Commissioner's Remarks

Introduction

Thank you for having us here today. I'm pleased to have with me Florida's Governor, Charlie Crist, Public Schools Chancellor, Dr. Frances Haithcock, President of the Florida Education Association, Andy Ford, and Miami-Dade School Superintendent, Alberto Carvalho.

We are very excited about Race to the Top because it is so consistent with the history of reform in Florida – reform that has generated solid, proven results with one of the most diverse student populations in the nation. Florida has set ambitious, yet achievable student goals and will pursue them based on research, experience, and our theory of

action. A solid foundation of state school reform policies, a united spirit, and our current Strategic Plan aligns Florida completely to the principles of Race to the Top.

Florida's more than 2.6 million public school students will receive an education that prepares them to lead their generation into the global economy. Our state will use Race to the Top to identify and support highly effective teachers and school leaders who will provide our students with world class instruction. As a result, our students will prove to be the talent that will drive our country to the top academically and economically. We do not accept the status quo. We use our diversity as an asset. Florida, as a nationally-recognized leader in education reform that has been successful in

closing the achievement gap, improving overall achievement in K-12, and increasing our students' career and college readiness, is better poised than other states to implement Race to the Top successfully. But we won't be doing it for our students, nor our state, alone. What happens in Florida can provide a significant solution for the entire country. **We will prove that a large, diverse, and complex state can take on rigorous reform and bring it to scale. Race to the Top will keep Florida moving forward while serving as an example to other states across the nation.**

We stand ready to deliver and now I'm honored to turn it over to Governor Charlie Crist.

Conclusion

We look back to the success and lessons of our prior reforms that have built a valuable knowledge base to implement and sustain our comprehensive Race to the Top agenda. United, we look forward with a strong State Plan and MOU that demonstrate Florida's commitment to bold innovation. We did not start our reform efforts with Race to the Top and we will not finish them with Race to the Top, but we will seize this opportunity, coupled with the enthusiasm and support of all involved parties, to broaden and accelerate our reforms and increase student achievement for our state. As a result, Florida will raise the education bar for the United States of America. Thank you.