



March 22, 2013

The Honorable Arne Duncan
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

UNITE-LA urges the U.S. Department of Education to approve the Education and Secondary Education Act flexibly waiver submitted by districts participating in the California Office to Reform Education (CORE).

Since 1998, UNITE-LA, has led education reform and workforce development initiatives designed to benefit urban youth in Los Angeles and statewide. Working with its extensive network of collaborators and partners, UNITE-LA provides direct services to more than 30,000 students, teachers, administrators and parents; champions an effective and aligned education and workforce delivery system from cradle to career; and cultivates businesses and corporate leaders as education advocates and connects them to schools through formal partnerships.

Through our day to day work with the Los Angeles Unified School District and many others, we have seen firsthand the impact that the overly rigid No Child Left Behind rules have had to force California schools to aim for a bar that has been set too low for too long. We are pleased that the districts participating in the CORE Waiver have committed to reach a much higher goal: college and career readiness for all students with a consistent focus on success for English Learners and the elimination of disparity and disproportionality across all subjects.

The CORE Waiver recognizes that future success for all students is built on many factors and that a collective effort by the entire school, district, and larger community is required to prepare all students for college and career. The orientation towards a collaborative focus on student success is built on the right drivers to achieve results. The districts participating in the CORE Waiver are assuming unprecedented accountability for supporting students' academic, social and emotional development and growth. The focus on these important measures of student success is vital for developing successful citizens who will help communities and the economy thrive in California well into the future.

The CORE waiver is an important step to improve outcomes for families that often don't have a choice where their children will attend school.

We urge the U.S. Department of Education to favorably review the CORE Waiver application. [Your organization] looks forward to working with the districts participating in the CORE Waiver as they work to reorient their work around success for all students.

Sincerely,

David Rattray
President
UNITE-LA