



Feds add \$19 million to Delaware's funding for Race to the Top

Money will buy data-tracking system

By NICHOLE DOBO • The News Journal • June 12, 2010

The U.S. Department of Education has increased the state's \$100 million Race to the Top award by \$19 million.

The official announcement of the grant increase will come from the U.S. Department of Education next week, but the state Department of Education confirmed Friday that the grant was bolstered to \$119 million.

"This is good news for all of our districts and charters," said Daniel Cruce, the state's deputy secretary of education.

Delaware had initially requested \$107 million in Race to the Top grant money.

After the U.S. Department of Education announced that the state had won up to \$100 million, state officials vowed to persuade the federal agency to increase the grant.

The U.S. Department of Education decided to increase the grant so the state could buy a data-tracking system that is a key part of its Race to the Top proposal.

The program -- called the Delaware Automated System for Education Reporting -- will allow the state to track a child beyond test scores, Cruce said.

The system will allow the state to follow students through their higher-education years and across multiple state agencies.

"This will give us a picture of the whole child, so we can make the best decisions," Cruce said.

The state had applied for another federal grant to

pay for the data system, but the U.S. Department of Education decided to give the state more Race to the Top money instead, Cruce said.

Local school districts and charter schools will receive half of the \$119 million award.

The state has not yet released figures showing how much money each district and charter school will get.

The money will be disbursed this summer according to a formula that takes into account student poverty levels.

School districts and charter schools must obtain state approval for their plans to spend the money before it will be doled out.

Delaware and Tennessee were the only two states chosen March 29 to receive funding in the first round of Race to the Top, winning a collective \$600 million.

Delaware scored highest among the 41 applicants vying for more than \$4.35 billion in federal stimulus money under President Barack Obama's education reform program.

Earlier this month, 35 states and the District of Columbia applied for the second round of grant money.

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For the first round, the U.S. Department of Education set guidelines, but not requirements, for state spending plans according to each state's size.

Delaware asked for \$107 million despite the federal agency's suggestion that it seek up to \$75 million. After Delaware's grant was approved, the rules were **changed** to prevent states in the second round from requesting more than those guidelines allow.

The state's final education reform plan is due to the U.S. Department of Education within 90 days of the March 29 grant announcement.

It will be based on the plan outlined in the Race to the Top **application**.

Some of the initiatives proposed in the state's Race to the Top are data coaches to meet with small groups of teachers several times a month to review student data and help teachers develop lessons; teacher **leaders** at high-need schools; development coaches to work with principals; fellowships for highly effective educators; and retention bonuses for highly effective teachers in high-needs schools.

Contact Nichole Dobo at 324-2281 or ndobo@delawareonline.com.

On the Web

- Delaware Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Education: Race to the Top Fund

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