

# Race to the Top Funds Available to Schools

On Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Department of Education announced the availability of \$9 billion in new grants to states and school districts. This initiative is part of the federal stimulus program, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Of the \$9 billion, \$4 billion is being allocated as competitive grants under the Race to the Top program.



Race to the Top funds provide competitive grants to encourage and reward states that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform and implementing ambitious plans in the four education reform areas of:

- Adopting internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;

- Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals;

- Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices; and

- Turning around our lowest-performing schools.

According to the Iowa Department of Education, competition is open to an application from each state. It is expected that only a few states will receive Race to the Top funds. The Iowa Department of Education is researching opportunities that align to the Iowa Core Curriculum to bring resources to our state.

According to information found at [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov), the \$4 billion in Race to the Top grants will be awarded in two phases. Phase 1 will open for

applications late in 2009. Awards will be made in early 2010. Phase 2 will open in late spring of 2010 with awards made by September 2010.

States that apply in Phase 1, but are not awarded grants, may reapply in Phase 2 with states that are applying for the first time in Phase 2. Phase 1 grantees may not apply for additional funding in Phase 2; they will receive full-sized awards in Phase 1. Specific deadlines will be announced in subsequent notices inviting applications.

Later this year, the U.S. Department of Education intends to announce a second competition of up to \$350 million for the improvement of state standards and assessments.

A draft of the requirements to receive funds can be found at [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov). There are many requirements for which public comment is being solicited within the next 30 days.