



GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**

*Division of Federal Grants*

1834 Kongens Gade, Charlotte Amalie  
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**María E. Meléndez-Tirado, Ed.D.**  
Director

August 16, 2018

David Cantrell, Ph.D.  
Director, Office of School Support and Rural Programs  
U. S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

***TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL***

***Re: Waiver Request to Extend FY 2016 Obligation Period***

Dear Dr. Cantrell:

The Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) would like to formally request a six (6) months extension to the performance period for the use of fiscal year (FY) 2016 carryover funds under the Consolidated Grant (CG) to Insular Areas. The extension will allow VIDE the opportunity to complete needs assessments for all CG programs, complete FIFO revisions, purchase all program materials and goods post hurricanes and issue payments. There are several factors that have delayed the implementation of VIDE and its school district's approved CGA activities and expenditures. Please see the listing below:

- **MUNIS/Requisition Entry**

VIDE was not been able to enter requisitions since June 23, 2018 due to the completion of the FY2018 year-end closing of MUNIS. As of July 11, 2018, VIDE was not able to resume entering requisitions. MUNIS was displaying an error when users tried to enter a requisition. BCA has worked with MUNIS to rectify the issue and it has been resolved as of July 12, 2018. This further delayed the encumbering of funds which will markedly impact VIDE's ability to meet the September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline for obligation of all funds.

- **FIFO Revisions & Procurement**

The FY2014 and FY2015 funds are currently being transferred to FY2016 in the Feral ERP System by the BCA. Once the funds are transferred to FFY2016, the LEAs will prepare and submit budgets to the Office of Federal Grants for review. Once the budgets are reviewed and approvable, they will be submitted to the Office of Business and Budget for further processing. The Office of Business and Budget personnel will then enter the budget revisions line by line. Once completed, BCA will review, approve and upload the budgets. This will also affect VIDE's ability to obligate funds since obligations cannot occur until the budgets are uploaded in MUNIS.



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Additionally, due to the pending review and approval of FIFO revisions, not all justification letters or contractual requests have been submitted to the Procurement Office. The procurement process can be delayed depending on the amount of the purchase. Any services or goods in excess of \$50,000.00 will be required to be processed and approved by the Government of the Virgin Islands Department of Property and Procurement. Because of their limited staff, attaining a prompt and favorable response may be delayed.

- **Private Schools**

Moreover, the LEAs were unable to complete meaningful consultations with private schools in order to complete the FIFO revisions in a timely. Unfortunately, few private school administrators were unavailable due to schools closing and Summer break. This has delayed the revision and approval process. Hence, the encumbering of funds for private schools is further delayed.

### **ESEA Programs/Services and Activities**

Below please find a listing of LEAs and schools that will benefit from the extension of the period of availability of funds. Specific services and activities can be found on the FFY2017 Consolidated Grants application listed under the FFY2016 carryover column (see attachments 1 through 4).

1. **SEA 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers**
2. **SEA State Assessment**
3. **LEA St. Thomas/St. John District to include Non-Public Schools**
4. **LEA St. Croix District to include Non-Public Schools**

Please note that the services and activities will increase the quality of instruction and improve the academic achievement of students by allowing opportunities for improving the instructional practices of educators as well as providing students with additional enriched instruction that can assist in improving student learning.

### **Consultation with LEAs on Waiver Requests**

In an effort to reduce the possibilities of lapsing FFY2016 carryover funds, the Federal Grants Office has requested weekly spending plans from the LEAs. The Office of Federal Grants has also been conducting weekly spending plan meetings. During said meetings, the LEAs have expressed concerns relative to the timeframe allowed to obligate the funds. More importantly, concerns regarding purchases for goods and services that are tied to contracts were identified. As a result, all parties involved agreed to the need of an extension. Letters in support of the waiver request have been received (see attachments 5 and 6).



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**Website Posting**

The Virgin Islands Department of Education has posted on its public website notice and information regarding the waiver request. Copy of the waiver request can be found on the following link: <http://www.vide.vi/our-divisions/public-relations/1584-vide-request-waiver-to-extend-2016-consolidated-grant-obligation-period.html>

If approval is granted, VIDE will implement the following accountability measures to ensure that all funds are encumbered and liquidated timely:

- **Spending Plans**  
Attain updated weekly spending plans from the LEAs and SEA to ensure that proposed dates are met.
- **Weekly Balance Updates**  
Once the FIFO funds have been transferred to FY2016 and all budgets have been uploaded, programs will continue to provide weekly balances to ensure that they are kept abreast of their balances.
- **All Hands on Deck**  
The Procurement Office, the Office of Federal Grants and the Third Party Fiduciary will conduct an “All Hands on Deck” session on both districts to assist with requisition entry as well as to speed up the approval process.
- **Weekly Tracking of Justification Letters and Contracts**  
Attain a weekly status from Procurement as it relates to the submission and approval of justification letters and contracts.
- **Training on Federal Payment Processes**  
In order to ensure timely liquidation of Federal funds, the Business staff territory-wide will receive training on how to process Federal payments timely and efficiently.

Additionally, please refer to the enclosed list of attachment for complete details of responses.

Attachment 1: FFY 2017 SEA 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

Attachment 2: FFY 2017 SEA State Assessment

Attachment 3: FFY 2017 LEA St. Thomas/St. John District to include Non-Public Schools

Attachment 4: FFY 2017 LEA St. Croix District to include Non-Public Schools

Attachment 5: FFY 2016 LEA Waiver Request Support Letter from STTJ District

Attachment 6: FFY 2016 LEA Waiver Request Support Letter from STX District



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It is important to note that this extension request has been completed in collaboration with the Director of Procurement and the Third Party Fiduciary. Please do not hesitate to contact me if additional information is needed.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "mmtd".

María Meléndez-Tirado, Ed.D., *Federal Grants Director*

Cc: Dr. Sharon Ann McCollum, Ph.D., *Commissioner of Education*  
Akeyla Christian, *Director of Financial Services*  
Joy Medley, *Education Program Specialist*