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SELECT COMMITTEE ON FEDERAL ECONOMIC STABILIZATION FUNDING

MEMORANDUM

OK FOR DISTRIBUTION

TO: Texas House of Representatives
FROM: Chairman Jim Dunnam
DATE: March 29, 2010
SUBJECT: Race to the Top Awards Announced

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Jim Dunnam", written over a horizontal line.

Race to the Top Awards Winners Announced

The U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced today that Delaware and Tennessee have won grants in the first phase of the Race to the Top competition.

Delaware will receive approximately \$100 million and Tennessee \$500 million to implement their comprehensive school reform plans over the next four years. As with any federal grant program, budgets will be finalized after discussions between the grantees and the Department, and the money will be distributed over time as the grantees meet established benchmarks.

The U.S. Department of Education will have about \$3.4 billion available for the second phase of the Race to the Top competition.

"We set a very high bar for the first phase," Duncan said. "With \$3.4 billion still available, we're providing plenty of opportunity for all other states to develop plans and aggressively pursue reform."

The \$4.35 billion Race to the Top Fund is an unprecedented federal investment in reform. The program includes \$4 billion for statewide reform grants and \$350 million to support states working together to improve the quality of their assessments. The Race to the Top state competition is designed to reward states that are leading the way in comprehensive, coherent, statewide education reform across four key areas:

- Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace;
- Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals how to improve instruction;
- Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and
- Turning around their lowest-performing schools.

Forty states and the District of Columbia submitted applications for the first phase of grants. Delaware and Tennessee were selected from among 16 finalists who presented their proposals to panels of peer reviewers earlier this month.

The peer reviewers awarded the highest scores to Delaware and Tennessee. They awarded Delaware and Tennessee high marks for the commitment to reform from key stakeholders, including elected officials, teacher's union leaders, and business leaders. In both states, all school districts committed to implementing Race to the Top reforms. Delaware and Tennessee also have aggressive plans to improve teacher and principal evaluation, use data to inform instructional decisions, and turn around their lowest-performing schools. In addition, both states have put in place strong laws and policies to support their reform efforts.

Applications for Phase 2 of Race to the Top are due on June 1, 2010. To help states as they prepare their proposals and to continue the nationwide dialogue on education reform, the Department of Education has made all Phase 1 applications, peer reviewers' comments, and scores available on its website; videos of states' presentations will be posted next week.

The Department is making one change to the rules for the Phase 2 competition. To fund as many strong applications as possible, the Department of Education is requiring states' budgets to be within the ranges that were suggested in the original notice. Details are available on the Department's Web site and will appear in the Federal Register later this week.

To view the complete press release please visit:

<http://www2.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2010/03/03292010.html>