



*Affiliated with the National Education Association*

January 13, 2010

Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

With this letter, we are writing to express our support for Colorado's application to the U.S. Department of Education for a federal Race to the Top grant. As the President and Executive Director of the Colorado Education Association (CEA) representing the interests of 38,000 teachers and education support professionals across our state, we firmly believe that the detailed plans outlined in Colorado's proposal will help raise the performance of students in Colorado and close the state's achievement gap. Every child in Colorado has a right to a quality education and the state's application will make significant strides to ensure this goal is accomplished.

We commend Colorado, under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Barbara O'Brien and State Education Commissioner Dwight Jones, for pursuing a thorough, transparent and inclusive public engagement process that honors the perspectives of all participants in the state's P-20 educational system. As far back as last spring when the Lt. Governor held the state's first public meeting in Denver on Race to the Top, CEA has been committed to actively participating in the state's reform effort. CEA leaders and staff were involved in the design of Colorado's proposal from the beginning and our commitment to the effort has carried on through to the end of this thoughtful and arduous process.

We are pleased that the voices of our members were a critical part in developing the state's reform plan. We also commend all those involved in drafting the application for their unwavering commitment to pursuing a collaborative strategy with CEA and its members. This federal competition has brought many divergent interests together within the state, all with the same goal of improving instructional practice and, ultimately, student achievement. We can't imagine another state that has been as committed as Colorado in building a "bottom up" effort with the primary goal of helping every child succeed in life.

Colorado is now on the brink of a performance-oriented public school system driven by data. The key now is to ensure that this data is used to develop a fair, transparent, thoughtful and flexible teacher and principal evaluation system that maximizes opportunity and enhances practice in classrooms. As the parties progress in this effort to improve our public education system, we must recognize that details do matter. We must listen and be respectful of concerns from stakeholders that are raised along the way. Working cooperatively for the good of students is what education reform in Colorado is about.

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The Colorado Education Association is focused on ensuring that all Colorado's children receive a high quality education and graduate prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. The infusion of funds through the Race to the Top grant will ensure Colorado's ability to fully implement the state's proposal.

On behalf of the teachers and education support professionals working in the thousands of schools across Colorado, we applaud Colorado for submitting a bold, yet realistic, proposal that paves the way for improving student performance and closing achievement gaps throughout the state. The creativity, trust and vision that have emerged from this collaborative process embody a collective spirit of optimism of which all Coloradans can and should be proud.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Beverly Ingle  
President  
Colorado Education Association



Tony Salazar  
Executive Director  
Colorado Education Association