



STATE OF WISCONSIN

May 6, 2010

Dear Colleague:

We are excited to invite you to participate in Wisconsin's Round Two Race to the Top application to the Department of Education Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, President Obama and Congress provided \$4.3 billion in competitive grant funding to states that move forward with innovations and reform in education. Over \$3 billion in funding is available in Round 2; Wisconsin's Round Two application will aim to secure up to \$250 million of this amount. Round Two awards will be announced in September 2010.

In Fall 2009, and again just a few weeks ago, the Wisconsin Legislature passed bills to make Wisconsin both eligible and more competitive for the Race to the Top grants. Now our local school district leaders – school board members, superintendents, principals, teachers and other staff – need to prepare their district for participation in Wisconsin's grant application.

Over the past several months, we have carefully reviewed feedback from local school leaders, educators, stakeholders, legislators and the federal government. We also worked closely with statewide organizations that represent teachers, principals, administrators, school boards, CESA directors, school business officials, special education directors, higher education representatives and other key stakeholders to craft the framework for Wisconsin's Round Two application. We appreciate the commitment that all groups have shown in their collaborative efforts to make our application more competitive.

Enclosed is the Race to the Top district memorandum of understanding (MOU) that the federal government requires participating districts to sign as part of the state's Race to the Top grant application. The MOU provides a framework of collaboration between districts and the state, articulating the specific roles and responsibilities necessary to implement an approved Race to the Top grant.

To be considered as an eligible participating local education agency (LEA) the MOU must be signed by the LEA superintendent or the president of the local school board, and LEAs should seek the signature of the local teachers' union leader or their authorized representative. To demonstrate broad commitment to the MOU, districts should seek to obtain signatures from all the aforementioned individuals. When all three parties sign the MOU, the state is awarded more points on the Race to the Top application and the LEA is in a better position to implement the reforms when the grant is awarded.

The signed MOU must be returned to the Department of Public Instruction by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, May 21, 2010.

Please note that under the federal guidelines, a district that does not sign and submit the MOU by the deadline cannot be included as a participating LEA in Wisconsin's Race to the Top application and cannot be given an opportunity to participate once the award is received.

If Wisconsin is awarded Race to the Top grant funds, a participating LEA will have 90 days to finalize their work plan for their Race to the Top funds and submit that to the state. During this 90-day period, districts will have the right to review and reassess their scope of work in light of their Race to the Top local award. At this time, districts may also withdraw from the MOU and forgo their local award and participation in the Race to the Top program without penalty.

The State is applying for the maximum \$250 million award; however, we cannot guarantee the exact level of funding the State may be provided to the state through Race to the Top. Please note that federal guidelines require that at least 50 percent of the state's total award will be distributed to participating LEAs through the Title I formula.

To ensure that districts have sufficient support to participate in the program, the State has eliminated the competitive grant program and allocated additional funds to create a funding floor so that each district will receive the greater of:

- Their share of Race to the Top funds based on the Title I formula;
- \$100 per pupil; or
- \$70,000 per district.

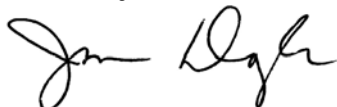
This adjustment will be made using the Race to the Top funds that may be distributed by the state through other means.

Attached to this letter is an estimate of Race to the Top funds by school district. This estimate includes the funding floor, and it assumes the state receives \$250 million in Race to the Top funding and that all districts participate.

We hope all of you will complete the MOU and take part in this important initiative. The Governor and State Superintendent will be conducting a webinar on **Monday, May 10th at noon** to discuss the MOU and answer questions. Further detail about this webinar will be sent to you soon.

Please contact Jeff Pertl, Policy Initiatives Advisor at the Department of Public Instruction, by email jeff.pertl@dpi.wi.gov or by phone 608/267-9232 or Nina Carlson, Senior Policy Advisor in the Governor's Office, by email nina.carlson@wisconsin.gov or by phone 608/266-3271 if you have any questions or concerns as we move forward with the Race to the Top opportunity.

Sincerely,



Jim Doyle
Governor



Tony Evers
State Superintendent