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Kentucky makes valiant effort, but trips at the finish line

Describing Kentucky's failure to secure Race to the Top funding, Dave Adkisson, Chamber president and CEO, called it an "utter disappointment." Today, Arne Duncan, U.S. Education Secretary, announced the winners of round two of the Race to the Top funding for states. Once again, Kentucky didn't make the list.

Kentucky education officials presented a strong application, but it was lacking in one important area that would have boosted the state's score and improved its chances of winning \$175 million in federal education funding: charter schools.

Education Commissioner Terry Holliday presented a charter school proposal during the 2010 legislative session, a move supported by the Kentucky Chamber as a way to secure funding to support teacher professional development and other important areas, but interest groups could not agree on an approach. Without the additional funding Race to the Top would have brought to Kentucky, our teachers will lose. They will lose desperately needed training money to help Kentucky students achieve the higher standards now required in the state.

Kentucky's business community is disappointed that consensus could not be reached on charter schools and that the state missed out on federal funds as a result. Despite multiple attempts by the Senate, a bipartisan group of House legislators and Commissioner Holliday to move the issue forward, interest groups successfully blocked its passage to the detriment of Kentucky students. The Kentucky Chamber will continue to press the case that charter schools, in situations where certain schools consistently underperform, should be one of the tools by which Kentucky can improve its schools.