

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

THE GENERAL COURT

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

January 15, 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 Massachusetts General Court and the citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, we are writing to share our enthusiastic support for Massachusetts' Phase I application to the Race to the Top Fund.

As you know, Massachusetts' students consistently outperform their national and international peers in the areas of reading, math and science, on multiple measures of assessment. Despite this success, however, we recognize that we have a tremendous amount of work to do to close persistent achievement gaps and ensure that each and every one of our students receives the best possible public education. In 1993, our General Court put in place a strong foundation through a landmark Education Reform Act, and this year our state legislature has reaffirmed its support for education reform through legislation enacted this week. The Legislature's support for *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap* underscores our belief in providing meaningful intervention tools to address persistent underperformance in our schools, lifting charter school caps in our most challenged districts, and promoting innovation in all Massachusetts schools and districts. These are three essential steps Massachusetts must take to achieve our educational goals and close the achievement gap, and with the Governor's signature, this law will be the most significant education legislation our state has passed since the Education Reform Act of 1993.

The Commonwealth's Race to the Top application, coupled with this newly passed law, will allow us to initiate an ambitious second phase of education reform in Massachusetts that will improve student achievement while closing achievement gaps. Our application emphasizes four ambitious yet achievable goals: providing all students with more individualized educational experiences; developing and retaining an effective, diverse, and culturally competent educator workforce; concentrating high-quality instruction, additional supports for students and families, and tools for educators in the lowest-performing schools; and increasing college and career readiness for all students. The Commonwealth's application articulates a series of bold and innovative strategies to reach each of these goals that will not only be a powerful impetus for dramatic change in Massachusetts, but will also allow our state to continue to serve as a national model for educational improvement and reform.

We are grateful to you and President Obama for providing this opportunity to the Commonwealth, and we look forward to working to ensure *all* of our students receive a high-quality educational experience. On behalf of the Massachusetts General Court, we hope that you will grant your fullest consideration to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Race to the Top application. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide additional information.

Sincerely,



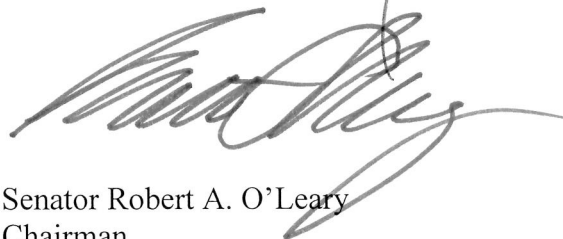
Speaker Robert A. DeLeo
Massachusetts House of Representatives



President Therese Murray
Massachusetts State Senate



Representative Martha M. Walz
Chairwoman
Massachusetts Joint Committee on
Education



Senator Robert A. O'Leary
Chairman
Massachusetts Joint Committee on
Education