



# OAKLAND EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

AN AFFILIATE OF THE CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION AND THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

VIA EMAIL AND HAND DELIVERY

October 8, 2012

Tony Smith, Superintendent  
Oakland Unified School District  
1025 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94606

Dear Dr. Smith,

I have been directed by the Executive Board of the Oakland Education Association to disengage from participation in the Race to the Top-D Grant. I had already expressed my concerns about the grant in a previous letter to you and in a private meeting.

After meeting with Mr. Christmas on Tuesday, October 2, I decided to ask the OEA Executive Board to make a decision. I felt Mr. Christmas's increasing frustration at our questions, and I was becoming increasingly uncomfortable knowing many people were frantically working on a project that I thought:

1. May cost the district far more money than moneys received from the grant;
2. Lacked the time necessary to be sufficiently thoughtful about the development of systems not yet in existence;
3. Replaced negotiations at the bargaining table with a grant writing process;
4. Had a low probability of success (25-45 grants out of 900 districts intending to apply);
5. Committed OUSD and the OEA to an uncertain path for a number of years;
6. At its heart, made assumptions about teaching and learning and assessment that did not align with our understanding of the best practices in these areas.

While unanimous in its decision about the grant, the OEA Executive Board is also unanimous in its commitment to partner with the District in improving outcomes for students. In this case, we regret that the requirements of the grant and the time frame for reaching an agreement make us unwilling to further burden the grant writing team with what we have determined to be a near impossible task.

And, while I understand Mr. Christmas's reaction to our withdrawal, I have to object to his implication that, but for us, the students of Oakland would have millions of dollars at their disposal. Please recall, that it was OUSD that unilaterally withdrew from the TIFF Grant after OEA actively expressed interest in partnering with the District on it. Also, the OEA Bargaining Team has been ready since July 30, and proposals relating to the RTTT-D grant could have been part of that process for the last two months.

It is the intention of the OEA to continue this discussion at the bargaining table, and we look forward to increasing other opportunities for partnership in the future.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Trish Gorham".

Trish Gorham, President  
Oakland Education Association

Cc:

OEA Executive Board

OUSD School Board Directors

Maria Santos, OUSD Deputy Superintendent

Brigitte Marshall, Director, Human Resources

Troy Christmas, Director, Labor Management and Employee Relations

Madeline Clarke

CTA Staff