



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

October 29, 2009

Honorable Neil Abercrombie
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Abercrombie:

Thank you for meeting with me to discuss Hawaii's decision to eliminate 17 instructional days from the school year due to state budget constraints. As you know, I addressed this issue in the October 23 edition of the *Honolulu Advertiser*. Despite the current fiscal challenges that states face, I believe we must maintain a strong investment in the future of our children and our country.

As you know, Congress and the Administration worked together to provide education funding for states through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). As of October 23, Hawaii has drawn down only \$24 million of the more than \$222 million available to the state through ARRA for K-12 public education. Of these funds, \$33 million is for Title I programs, \$43 million is for special education programs, and \$105 million is available through the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF), which was passed by Congress to help states avoid cuts in public education. The intent of the SFSF is to ensure that states do not have to cut back on essential education services, while also providing funds to invest in innovation and reform. The ARRA also includes \$5 billion in competitive grants, including the \$4.35 billion Race to the Top and \$650 million Investing in Innovation programs. Through the Race to the Top program, the Department will make competitive grants to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; implementing ambitious plans in the four education reform areas described in the ARRA; and achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including by making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring that students are prepared for success in college and careers. I encourage Hawaii and all other states to join in moving toward those goals.

I look forward to continuing to work together to do what is best for our nation and our children. We cannot allow current economic challenges to create a long-term educational crisis for the state. We must all invest in our children's education so that they, Hawaii, and our country can succeed in the global marketplace.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arne Duncan".

Arne Duncan