



NEWS RELEASE

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NALEO Applauds Nomination of Connecticut Education Commissioner Dr. Miguel Cardona to lead U.S. Department of Education

Cardona is the third Latino nominated to a cabinet position by President-elect Joe Biden

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) today released the following statement from CEO Arturo Vargas following President-elect Joe Biden's intention to nominate Connecticut Education Commissioner Dr. Miguel Cardona to serve as the next Secretary of Education:

"NALEO congratulates Connecticut Education Commissioner Cardona for his nomination to lead the U.S. Department of Education as schools, teachers, and students continue to face distance learning challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The third Latino to serve as Education Secretary upon Senate confirmation, Dr. Cardona has dedicated his career to educating and inspiring future generations, serving as a teacher, a school principal, and assistant superintendent before becoming the first Latino to be appointed to the position of Connecticut Education Commissioner.

"As a native of Puerto Rico who struggled to learn English upon entering Kindergarten, Dr. Cardona has spent the bulk of his career working to close achievement gaps between students of color and their classmates, as well as address the challenges that English-Language Learners (ELL) face in American classrooms, the majority of whom are Latino. Dr. Cardona's Doctoral dissertation analyzed how to boost the 'political will' to close gaps between ELLs and those who speak English as their primary language.

"As the first Latino in Connecticut history to serve as Education Commissioner, Cardona successfully led an effort to provide computers and wireless internet devices to students across the state, becoming the first in the nation to distribute laptops to every student who needed one."

NALEO Member and Connecticut State Representative Christopher Rosario also signaled his approval for the nomination: "I am proud of Commissioner Cardona being tapped by President-elect Biden to be the new Education Secretary. In this new role, Dr. Cardona will continue his public service with the same level of excellence he put forward while serving Connecticut. He will work tirelessly on behalf of students and will bring his ideas and commitment to the national level. The nation will be in good hands with Commissioner Cardona in next

Administration, helping us safely reopen our schools while supporting public schools after the pandemic.”

Vargas continued: “millions of Latino students have had their learning process disrupted by COVID-19. Many Latino households do not have the resources necessary to ensure a successful remote learning environment for their children, further exacerbating existing gaps in achievement between low-income students and their wealthier classmates. We share President-elect Biden’s utmost confidence in Dr. Cardona’s ability to safely and effectively reopen schools across the country and ensure teachers and school districts have the resources they need to provide world-class K-12 education, and we urge the U.S. Senate to swiftly confirm his nomination.

“The President-elect’s dedication to seeing his Cabinet and Administration mirror America is a critical step toward inclusion and representation. As we applaud Dr. Cardona’s nomination, we continue to urge the President-elect to ensure that Latinos hold at least five Cabinet-level positions and at least 20 percent of the Administration’s posts. NALEO stands ready to work alongside the next Administration and Congress to secure a safer, healthier, and vibrant future for Latinos and all Americans.”

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About NALEO

The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials is the non-partisan leadership organization of the nation’s more than 6,800 Latino elected and appointed officials.