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Mr. Winerip:

The Pearson Foundation's support for CCSSO's International Education Summits is a long-term commitment to foster a productive dialogue between some of the world's best-performing and most-improving school systems.

We categorically refute any suggestion or implication that the partnership is designed to enable Pearson "to win contracts." It is a public-private partnership in pursuit of education excellence.

Everyone from Education Secretary Arne Duncan on down understands the importance of knowing how American students are doing compared to their peers in other countries, and then learning from school leaders in high-performing nations.

As a result, many of our nation's education leaders are rightly eager to engage in an exchange with their international counterparts, share experiences, and come home armed with new strategies and ideas to raise achievement, especially achievement for our most struggling students.

But state and local education budgets could never provide the resources necessary for state chiefs and others to travel and collaborate in person with education ministers, reformers and innovators from Finland, Singapore, South Korea, or other nations who are more than willing to share their insights and best practices with us. If it were left to public funds, it simply wouldn't happen, and the opportunity to improve our schools would be lost.

Four years ago the Pearson Foundation partnered with the CCSSO, who alone plans the agenda, invites its members and other education leaders, and issues reports summarizing findings from the Summits. Starting with a study of Singapore's exceptional progress in mathematical achievement, each subsequent year the Pearson Foundation has provided a grant to CCSSO to support the analysis, understanding, and application of education practices in these high-achieving nations. In Finland the chiefs explored teacher quality and innovation. This year CCSSO chose Brazil because of the significant diversity of its student population and the educational challenges that implies. These are all pressing issues that are critical to student success in America.

There are many other companies that support CCSSO in similar ways.

And as those who have attended the Summits can attest, participants from all nations return home with a greater understanding of the challenges facing their students, but with fresh ideas and a reinvigorated will to take them on.

This is a natural and legitimate venture for a Foundation that is deeply committed to the mission of helping students and educators succeed. We're very proud of our association with the CCSSO and of the connections we have helped them forge with educators around the world.



Mark Nieker
President/CEO
Pearson Foundation