

Why the Florida Chamber of Commerce is Supporting
RACE TO THE TOP

Florida has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to participate in a federal education grant program – Race to the Top – which could generate up to \$700 million for local school districts in Florida. For months, the Florida Department of Education has worked with education and business leaders, experts and stakeholders to design an ambitious, yet achievable plan which has two clear purposes: to help Florida students, teachers and principals improve their performance; and reward that improvement.

- ✎ Race to the Top is a national competition among states to improve education quality and results. Grant funds from the U.S. Department of Education will drive gains in student achievement by supporting states making dramatic progress around four specific areas: **standards and assessments** that prepare students to succeed in college, the workplace and the global economy; **data systems** that measure student growth and success, providing teachers and principals the information they need to improve instruction; **recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining** effective teachers and principals; and **turning around our lowest-achieving schools**.
- ✎ Race to the Top provides incentive funding (potentially \$700 million for Florida) to do things we should be doing anyway.
- ✎ Race to the Top is a grant program that uses federal monies to improve our schools by rewarding schools and teachers for doing what good teachers have been doing for years and what all teachers should be doing anyway; teaching our children and evaluating the effectiveness of that teaching by the improvement students make.
- ✎ Awards in Race to the Top will go to states that are leading the way with ambitious, yet achievable plans for implementing coherent, compelling and comprehensive education reform. Race to the Top winners will help trail-blaze effective reforms and provide examples for states and local school districts across the country to follow as they are hard at work on reforms that can transform our schools for decades to come.
- ✎ Florida is one of four states that could qualify for \$350 million to \$700 million.
- ✎ Florida has a chance to earn up to \$700 million to reward schools and good teachers for doing their job well. While there's no such thing as free money, this is money that we have all paid in the form of federal income taxes, and the monies will benefit students in other states if we choose not to participate.

- ✧ To ensure a quality education system, where students graduate with the skills they need to compete and prosper, where they are taught by highly qualified individuals, where we have narrowed/eliminated the achievement gap between minority students and white students, there are several clear steps that must be taken.
- ✧ We all understand how important education is to our children, the future of our state, and our state's troubled economy. Race to the Top allows us to invest in that future without raising property or sales taxes.
- ✧ Call it whatever you want, performance-based pay, value-added education, Race to the Top will reward our teachers and schools for doing what the good ones have always done, teach children well and have their performance evaluated by student progress.
- ✧ To keep quality teachers in the classroom we should evaluate and reward teachers based upon student learning.
- ✧ Good teachers welcome being evaluated by measuring the success of their students. Good teachers want that because their students do show progress. Wouldn't it make sense to pay teachers based on that criterion of success?
- ✧ Florida's school children deserve every opportunity available to them. If the state is successful in its Race to the Top application, our schools and teachers could receive up to \$700 million in federal funding. With this money, Florida will be better able to ensure that our students graduate ready for college and take on the high-skill jobs of the future.
- ✧ Reward our systems, our good teachers and our children. Improve our schools. Help our children. Give teachers the respect and pay they deserve.
- ✧ This is the time for action to be eligible for Race to the Top funding. We must commit to maximizing opportunity for all children.

Because of our commitment to education reform and innovation, Florida has a chance to receive a significant portion of this competitive grant, but local superintendents, school boards and education organizations must show their support for Florida to receive grants. We have the opportunity to make a difference in whether or not Florida gets this grant, and this is an opportunity that can't be squandered.

FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT RACE TO THE TOP

**Visit www.FloridaChamber.com or contact Tony Carvajal
at 850.521.1231 or tcarvajal@flchamber.com.**