



New Jersey awarded \$38 million in federal funding through Race to the Top 3 competition

For Immediate Release

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Date: December 23, 2011

The US Department of Education today announced that New Jersey has been selected as a winner of its Race to the Top 3 grant competition. New Jersey will receive \$38 million in federal funds, half of which will go to participating districts, and half of which will be used to support the state's bold education reform agenda.

Governor Christie said, "New Jersey is on a path of bold education reform, and over the past two years we have taken significant steps to ensure that every child in New Jersey, regardless of zip code, will graduate from high school ready for college and career. This award today will help give educators in New Jersey the tools they need to be successful and the support to meet our reform agenda goals."

As part of its Race to the Top 3 application, New Jersey selected four objectives in line with the administration's education reform agenda:

1. Development of model curriculum and assessments for all core content subject areas
2. Development and rollout of an online Instructional Improvement System (IIS) that will serve as a platform for teachers to access the model curriculum and other supports like formative assessments and instructional tools
3. Implementation of the current teacher evaluation pilot program and the creation of a principal evaluation pilot program
4. Expansion of high-quality school options by strengthening the Department's charter authorizing practices

Of these funds, roughly two-thirds of the state's allocation will be spent on the development of model curriculum and IIS. Last month, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) outlined a plan to develop model curriculum for math and English language arts in K-12 by September 2012, and all subjects aligned with New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards by September 2013. This curriculum would consist of six week units of student learning objectives tied to the Common Core State Standards, with a bank of aligned formative assessments and instructional resources. These resources would be optional for all teachers to use as a resource, but may be required for the state's persistently failing schools if they do not otherwise have high-quality curriculum. Focusing such a large portion of RTT3 funds on these areas is another indication of the NJDOE's investment in providing high-quality tools to educators to implement high standards for all students.

"This injection of funding will have a transformative impact on teachers and students across the state and allow us to aggressively pursue important pieces of our reform agenda, such as implementing the Common Core State Standards. These revolutionary new standards are aligned with college- and career-readiness and will change the way we prepare students for the 21st century. Over the past month, we have heard a groundswell of support from districts across the state for this type of model curriculum to ensure that the Common Core State Standards move from a concept in Trenton to a tool for every classroom in the state," said Acting Commissioner Cerf.

Any district in the state will have the ability to sign up to participate in the Race to the Top 3 award, and 50 percent of the award, or \$19 million, will be split between those districts that choose to participate. In January, the NJDOE will provide details on the process for districts to participate.

"From day one of the Christie administration, New Jersey has embarked on a bold education reform agenda and has already begun to execute on a number of the projects included in our Race to the Top applications. This includes the development of a new teacher evaluation framework; the development of a new school accountability system and the development of seven Regional Achievement Centers that will provide targeted assistance to help turn around the state's persistently lowest-performing schools," said Acting Commissioner Cerf. "On top of this, we have restructured the entire state Department of Education around the four building blocks of success that will have the biggest impact on student achievement: academics, performance and accountability, talent, and innovation. This award today will help us to accelerate the tide of reform across New Jersey."