



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF EDUCATION
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PAUL REVILLE
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

January 18, 2010

The Honorable Arne Duncan
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

On behalf of the educators of our Commonwealth, I'm pleased to enthusiastically endorse Massachusetts' application for the Race to the Top Fund.

As you know, Massachusetts has never shied away from tackling the difficult work of education reform and improvement. Nearly a generation ago, our state was among the first to institute a rigorous system of learning standards coupled with high-quality assessments, allowing Massachusetts to vault from the middle ranks of the states in terms of academic achievement to the very top. Now we are setting a new goal: we want Massachusetts to become the international leader in student achievement, and close – once and for all – the pernicious achievement gaps that hold our students back and damage their life chances.

Our Race to the Top application reflects hundreds of hours of work and tremendous input and feedback from every corner of our education community. It balances initiatives that promote the yeoman's work of education with exciting new efforts that will challenge our school leaders, educators, and students. Our application is deeply responsive to the four reform priorities you have identified and addresses the competitive priority regarding STEM education, as well as most of the invitational priorities. We believe our application is a solid blueprint on which to base the next phase of education reform in Massachusetts, and we're eager to move forward.

We're just as eager to move forward in implementing the Commonwealth's new education legislation, the introduction of which you joined us for in July. After months of hard work, our Legislature passed this legislation by strong margins last week, and Governor Patrick signed it into law yesterday. The new law makes major advances in promoting school innovation, effective charter schools in our lowest-performing districts, and swift turnarounds of underperforming and chronically underperforming schools. We believe it will further enhance the effectiveness of our Race to the Top plans, and we're grateful that our state's leadership has coalesced around this measure.

Massachusetts has always prized the value of high-quality education, and with support from the Race to the Top Fund, we're confident that we reach new heights and deliver world-class schooling to all of our students. Thank you for the opportunity to partner with you and President Obama on this important work, and we look forward to your consideration of our application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Reville".

Paul Reville
Massachusetts Secretary of Education