

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION**

**JACK O'CONNELL**, State Superintendent  
of Public Instruction  
1430 N Street, Suite 5602  
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901  
916-319-0800

**CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF  
EDUCATION**

**THEODORE R. MITCHELL**, President  
1430 N Street, Suite 5111  
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901  
916-319-0827

**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION**

**GLEN W. THOMAS**, Secretary of Education  
1121 L Street, Suite 600  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916-323-0611

December 18, 2009

Dear Stakeholder:

**Request for Your Support for California's Race to the Top Application**

We are writing to solicit your support for California's application for federal funding under the Race to the Top initiative. As you are aware, Race to the Top offers an unprecedented opportunity to build on our progress to date and invest in a partnership between the state and local educational agencies (LEAs) to strengthen schools and close the achievement gap. Race to the Top offers an opportunity to strategically build upon our current efforts and invest in key supports that 1.) refine our current rigorous state standards; 2.) provide new supports for teachers and principals aimed at improving effectiveness; 3.) enhance local data systems and coordinate those systems with state data systems; and 4.) dramatically improve the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools. Participating LEAs will need to commit to partnering with the state in implementing each of these four key reform areas through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). For more detail on the state's plan and the MOU, please see "How to Participate" on California's Race to the Top Web site at <http://www.caracetothetop.org/> (Outside Source).

California's diverse demographics and ongoing leadership in innovation make our state an important exemplar in efforts to embrace both the challenges and the unique potential that frame the future of American education. Our state includes some of the most diverse and innovative school and district practices in the nation. If all our students were educated to the high standards we have set for them, our workforce would be uniquely positioned to compete effectively in a culturally diverse global marketplace.

California's Race to the Top application will be built on a strong history of education reform that is grounded in some of the highest standards in the country. Despite the state's commitments and successes to date, progress must be accelerated and expanded. Race to the Top represents our state's best chance to engage in the

fundamental reforms that are needed to develop our workforce and fuel future innovations—to invest in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement.

We need to use our creativity, leavened by the Race to the Top award, to build a new way of running the educational enterprise in California. This new system must be less hierarchical and more collaborative, student-centered rather than adult-centric, data driven with mutual accountability at all levels, and must leverage our expertise in all things technological for which California is known throughout the world to undergird our efforts. This system will require that the State and LEAs redefine their working relationships. The state role must transition from that of regulating inputs and monitoring processes to one of setting and maintaining world-class standards, providing assistance and leveraging best practices, and monitoring outcomes in a way that fosters continuous improvement at all levels. The local role will need to be one of leadership and innovation.

In addition to the state and local partnership described above, it is vital that we are joined by education, community, and civil rights organizations, as well as by our business and philanthropic communities.

We respectfully request that you join California in this unprecedented effort by formally declaring your support for California's Race to the Top application. A draft letter of support is available for your use on the "How to Participate" page of California's Race to the Top Web site at <http://www.caracetohtop.org/> (Outside Source). The State envisions the following types of support from California's stakeholder organizations:

1. General support for California's efforts for Race to the Top. If your organization would like to help support the State's efforts to be awarded these funds, please download the draft letter of support, sign, convert to PDF and e-mail to [info@caracetohtop.org](mailto:info@caracetohtop.org) by January 8, 2010.
2. Involvement in California's efforts on Race to the Top. If rather than a simple acknowledgement of support your organization would like to be directly involved with the State's efforts, please modify the draft letter of support and specify how you would like to participate in this effort. Please e-mail this letter to [info@caracetohtop.org](mailto:info@caracetohtop.org) by January 8, 2010.
3. Providing in-kind support or resources and partnership with the State on Race to the Top. If your organization is interested in a partnership with the State and willing to sign an MOU outlining how you intend to partner with the State and LEAs, please send a request to [info@caracetohtop.org](mailto:info@caracetohtop.org) by January 6, 2010, and you will be contacted directly to develop the parameters of an MOU.

These letters will be used to document statewide support for California's application for Race to the Top funds. If you have questions, please e-mail [info@caracetohtop.org](mailto:info@caracetohtop.org).

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By joining as a group of committed citizens, focused as a team on providing the opportunity for all of our children to reach their potential, we know we can win this race. Thank you in advance for your support of California's Race to the Top!

For more information on Race to the Top, please visit California's official Race to the Top Web site at: <http://www.caracetothetop.org> (Outside Source).

Sincerely,



JACK O'CONNELL  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
California Department of Education



THEODORE R. MITCHELL  
President  
California State Board of Education



GLEN W. THOMAS  
Secretary of Education  
Office of the Secretary of Education

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