

## RACE TO THE TOP

In January 2010, the United States Department of Education (USDOE) made available a competitive grant for states. The grant, entitled “Race to the Top” (RttT), is a part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus money.

Ohio was successful in being awarded the Race to the Top money on their second try. This grant money is to be used for specific school improvement strategies. School districts in Ohio could choose to participate in the grant and implement the strategies. The Adams County/Ohio Valley School District chose to participate and will receive money from the grant over a four-year period to implement the improvement strategies designated by the Ohio Department of Education.

One thing important to note is the money from this grant, and all grants for that matter, can only be used to implement specific strategies. The money cannot be used to fill deficits in the general fund. It cannot be used to buy classroom supplies, equipment, to pay utility costs, or pay classroom teacher salaries. The bulk of the money must be used for educator training expenses including full implementation of new core content standards, assessments, and evaluative educator procedures.

The Race to the Top grant is a federal level initiative to improve schools across the country. It is designed to help schools adopt common standards which outline the knowledge and skills to be taught in order to prepare students for college and the workplace. A system of student assessments are to be designed to help teachers be able

to monitor student progress on learning the skills. The data from these assessments is to be readily available for teachers to use to monitor student learning so teachers can adjust their teaching in order to assure students master the skills. The third strategy of the grant is to improve teacher and principal effectiveness. This includes designing teacher and principal evaluation procedures to include evaluating their performance based on student learning and progress over time.

Education, of course, is one of the most important factors in improving our communities and quality of life. Good education is vitally important to our children as they prepare for jobs and careers. It is also an important factor in the competitiveness of our county, state, and country in a global economy.

As we all strive to keep our communities and nation strong and improve the quality of life for generations to come, education is the key. It is our intent that participation in Race to the Top will continue to improve the effectiveness of the teachers, principals, and schools of the Adams County/Ohio Valley District.

If you have questions about this article or the Race to the Top Grant, feel free to call me at 544-5586.

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