

STATE of TEXAS
HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES



GARNET F. COLEMAN
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 147

January 12, 2010

The Honorable Rick Perry
Governor
Post Office Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711
Via Hand Deliver & Facsimile

Dear Governor Perry:

I understand from correspondence and conversations with staff of the House Select Committee on Federal Economic Stabilization Funding, on which I serve, that the state's application for Federal Race to the Top Funds was prepared and submitted to your office this week, for you to submit to the Department of Education. As you know, the deadline for submitting the application to the federal government is next Tuesday, January 19.

Although I'm concerned about certain provisions in the scoring matrix, I encourage you to submit the application to allow our state to compete for these resources.

As you know, the funds aid education reform by providing competitive grants to states to reward and support education reform in four priority areas:

1. Promoting college and career standards as well as aligned assessments.
2. Enhancing teacher effectiveness and promoting the equitable distribution of effective teachers for low income and minority children.
3. Strengthening state longitudinal data systems.
4. Supporting the turnaround of chronically underperforming schools

Amongst the myriad provisions used to score applications are two policy positions I take issue with -- not prohibiting the tying of teacher and principal pay to student test scores and loosening caps on the number of charter schools that states allow each year. I know that in the past, you have been a vocal supporter of using federal funds for teacher incentive pay, and you've been in favor of expanding the number of charter schools. In an executive order in 2005, you used \$10 million in discretionary federal funds to pay for an incentive pay program. In 2001 you also vehemently opposed my colleague Chairman Jim Dunning's HB 6 that placed a moratorium on charter school expansions.

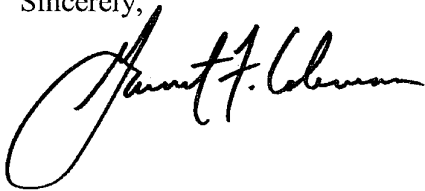
While I disagree with these policy stances, they are but two of the many ways to receive points in the scoring matrix. I believe you may take issue with some of the policy provisions that can receive points. However, it is important to note that they are not all needed to receive possible

grant funds. Submitting the application for Race to the Top Funds will allow our state to compete with other states for grants. Race to the Top is not like unemployment insurance stimulus funds, which you turned down because of possible "strings attached". This is a competitive program where states that do better will receive larger allocations.

It would be unwise to not let our state compete for funds that could benefit schoolchildren, especially in these tough economic times. Race to the Top funds could be used for many different programs, like increasing student achievement, decreasing achievement gaps, and increasing the rate which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. The funds could be used to improve educational outcomes for high-need, young children (pre-kindergarten through third grade) by enhancing the quality of their programs.

Submitting the application allows Texas to compete with other states. We do not have to do everything in the scoring matrix to receive funding. For this reason, I encourage you to do everything in your power to ensure our schoolchildren have the resources they need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Garnet F. Coleman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Garnet F. Coleman
State Representative, District 147