



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## Office of the Governor

Aimee Rogstad Guidera  
Secretary of Education

October 4, 2023

The Honorable Miguel Cardona, Ed.D.  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretaries Cardona and Vilsack:

Governor Youngkin is committed to ensuring our Virginia higher education institutions are best in class as they prepare students for success. This Administration's commitment to both our 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) and Virginia State University (VSU), respectively, is evident based on our historic investments and continued support of both schools.

Since his first day in office, Governor Youngkin has fulfilled his stated commitment to our Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), public and private, recognizing their critical role in our higher education ecosystem. The Youngkin Administration has made record investments in campus safety and security and expanded financial aid opportunities for all—especially those who have been traditionally underserved by our higher education institutions. On average, our Administration has provided the highest per student investment at our public HBCUs of any other gubernatorial administration since 1994, when reliable records are available.<sup>1</sup>

Virginia also has a history of working with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to ensure our HBCUs are appropriately funded. This cooperation includes an agreement in 2001 in which the Commonwealth agreed to provide additional investment to the state's public HBCUs and subsequent recognition from ED in 2004 that Virginia was on track with its commitments to HBCUs.

As is widely acknowledged, there are well-documented issues with the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) that is the source of data ED used in its analysis. IPEDS as currently constructed does not collect high quality, student-level data.<sup>2</sup> Based on reliable data from

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<sup>1</sup> Reliable data for colleges and universities only goes back to 1994.

<sup>2</sup> See Institute for Higher Education Policy, *Putting the "Integrated" Back Into IPEDS: Improving the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System to Meet Contemporary Data Needs*.

state-maintained finance, accounting, and education systems, the Commonwealth has funded VSU well above Virginia Tech on a per student basis in aggregate, since 1994.<sup>3</sup>

The Commonwealth has met its obligations for our 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions. Our Administration will continue to work tirelessly to improve outcomes at all of our institutions and to prepare students for success.

Sincerely,



Aimee Rogstad Guidera

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<sup>3</sup> We have found limited instances where Virginia potentially did not contribute its non-federal funds matching requirements for certain U.S. Department of Agriculture programs by nominal amounts.