



New Jersey School Boards Association

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Lucille E. Davy
Commissioner of Education
New Jersey State Department of Education
100 River View Plaza
P.O. Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Commissioner Davy:

The New Jersey School Boards Association endorses New Jersey's Race to the Top grant application. The proposal includes innovative strategies to expand educational opportunity, to improve the evaluation of teachers, and to continue our state's progress in closing the academic achievement gap.

- **Standards & Assessments** – Our Association, which includes 588 local school districts and 37 charter school associate members, is a long-time supporter of standards-based education. We are enthusiastic about the proposal, reflected in New Jersey's grant application, which will integrate the standards into a comprehensive database of high-quality lessons and in-class assessments.
- **Data Systems** – Technology provides access to the growing body of knowledge that our teachers need to keep lessons current and instruction relevant. The grant application proposes the use of Web and mobile technology as a gateway to content developed by nationally recognized experts.
- **Great Teachers & Leaders** – NJSBA was an early proponent of New Jersey's statewide database for student academic records. Our state's grant application would include analysis of student achievement data to enhance accountability among school staff while, at the same time, identifying and rewarding our best teachers and school leaders. It would also enable local school districts to provide effective professional development aimed at advancing student achievement.
- **Turning Around Struggling Schools** – Every effort must be made to improve academic achievement in persistently low-performing schools. The grant application calls for implementation of innovative strategies to change the culture of these schools and provide essential opportunity for their students.

The New Jersey School Boards Association urges the United States Department of Education to consider how students, particularly those most at risk academically, socially and economically, would benefit from the innovative strategies contained in our state's Race to the Top grant application and to act favorably on the proposal.

Sincerely,

Marie S. Bilik
Executive Director