

June 7, 2021

The Honorable Miguel Cardona  
Secretary  
U. S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona,

I am writing to request you accept the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund III (ESSER III) implementation plan from Montana's Office of Public Instruction (OPI) enclosed with this letter. As you are aware, Montana is the only state in the union offering a differentiated plan. Montanans believe that accountability and oversight works best at the local level and education officials intimately familiar with the situation on the ground in Montana are best equipped to educate Montana students.

The Montana ESSER III plan is comprehensive, emphasizes local control, and was constructed with extensive input from OPI's stakeholder engagement process. Critically, the plan provides flexibility, support, and resources to Montana schools; empowering local communities to find solutions that advance education. As a former superintendent, you know how important it is to have the necessary flexibility to best serve pupils in a specific district.

Thankfully, we are emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the last 14 months parents, teachers, and administrators across Montana's 403 districts have worked tirelessly to keep students engaged and learning. I trust you will accept this plan that puts students at the heart of reopening Montana schools. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES  
United States Senator