

## Sample Letter to Pres. Obama, Sec. of Ed. Arne Duncan

DATE

To: President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

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

Subject: Race to the Top (RTTT) Proposed Priorities and Selection Criteria

Providing a quality public education to all kids is the cornerstone of our democracy and society. I commend the administration for wanting to put additional resources into our schools. I supported the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act as the additional federal funding has been significant in off-setting staggering state budget cuts to education in California. As the Race to the Top grants are another opportunity for states to access additional resources, it is important that the criteria and priorities set for those grants are equitable for all states.

Although it is the intent of the Obama administration to drive school innovation and improvement, as proposed, the RTTT criteria repeats many of the mistakes found in the No Child Left Behind Act with an over-reliance on test scores as an accurate measure of student achievement and support for interventions that do not have a track record of success.

Instead of supporting states in determining innovation and improvement, the United States Department of Education is mandating that states and local education agencies conform to a specific set of criteria in order to apply for the RTTT grants. For example, California would be required to change its rigorous academic content standards and assessment system.

Before we layer another set of mandates on top of the flawed NCLB system, I ask you to consider priorities for the Race to the Top grants that will be equitable to all states and allow innovation and best practices to come from the states and local school districts. One size fits all does not fit all.

Sincerely,