

THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA)

BACKGROUND

The ARRA goals are to stimulate the economy in the short term, ensure transparency, accountability, and use the education portion of the funds to improve schools, raise achievement and drive reforms. These funds are provided for a one time use over a two year period. There are three main groups of money:

1. Formula for state fiscal stabilization (\$836 million WA State) is for the Governors.
2. Competitive grants, (\$5 billion federal), is available for the U.S. Department of Education and two grant applications are also available: a) Race to the Top and b) local Innovation grants.
3. Additional funding for Title I A (\$175 million for WA State) for low income children and IDEA (\$232 million for WA State) for special education children, School Improvement Grants (\$45 million for WA State), Education Technology for schools (\$9 million for WA State), Statewide data systems (\$250 million federally), Teacher Quality Enhancement (\$100 million federally) and Teacher Incentive Fund (\$200 million federally).

When the Governor applies for the state fiscal stabilization funding, she must sign off on the following four assurances to advance core reforms:

1. Making progress toward rigorous college and career-ready standards and high quality assessments that are valid and reliable for all students, including ELL learners and students with disabilities;
2. Establishing Pre-K to college and career data systems that track progress and foster continuous improvement;
3. Making improvements in teacher effectiveness and in the equitable distribution of qualified teachers for all students, particularly students who are most in need; and
4. Providing intensive support and effective interventions for the lowest performing schools.

In the SBE testimony on HB 2261, we spoke about the need to show progress on these assurances. We have made some good progress in our math and science standards (English Language arts standards have not been updated). We maintain that the state must take steps for a stronger accountability system, including a step for required action

if there is no improvement in a school for student achievement after a set period of time. The Legislature endorsed our Accountability principles in HB 2261.

The State Legislature decided to use \$738 million of ARRA funds to stabilize the state general fund budget in K-12 by replacing state funding for I-728 and levy equalization.

Recently the U.S. Department of Education (USED) awarded Washington State a data grant of \$5.9 million over a 4 year period to address data governance, data quality, business/data analysis, technical infrastructure, tools, reporting & Professional Development.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

By May 1, the Governor must submit this request, along with the providing information on the Washington's commitment to the four assurances listed above. According to Alan Burke, Deputy Superintendent for OSPI, there is discussion between Governor Gregoire and Superintendent Dorn on whether to join the Council of Chief State School Officers (and National Governors Association) in an effort with other states to create national common core standards in math and English/Language Arts (ELA). This decision will be made in the next several weeks. If Washington signs on to the Memorandum of Understanding, it does not have to implement the final standards if it disagrees with them. A draft of the math and ELA standards will be ready on 6/1/2009 with a final on 12/31/2009.

Race to the Top (RTTT) funding will be available in two rounds. The funding can be spent in a four year time frame. The first round (10% of funding) will have a June draft RFP date and an August final RFP date with a deadline of October 1 to submit proposals. The second round (90% of funding) will have a March 2010 RFP date and a May 2010 deadline. According to Alan Burke, Deputy Superintendent of OSPI, a comprehensive proposal will need to meet the four assurances and states should not submit an application for a stand-alone program, nor for a collection of states to submit an application to duplicate a standalone program. States can apply for both rounds. The state's School Improvement program should be linked to the RTTT. The USED has not closed the debate on the question of whether a comprehensive plan must attack all four assurance areas.

Washington has some exciting opportunities to consider how they would participate in the RTTT and innovation grant funding. Keeping in mind that this is a one-time investment, some ideas could center around:

- Working with the new WA STEM partnership.
- Some of the concepts identified in our Innovation Zone: redesigning master calendars to ensure sufficient collaborative planning time for professional development, restructuring schedules to assist at risk students, and revising

collective bargaining agreements to ensure best teachers are available in low performing schools.

- Strengthening teacher effectiveness through revamped evaluation systems and performance pay.
- Providing additional investments needed to complete the upgrade of our data systems.
- Scaling up effective ELL instructional strategies from the Spokane School District work.

EXPECTED ACTION

None