



The School District
of Greenville County
Board of Trustees

July 6, 2011

The Honorable Dr. Mick Zais
South Carolina Superintendent of Education
1429 Senate Street, 1006 Rutledge Building
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Dr. Zais:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Greenville County Schools, I am writing to express our disappointment in your refusal to apply for federal funds available through the Race to the Top grant program for public education. We respectfully request that you reconsider your decision on this important matter.

We agree that federal funds are too often tied to onerous mandates that do little to enhance the educational experience of students. We also agree that our state cannot presently afford to adopt programs which will require ongoing funding.

However, we understand that flexibility exists within the Race to the Top grant program that allows states to create grant applications that enhance their goals and objectives without tying their hands or committing them to programs requiring long term funding. For instance, grant funds can be used to:

- assist the state with aligning our standards and assessments to the newly adopted National Common Core standards;
- update and integrate the state's data system;
- design a statewide teacher compensation model using measurable performance criteria; and
- provide instructional resources and online professional development modules for use statewide, saving districts' financial and human resources.

In a state faced with a myriad of challenges, including education, we cannot afford to miss opportunities for improvement or additional funds. We encourage you to take another look at the Race to the Top grant program. We are confident that with creativity and hard work, these funds can be used to improve our state's educational system without impeding your department or placing any additional obligations on our state's finances.

We thank you for your service as our state Superintendent of Education. Please know we stand ready to assist you at anytime to improve public education in South Carolina.

Sincerely,

Roger D. Meek
Chairman