



New Haven News

News from the New Haven Unified School District

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NEW HAVEN WINS RACE TO THE TOP GRANT

UNION CITY ((Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2012) – The New Haven Unified School District was named today one of 16 nationwide winners in the U.S. Department of Education’s Race to the Top-District (RTTT-D) competition.

New Haven’s application was ranked No. 2 in the country. The District will receive more than \$29 million over the next four-and-a-half years, to personalize student learning, improve student achievement and educator effectiveness, close achievement gaps, and prepare all students to succeed in college and careers.

“This is a tremendous validation of the work that we’ve been doing in New Haven for the past few years, and every teacher, classified employee and administrator in the District should be proud of all they’ve done to make this possible,” Superintendent Kari McVeigh said. “This grant will enable us to extend and expand services and fulfill our mission to help *every* child reach his or her potential.”

The RTTT-D competition attracted 372 applicants from across the country. Applications were evaluated and scored in independent peer reviews, and New Haven was notified in November that it was among 61 finalists, including only four from California.

"Districts have been hungry to drive reform at the local level, and now these winners can empower their school leaders to pursue innovative ideas where they have the greatest impact: in the classroom," U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said in a statement released by the Department of Education. "The Race to the Top-District grantees have shown tremendous leadership though developing plans that will transform the learning environment and enable students to receive a personalized, world-class education."

New Haven Unified serves nearly 13,000 students in Union City and south Hayward. The District includes James Logan High School, the largest high school in Northern California, along with seven elementary schools, two middle schools and a continuation high school as well as an adult school. The District also is the founding partner of the Union City Kids’ Zone, a consortium of agencies and organizations working together to provide comprehensive services for the District’s most vulnerable students and their families.

The District will use the RTTT-D funds to build on and expand its comprehensive K-12 reform strategies – known as the Seven Essentials for Continuous Growth and Improvement -- that focus on making sure that students acquire critical literacy and mathematics skills across the entire grade spans. The funds will help the District establish highly effective learning environments for all students, in which teachers instantly access a wide variety of educational tools, content and training aligned with the Common Core State Standards adopted by the State of California for implementation in 2014-15.

“The money will be targeted, so it won’t help us overcome all of the financial challenges that we’re facing after five years of state budget cuts, but it certainly will help us continue the good work we’ve started here,” Superintendent McVeigh said.

Predicated on the belief that quality instruction is the key to achieving District goals, while surrounding students with a network of supports and services, the grant will allow New Haven to expand educator professional development and support services for both students and their families, specifically expanding the work of the Kids’ Zone.

The grant will provide teachers, students and their families with real-time access to student assessments and learning needs while building on the work of the District's Grading and Assessment Task Force and Teacher Evaluation Task Force. The grant will help the District zero-in on its focus on teacher learning and student supports in ways made almost impossible during the last few years of budget cuts.

The District plans to hire literacy, assessment and math coaches for all schools to provide in-classroom coaching in personalized learning for literacy, math and use of assessments. The District will expand summer teacher institutes for reading, literacy and mathematics and would create smaller class sizes for high school English Learners. The District will purchase more K-8 library books and classroom libraries of non-fiction books and would expand online courses for high school students.

The District also plans to purchase mini-computer tablets for every 6-12 grade student and for every two K-5 students, as well as tablets, laptops and document cameras for all teachers. The District will hire additional IT technicians, a data specialist and technology trainers. All of the new technology will be phased in with strong teacher professional development to ensure usage. The District also will expand Library Media positions in every school.

“I’d like to especially thank the New Haven Teachers Association for their partnership in writing the grant application,” Superintendent McVeigh said. “In many districts across the country, teachers groups declined to sign on, wary of the evaluation component, but we’ve been working together with NHTA in this area, and their input and ultimate support was absolutely critical.”

Ms. McVeigh also thanked the Ball Foundation, which adopted New Haven four years ago and has supported the District in implementing many of its initiatives. The

Foundation sponsored the District's application, paying for the grant-writing services of Hatchuel Tabernik & Associates.