

CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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November 21, 2011

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan,

Following your announcement last week of eligibility criteria for Race to the Top Round Three, we have considered whether California can meet those criteria and satisfy the fiscal commitments that would be required to participate. We outline below our ability to meet the Part 1 application assurances, based on our understanding of the U.S. Department of Education's interpretation of those assurances.

California is in compliance with the Education Jobs Fund maintenance-of-effort (MOE) requirements through 2010-11, and there are no legal, statutory, or regulatory barriers at the state level that would prevent linking data on student achievement or student growth to teachers and principals for the purpose of teacher and principal evaluation. The state will maintain its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments, as evidenced by its participation as a governing state in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.

The conditions for reform identified in California's Race to the Top Round Two application remain in place, and there are no legal, statutory, or regulatory barriers at the state level to maintaining those conditions.

The state remains committed to adopting and implementing college and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments, improving the collection and use of data at the local level, increasing teacher effectiveness and equity in the distribution of effective teachers in a manner that is determined locally, and turning around the state's lowest achieving schools. It cannot afford to implement these reforms statewide, though, nor can it compel Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to implement them. Numerous LEAs are prepared, however, to implement several of the reforms as described below as part of the Race to the Top Round Three application.

In its Round Three application, California will focus on two central efforts of its Round Two application: implementation of the Common Core State Standards and development of local data systems to inform instruction. These are priorities for the participating LEAs and will be an appropriate use of one-time funds that will avoid cost pressure beyond the grant period. Our application will also include activities that are most likely to improve STEM education, as required.

Finally, the state will comply with all of the accountability, transparency, and reporting requirements that apply to the Race to the Top program as well as the requirements of any evaluation of the program, or of specific activities pursued as part of the program, conducted and supported by the U.S. Department of Education.

Sincerely,



Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor



Tom Torlakson
Superintendent of Public Instruction



Michael W. Kirst
President, State Board of Education