



**OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

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July 14, 2020

Dear HEOP Directors:

Please know that SED is aware that COVID-19 is disproportionately impacting our students, their families, and communities and that we have only begun to understand its many consequences on matters such as education and student success. As such, we wanted to share that SED is committed to providing flexibility on the HEOP RFP requirements related to the student recruitment (i.e., FTEs) as well as the graduation and retention rate benchmarks.

SED has plans to provide more specifics on that flexibility when more details and data become available to guide those decisions. Furthermore, SED will seek HEOPPO's input to help us develop those metrics so that they meet the mission of the program and take into account the impacts of COVID-19 on the programs and our students.

Again, we appreciate all of the work and advocacy you provide on behalf of the students and look forward to working with HEOPPO on this process in the coming weeks and months.

Sincerely,

Dr. Anael Alston  
Assistant Commissioner

cc: William Murphy, Ph.D., Deputy Commissioner  
Christopher Fernando, Ph.D., Supervisor for Higher Education Programs - NYSED  
Program Officers - NYSED