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

Dear Secretary Duncan,

I am writing to offer my unqualified support for the state of Arizona's application for the Race to the Top (RTTT) competitive education reform grant program. In utilizing these federal funds, Arizona seeks to capitalize on its assets – a strong record on performance pay, a plan for revamped standards and assessments, and an expanded charter school system. Arizona's RTTT proposal builds upon these assets and will accelerate reforms necessary to support educational achievement and excellence.

With the development and submission of the first phase application, Arizona has built on its experience and is even better prepared to adopt the challenging standards needs to measure student achievement, recruit and retain the best teachers, and turn around our lowest performing schools. I commend Arizona Governor Janice Brewer for submitting this RTTT application for phase two, and for establishing education task forces and the P-20 Coordinating Council whose mission is to develop real solutions drawn from the experiences of Arizona educators. She has taken the necessary steps to ensure that our state can comply with RTTT criteria and significantly improve student achievement in our state.

Governor Brewer's plan will attract qualified teachers through alternative certification, implement effective systems for monitoring student progress, and communicate school performance to parents. This is in addition to strong reading programs for younger students, early intervention services, and an end to the practice of social promotion. These steps will bring us closer to an education system that is capable of developing the innovators and leaders of the future.

It is imperative that the state of Arizona rebuild its education system and move forward with comprehensive reform so that every child has the skills necessary to compete in a global labor market. The students of Arizona deserve nothing less.

Arizona stands ready to be a partner with you in this Race to the Top on behalf of our students. Thank you for giving our application the strongest possible consideration.

Sincerely Yours,



Gabrielle Giffords
Member of Congress