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education

Rhode Island and Massachusetts named Race to the Top education grant winners

By Kimberley Donoghue
PBN Web Editor

(Updated, 1:10 p.m.)

WASHINGTON – Rhode Island and Massachusetts were selected as winners for the Obama administration’s Race to the Top school grant competition on Tuesday along with eight other finalists.

Rhode Island was granted a maximum budget of \$75 million for its education initiatives and

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Massachusetts, the highest scored applicant, received \$250 million. Florida and New York were allotted the biggest budgets, both coming in at \$700 million. The states had been vying for a portion of \$4.35 billion in education funding.

Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Washington, D. C., will also receive grants.

The winners were selected after two rounds of competition in which 46 states and the District of Columbia applied.

Race to the Top is an historic U.S. Department of Education program designed to reward states that have undertaken comprehensive education reform, including adopting national achievement standards as well as linking teacher pay to student testing outcomes.

Rhode Island will use the grant money to support various education initiatives by the state and participating school districts.

“Our application was strengthened significantly by a broader base of support among school districts and stakeholders, new initiatives adopted by the General Assembly, and by new policies that reflect our steadfast commitment to reform and school improvement,” Gov. Donald L. Carcieri said in a statement.

“Race to the Top winners will help trail blaze effective reforms and provide examples for states and local school districts throughout the country to follow, as they too are hard at work on reforms that can transform our schools for decades



PBN FILE PHOTO/RYAN T. CONATY

R.I. COMMISSIONER of Elementary and Secondary Education Deborah A. Gist has made the federal Race to the Top competition a key component of her reform efforts for Rhode Island schools.

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to come," the Education Department said.

In addition to the competition, the department has made more resources available through reform programs such as the Investing in Innovation Fund, the Teacher Incentive Fund and School Improvement Grants. The total sum of the Race to the Top program and additional support reaches \$10 billion, the department said in a statement.

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