

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

February 25, 2010

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

Dear Secretary Duncan:

The undersigned Members of the North Carolina Congressional delegation write in strong and unanimous support of the State of North Carolina's application for phase one funding under the Race to the Top Fund.

North Carolina has always been a leader of innovation in education. Examples of our innovation include small school redesign, STEM schools, Early Colleges, the NC Virtual Public School (NCVPS), magnet schools, and other unique school models. Receiving grant money through the Race to the Top fund will allow our state to continue making important investments in education that will ensure our students not only graduate from high school but also graduate prepared for college or the workforce.

Over the next four years, North Carolina will use the funding to build on its strengths and improve student outcomes for each and every student. As noted in the application, North Carolina has already signed on to participate in state-led, internationally-benchmarked standards and assessments. Additionally, Governor Bev Perdue has directed all of our education governing boards K-20 to adopt those same standards to ensure agreement on what all high school graduates need in order to go straight to work, to a 2- or 4-year college, or into technical training. In keeping with the other assurances for Race to the Top, North Carolina will turn around low-performing schools, support effective teachers and leaders, and continue its development of a longitudinal data system that provides teachers with the information necessary to improve instruction and measures student success.

More specifically, North Carolina's application focuses on two overarching goals for education reform. The first goal is to strengthen the education workforce to ensure that every student has effective teachers and every school has effective leadership. We firmly believe, and the research has shown, that in North Carolina the quality of teachers and school leaders makes a large impact on student achievement. Therefore, it is imperative that North Carolina teachers and principals are highly qualified and prepared to teach our students the skills necessary to be successful in the 21st century global economy.

The second overarching goal in North Carolina's application is to improve the lowest-achieving schools and districts so that every student and teacher is in a school that supports high

educational achievement. Every student in North Carolina deserves a top-notch education. Only by turning around the lowest-performing schools can we make that goal a reality for all of our students.

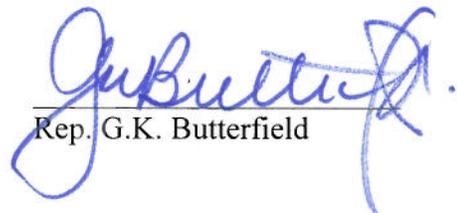
Throughout its history, North Carolina has had many strong partners in education. This commitment to collaboration is evident in the state's Race to the Top application. For example, all of North Carolina's Local Education Agencies and professional education associations have agreed to partner with the state in this endeavor. This teamwork and collaboration will ensure that North Carolina's public school system is the strongest and the most innovative in the country and that all North Carolina students are prepared for college or a career when they graduate from high school.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to answer any questions or to discuss this matter further. We thank you for your leadership in improving education through the Race to the Top Fund.

Sincerely,



Sen. Kay R. Hagan



Rep. G.K. Butterfield



Rep. Bob Etheridge



Rep. Walter Jones



Rep. David Price



Rep. Mike McIntyre



Rep. Larry Kissell



Rep. Heath Shuler



Rep. Melvin L. Watt



Rep. Brad Miller