



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

June 18, 2009

Honorable Edward G. Rendell
Governor of Pennsylvania
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Rendell:

Thank you for your May 21 letter outlining your concerns regarding the proposed cut in support for education in the budget recently passed by the Pennsylvania Senate. I share your concerns and believe that just as the Federal government has taken serious steps to help save jobs and drive reforms, each State has an obligation to play its part in spurring today's economy and protecting our children's education.

One such tool that Pennsylvania and other States have at their disposal is the rainy-day fund, which can be used to both support education jobs and advance much-needed reforms. I was disappointed to see that, instead of tapping into the State's rainy-day fund, the Pennsylvania Senate recently chose to reduce the percentage of the overall budget being spent on education. To cut State appropriations for primary education by \$728 million (14%) while leaving a \$750 million rainy-day surplus completely intact is a disservice to our children.

Discretionary award applications, including for Race to the Top funds, will be available in the coming months and will ask, among other things, to what extent has a State increased/decreased its education budget (as a percentage of revenue) and what has a State done with the dollars it has received to date. If a state has disproportionately reduced its education budget and/or if a State has done nothing more than backfill budget holes with these dollars when the State had other resources available to it, such as a rainy-day fund, the State's competitive position to receive Race to the Top funds and/or other competitive grants may be negatively impacted.

Our first responsibility is to our children. I hope that those who have the power to make a difference for our children on the Federal, State and local levels will take this responsibility very seriously.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of the students of Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

/s/

Arne Duncan