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Congress of the United States

Washington, DC

June 18, 2010

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

Dear Secretary Duncan,

As the former Director of the Arizona Governor's Office for Children and the author of the Arizona Scholarship Tax Credit law, I have been passionate about education my entire career, which is why I write in support of Arizona's Race to the Top Round 2 application. Under the direction of Governor Jan Brewer, the work that has gone into this plan will serve as Arizona's roadmap for continued education reform.

Over the past few years, Arizona has made tremendous strides toward strengthening and reforming education. Arizona's plan will continue to make the progress necessary to ensure that Arizona students are prepared for postsecondary education and beyond.

In this past year alone, key legislation has been passed in Arizona that helps eliminate the practice of social promotion, provides for teacher and principal evaluations and linking key employment decisions to those evaluations, and opens the door to alternative pathways to teacher and administrator certification.

The entire education continuum is working together to address all facets of the education system: attracting, training and retaining the best possible educators; building on recent work to strengthen education standards and developing an assessment system that indicates student preparedness; developing a coordinated and integrated data warehouse that informs teaching and student progress; and providing the necessary interventions to support struggling schools and the students they serve.

Arizona has demonstrated its strong commitment to these policy initiatives. Race to the Top funds will most certainly help with their implementation. I am confident that this plan will propel necessary education reform in Arizona and provide the tools for economic prosperity for years to come.

Daniel Webster, often referred to as the "Schoolmaster of the Nation", said that "If we work on marble, it will perish, if we work on brass, time will efface it, if we rear up temples, they will crumble into dust, but if we work upon immortal minds, and imbue them with principles, with the just fear of God, and love for our fellow men, we engrave on those tablets something that will brighten for all eternity."

Most sincerely,



Trent Franks
United States Congress