

STATE OF COLORADO

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Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

December 3, 2009

Mr. Arne Duncan
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan,

Since taking office three years ago, creating longitudinal data systems has been one of the highest priorities of our administration. Since 2007, we supported and passed legislation creating the Colorado Growth Model, legislatively authorized all state administrative departments to share unit-level data, created an educator identifier system that will match student outcomes to teachers and teacher preparation programs, expanded the use of a common student identification number across all publicly funded education systems, and created the Government Data Advisory Board to govern the exchange of unit-level records across state agencies and research organizations. Without question, improving state longitudinal data systems has been central to our administration.

In addition to supporting reform-oriented data legislation, and in spite of the recent economic downturn, we have continued to make the development of robust, longitudinal data systems a state budgetary priority. Recently, using State Fiscal Stabilization Funds – Government Services Funds, we funded enhancements to the state's growth model—which has been or is in the process of being adopted by several other states—and launched the development of the state's educator identifier system. These investments were matched by nearly \$600,000 in private support from Colorado-based philanthropic foundations.

We strongly believe that Colorado is among a handful of states currently poised to make immediate progress toward the vision of an aligned data system articulated in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. In other words, the enclosed proposal represents a true "shovel-ready" data system project.

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

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We strongly support the enclosed State Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) grant proposal. It represents the culmination of years of effort from our administration and thousands of hours of collaboration among Colorado educators, policymakers, and state departments, including education, higher education, and information technology. If funded, the enclosed proposal would enable the development of a model longitudinal data system.

We hope that you will give the Colorado State Longitudinal Data System proposal your most earnest consideration, and we thank you for the opportunity to participate in the competition.

Sincerely,



Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor



Barbara O'Brien
Lt. Governor and Co-chair of the
Colorado P-20 Council