



December 21, 2012

Honorable Governor Rick Scott, and
Dr. Tony Bennett, Commissioner,
Florida Department of Education

The undersigned are spokespersons of civil rights and non-profit organizations, school and public employee associations, and education stakeholders who advocate for high educational achievement for *all* students in our Florida educational system. We have united our voices to strongly urge you to ensure that all federal, state or other funds allocated to, available and/or accessible for the schooling of migrant students, English language learners, students with disabilities, minority group members, homeless, or low income students, be fully utilized for their benefit as intended by their funding sources.

Our concern is based on recent articles in the Washington Post’s *The Answer Sheet* (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2012/12/12/indiana-failed-to-spend-millions-of-federal-funds-on-migrant-students-report>) and the *Tampa Bay Times Gradebook* (<http://www.tampabay.com/blogs/gradebook/content/indiana-failed-well-serve-migrant-students-during-bennetts-tenure-report-shows>). Both articles state that during the time that Dr. Bennett was Commissioner of Education in Indiana, millions of dollars of Migrant Program funds were not utilized. According to a report from the federal Office of Migrant Education to Indiana’s Education Department, as of Sept. 26, 2012, the state “had not drawn down any of the FY 2010 or 2011 funds it received to operate the program.”

The mission of Florida’s education system is to increase the proficiency of all students by affording them the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills through efficient learning opportunities, as well as to maintain accountability procedures that measure students’ progress. For this to be an equitable system, it must serve all students.

Floridians expect the Florida Department of Education to comply with all the requirements, deadlines, and guidelines for expenditure of education dollars. Florida cannot afford to underutilize these ear-marked and available funds.

Based on the foregoing concerns, we ask for verification that education funds have been appropriately allocated and used in Florida, and your assurance that nothing similar to what happened in Indiana will happen in Florida. We pledge to assist you in meeting this goal with our continued vigilance and support for adequately funded quality education for all students.

Continued...Letter to Gov. Scott & Dr. Bennett
Re: Utilization of funding for Migrant & other Programs
December 21, 2012

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Asencio, President, Florida Public Employees Partnership;

Edna E. Canino, Esq., Member, LULAC Florida State Commission for Education Policy and Special Populations; President, Florida Embassy LULAC Council; Counsel, Institute for Mexicans in the Exterior (IME);

Roberto E. Canino, LULAC International Ambassador to Latin America & the Caribbean; President & Founder, Hispanics United Global Embassy (H.U.G.E.);

Rosa Castro Feinberg, Ph. D., LULAC Florida State Commissioner for Education Policy and Special Populations; Director for Education Policy and Special Populations, LULAC International Embassy;

Jose A. Fernandez, LULAC Florida Immediate Past State Director; Member, LULAC Florida Commission on Education Policy and Special Populations; LULAC International Embassy, Public Relations Director;

Andy Ford, President, Florida Education Association;

Dr. Joaquin Garcia, Hispanic Education Coalition of Palm Beach County, Board Chairman;

Shirley B. Johnson, PHD, NAACP Education Chair, Florida State Conference;

Juanita Mainster, Migrant Farmworker Advocate;

Lydia Medrano, Ph.D., Florida LULAC State Director;

Gepsie M. Metellus, Executive Director, Santa La, Haitian Neighborhood Center, Inc.;

Winnie Tang, President, United Chinese Association of Florida.

