



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

4 March 2026

The Honorable Jenniffer González-Colón
Governor
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
PO Box 9020082
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00902-0082

The Honorable Eliezer Ramos Parés
Secretary of Education
Puerto Rico Department of Education
PO Box 190759
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00919-0759

Dear Governor González-Colón and Secretary Ramos Parés:

I am writing regarding the U.S. Department of Education's (Department's) specific conditions on grants awarded to Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE). These specific conditions are imposed on all current grants issued by the Department to Puerto Rico and PRDE except those awarded by the Department's Office of Postsecondary Education to Puerto Rico.

For the past several years, the specific conditions have required that Puerto Rico and PRDE retain the services of a third-party fiduciary agent (TPFA) and work effectively with the TPFA to perform financial management functions in support of the delivery of Federal education programs. That contract for the TPFA has been in place since March 2021. In addition, PRDE has developed and implemented a comprehensive corrective action plan (CCAP) and reported to the Department quarterly on their progress implementing that plan.

We appreciate the work undertaken by PRDE to date. The CCAP demonstrates considerable progress addressing the concerns that led to the specific conditions in the areas of internal controls for payroll, human resources, procurement and contracting, grants management, and overall compliance. This view is based on the information PRDE has provided as well as the assessment of PRDE's progress in the February 3, 2026, report by the TPFA that confirmed PRDE's progress.

As a result, the Department is amending the specific conditions so that Puerto Rico and PRDE can focus on phasing out the TPFA in the upcoming months. The Department expects that this phase out will focus on transitioning the activities previously carried out by the TPFA to PRDE, with the TPFA continuing to provide oversight and monitoring of PRDE's implementation and also for the TPFA to provide technical assistance to PRDE as it carries out the transition. In order to resolve the specific conditions, Puerto Rico and PRDE must fulfill the following:

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

1. Maintain the TPFA through November 20, 2026, to provide for appropriate transition.
2. By March 30, 2026, provide the Department with a transition plan. The plan must incorporate the elements within PRDE's CCAP and how PRDE will mitigate the 14 risks identified in the TPFA's February 3, 2026, risk assessment.
 - Prior to submitting the transition plan to the Department, PRDE must provide the transition plan to the TPFA and incorporate their feedback into the plan submitted to the Department.
 - The Department will review this plan and may request revisions or clarifications before approving PRDE's transition plan. Additionally, as result of its review, the Department could modify the specific conditions.
3. Provide to the Department and the TPFA an update on PRDE's implementation of the transition plan. The updates should be provided not later than the following dates:
 - April 30, 2026
 - June 30, 2026
 - August 31, 2026
 - October 30, 2026
4. Provide to the Department by November 2, 2026, a risk assessment from the TPFA on the prevailing processes, controls, and systems, as well as PRDE's readiness to assume departmental control.

After reviewing PRDE's final update and the TPFA's risk assessment, and assuming no significant compliance issues or further risks are identified, the Department will remove the requirement that Puerto Rico and PRDE maintain a TPFA.

The Department expects that PRDE will maintain the existing TPFA for this transition period to ensure a consistent phase out and to build on the existing work between PRDE and the TPFA. If, for some reason, it is not feasible to retain the current TPFA, please let us know as soon as possible, including the reason why it is not feasible.

The Department is maintaining the specific condition that requires that any PRDE procurement process for the acquisition of property or services with Federal education grant funds must comply with the procurement provisions in 2 CFR §§ 200.317-200.327. A final determination of whether to continue this requirement or to modify it will be made following the end of the TPFA transition period.

Thank you for your on-going commitment to improving educational outcomes for all students in Puerto Rico and the significant progress you have made in resolving the issues that led to these specific conditions. If you have any questions, please contact Patrick Rooney at: Patrick.Rooney@ed.gov and copy PRSpecificConditions@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Murray Bessette
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development

cc: Francisco Martinez Oronoz