



HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

HATTIE MAE WHITE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT CENTER
4400 WEST 18th STREET • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77092-8501

ABELARDO SAAVEDRA, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

April 6, 2009

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20597

Dear Secretary Duncan:

My fellow superintendents of schools (listed on page two) and I are writing to you to urge you to strongly clarify key elements of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. We are very concerned that federal funds from the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) might not reach the Texas school districts we represent. We hope that the Department of Education will issue guidance, in the strongest language possible, that SFSF dollars cannot supplant state funding for education in Texas but rather must go to increasing support for our local schools and their students.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) designates 81.8 percent of SFSF funds for education support. We believe that Texas requires clear guidance regarding what qualifies as “primary elementary and secondary education formulae” in this regard. Giving the State of Texas wide latitude to name a number of “primary” education formulae allows for the creation of education budget shortfalls where none exist. This would enable the state to use stabilization funds to fill artificial gaps and address other budgetary or policy priorities, such as the maintenance of the state’s Rainy Day Fund, that are unrelated to our students’ educational goals and needs.

We consider the use of these stabilization funds for any purpose other than the one ARRA intended—the improvement of education for America’s children—to be unacceptable and a violation of the public trust. We believe that clear guidance from you on this vital matter will help to make sure that ARRA’s goals will be met and our mission as educators will be realized. We would like an opportunity to talk to you on a conference call to discuss these issues, if your schedule permits. Should you be available to participate in a conference call, your staff can make those arrangements through my office at 713-556-6300.

The Honorable Arne Duncan
April 6, 2009
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The superintendents listed here are in agreement with this letter and have given permission to add their names to this letter:

David Anthony
Wanda Bamberg
Carol Ann Bonds
Jesus Chavez
Scott Elliff
John Folks
Lorenzo Garcia
Michael Hinojosa
Richard Middleton
Michael Zolkoski

Cypress-Fairbanks ISD
Aldine ISD
San Angelo ISD
Round Rock ISD
Corpus Christi ISD
Northside ISD
El Paso ISD
Dallas ISD
North East ISD
Ysleta ISD

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Abelardo Saavedra". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Abelardo Saavedra, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

AS:wa

c: Michael Casserly
All Superintendents listed above