



Thursday, March 4, 2010
Contact: Laura Smith, Office of the Governor, 608-261-2162

Governor Doyle Announces Wisconsin Will Not Receive First-Round Race to the Top Funding

MADISON – Governor Jim Doyle announced today that Wisconsin will not receive first-round federal Race to the Top funding. Governor Doyle, State Superintendent Tony Evers and Milwaukee Common Council President Willie Hines made the announcement today in Milwaukee and renewed the call to move forward meaningful reform in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS).

“The train is leaving the station. But because the Milwaukee School Board continues to cling to the status quo – and because the State Legislature has so far failed to make real reforms – Wisconsin is not on that train,” Governor Doyle said. “Today’s announcement should be a wake up call to many. U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan has made it clear. The federal government will provide significant resources to states that are serious about reform. Milwaukee needs clear, consistent, accountable leadership focused on reform.”

The U.S. Department of Education released the list of first-round Race to the Top finalists earlier today. The biggest detriment to Wisconsin’s application is that Milwaukee has not shown itself to be serious about education reform. The decision underscores the need for clear, consistent, accountable leadership in MPS.

In the past seven years, under Governor Doyle’s leadership, the state has invested more than \$5.2 billion in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Today the state and federal government funds 80 percent of the MPS budget. Despite this investment, test scores show Milwaukee consistently ranks at the bottom of urban districts in the country.

Additionally, the McKinsey report demonstrates that the Milwaukee Public Schools as currently operated cannot be sustained financially. According to recent reports, class sizes in Milwaukee could be headed to 30 students in elementary schools and 50 students in high schools. Projections also indicate teacher layoffs, principal layoffs, and multiple schools losing their SAGE small class size funding.

The state submitted its first-round Race to the Top application earlier this year, focused on unique strategies to address three key areas of education based on consultations with local, regional and national education experts: 1) early childhood development; 2) addressing the achievement drop off between middle school and high school; and 3) developing good teachers and principals.

Governor Doyle has pushed for education reforms to improve student achievement and has signed new bills into law to answer President Obama’s call on education. Last fall, the state removed the prohibition from using student achievement to evaluate teachers. New data systems are being built to measure student growth and success, and evaluate the success of education programs. Wisconsin is working with other states to develop internationally agreed-upon standards to better see where students stand in relation to students from other states and other countries. New tests will also better show student achievement, an important tool for teachers to help kids improve.