

Teachers unions threaten state's grant chances

The Florida Education Association has advised its local representatives not to sign the memorandums of understanding required for individual school districts to participate in the state's Race to the Top effort.

How fair is that? An entire school board can vote to have its district participate in Race to the Top, but the lack of a single union signature can completely block the effort. That probably means some schools will be left out in the cold if Florida wins a federal RTTT grant and money is dispersed to individual districts. If the unions block RTTT participation in enough districts, the state's grant application could be seriously jeopardized.

We at the Education Action Group Foundation (www.eagfdn.org) believe the people of Florida should tell the unions to stop trying to destroy a very promising reform effort and stop trying to keep sorely needed federal dollars from the state's public schools.

Teachers unions dominated the K-12 landscape throughout the country for decades. The result was a mediocre system producing students who fell behind peers in other nations.

Now reformers want to give our kids a better opportunity, and the unions are threatening to block that effort by refusing to allow their local representatives to sign off. If Florida does not receive a federal education grant, everyone will know who to blame. If the grant comes through, but some districts are prevented from getting a share of it, everyone will also know who to blame.

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