



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

# NEWS

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## **Governor Quinn Announces Illinois Named 'Race to the Top' Finalist**

### *New Laws, Policies Propel State to Next Phase of Competition*

SPRINGFIELD – March 4, 2010. Governor Pat Quinn today announced that Illinois is one of 16 finalists in the U.S. Department of Education's 'Race to the Top' grant program. As part of the next phase of the competitive process, a delegation from Illinois will travel to Washington D.C. to interview with federal officials in the hopes of securing \$510 million for education reform efforts.

"A fulfilling and top-notch education for all Illinois students is our number one priority, and we are in a great position to take full advantage of this federal funding," said Governor Quinn. "Today's announcement put us one step closer to securing 'Race to the Top' education funding. In these tough economic times, we are working harder than ever to bring federal money home to Illinois."

'Race to the Top' is a \$4.35 billion competitive grant program funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). 'Race to the Top' aims to drive education reform and boost student success, principles that Illinois is deeply committed to. States are evaluated based on their commitment to enhancing standards and assessments; improving data collection and use; strengthening teacher and administrator effectiveness; and turning around struggling schools.

"I want to thank all of our education partners for helping Illinois get this far in the Race to the Top competition," said State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch. "We would not be able to chart these reform initiatives without the hard work and vision of many stakeholders, including teachers, parents, school management groups and private organizations."

Today's announcement reflects innovative laws and policies Governor Quinn has enacted to improve education in Illinois. In December, the Governor named 25 members to the P-20 Council, who make recommendations to boost Illinois' application. The Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2010 improves teacher and principal evaluations, and Senate Bill 616 that Governor Quinn signed earlier this year enables non-profit organizations to offer alternative teacher certification programs, increasing the number of high-quality training programs available.

Members of the Illinois delegation will be named shortly, and will meet with federal officials in March. The U.S. Department of Education is expected to announce its final decision April 1. Illinois' application is available online at [www.isbe.state.il.us/racetothetop/default.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/racetothetop/default.htm).

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