



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

October 19, 2011

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
US Department of Health & Human Services
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
US Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Sebelius and Secretary Duncan:

California has over 1,000 school districts, a large number of child care centers, and tens of thousands of licensed individuals who take care of children in their homes and nearby facilities. This diverse group of providers spans a wide spectrum of size, infrastructure, and capacity for innovation. Even during good times – which is not true of our current recessionary period – the demand for participating in early learning programs far outstrips what is available.

California is applying for this grant to give federal support to creative early learning approaches that have been undertaken since the passage of Proposition 10 in 1998 and its establishment of First 5 Commissions in all 58 counties. The heart of our plan is local control, where the effort to improve the quality of early learning can best be accomplished. Sixteen communities or consortia, ranging from urban San Francisco to rural Fresno, are joining in the state's grant application as full partners.

These consortia will use the state's early learning standards and curriculum frameworks to train teachers to teach, and to teach our youngest children, in a positive, developmentally appropriate way. They will use the state's child development assessments and health screenings to inform parents and teachers about children's progress, to get children the extra help they need – particularly those with high needs – and to identify areas for improvement. The consortia will operate under a process that will include all stakeholders, and they will commit to develop and mentor other local communities.

In our plan, more than 85 percent of grant funds will go directly to the consortia and be programmed under local control in accordance with our Proposition 10 First 5 framework. Each of the sixteen consortia will decide how to distinguish levels of quality, will identify its priorities for improvement, and will determine what specific ways it will improve program

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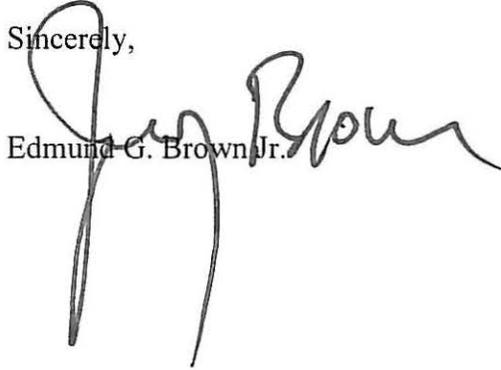
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quality. I believe that this approach will be much more successful than any one-size fits all mandate from the state capitol.

I urge you to carefully consider the strength of California's locally-based approach and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Edmund G. Brown Jr.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edmund G. Brown Jr.", written over the printed name.