



HUNTINGTON BEACH UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

5832 Bolsa Avenue • Huntington Beach, California 92649
(714) 903-7000 FAX (714) 892-5750

Board of Trustees:

Bonnie Castrey
Brian Garland
Matthew Harper
Susan Henry
Michael Simons

Van W. Riley, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: All Staff Members

FROM: Van W. Riley, Superintendent

SUBJECT: RACE TO THE TOP FUNDS

DATE: January 12, 2010

Over the past month, there has been much discussion about the federal Race to the Top (RTTT) program and the issue of whether or not our district should request to participate. At the California School Boards Association annual conference in December, our Board members attended several sessions about this program and since that time CSBA, ACSA, and School Services of California have all provided information and recommendations concerning whether or not a district should commit to the federal requirements for participation. I understand that CTA and CSEA have expressed similar concerns related to the RTTT program. Recently I have been in contact with all Orange County superintendents and the County Counsel through daily emails and conference calls. I have shared this information with our Board and have concluded that it is not in the best interest of our district to commit to the RTTT program at this time.

I believe we should not even consider applying until a final state plan is approved as all local plans must adhere to the state plan. One of the problems with the whole program is the timing. I had to submit a "letter of intent to participate" by December 31 to even have the opportunity to apply for RTTT funds. I did submit that letter only as a placeholder until I received more information. Then a decision had to be made to submit an official Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would have committed our district to the state and federal program. The deadline for that MOU was Friday, January 8, 2010. Prior to that MOU, agreement from DEA and approval of our Board was required. I spoke to DEA representatives and they basically agreed with my recommendation not to approve the MOU at least at this time. I certainly did not want to ask our Board for approval on something that was not defined and could have been detrimental to the district in the future.

If we had moved forward with the MOU, our district would have been committed to a state plan that had not yet been finalized and to a funding level that was unknown. To me that would have been irresponsible. We might have been agreeing to consequences that would affect our budget, our current employees, and our current program directions without knowing the impact of those consequences.

Therefore, I did not submit an MOU and our district will not participate in this first round. If the state plan is eventually approved and federal funding is provided, which is a long shot to begin with, we will have the opportunity to reapply at a later date. I believe that is the responsible way to proceed with the RTTT program.

At tonight's Board meeting, I will recap these issues and bring the Board up to date on actions by other districts in Orange County.

VWR:ct

Our mission is to ensure all students learn and achieve to their maximum potential in a supportive and innovative environment that develops creative, responsible and productive individuals prepared to meet the challenges of the future.