



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Tim Pawlenty

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

March 13, 2009

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

During his speech to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on March 10, President Obama called on us all to work together to reverse the decline of American education.

I am writing today to let you know that Minnesota wholeheartedly welcomes the President's call to action and looks forward to working with his administration to better prepare every student for the challenges and opportunities of this young century.

Specifically, I want to express my strong support for the President's commitment to ensuring "that anyone entrusted with educating our children is doing the job as well as it can be done."

That sentiment has been a driving force behind Minnesota's Q Comp performance and professional pay program, which rewards teachers based on performance, not just seniority. Q Comp, which is modeled after the Teacher Advancement Program, also aims to improve student performance by improving teacher training and professional development.

Q Comp is part of a larger reform effort to help transform our education system in order to prepare every Minnesota student for success after high school. Six years ago, Minnesota launched a bipartisan effort to reform and improve our public schools. During that time, we have raised our academic standards and

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graduation requirements, and implemented nation-leading reforms to improve teacher effectiveness.

Our efforts have already begun yielding positive results. In 2007, Minnesota students participated in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The TIMSS results showed that Minnesota students have made significant improvements in 4th-grade math since 1995. Yet, while Minnesotans celebrate this progress, we also know that much more needs to be done. That is why I have introduced legislation to expand Q Comp and to reward schools districts that improve student achievement.

This year we have proposed a new measure, called Pay for Progress, that rewards schools for increasing student achievement. School districts and charter schools administer assessments in grades 3-8 in reading and math, and high schools assess reading in grade 10 and math in grade 11. School districts and charter schools must reach measurable results by demonstrating student learning growth in order to receive general education funding increases.

As the national discussion on performance pay for teachers moves forward, I encourage the Obama Administration to look to Q Comp as a model. I would also like to invite both you and President Obama to visit Minnesota to see first-hand the progress that is being made under this nation-leading program.

Once again, Minnesota welcomes the President's commitment to reverse the decline of American education and we look forward to working with you to prepare our nation and our students for success in the 21st century.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Pawlenty', written in a cursive style.

Tim Pawlenty
Governor