



# Talawanda School District

For Immediate Release

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## Ohio wins \$400 million in Race to the Top Funds

Talawanda School District would like to thank the teachers and the TEA (first and foremost) for their willingness to participate in the ***Race to the Top*** grant. The perception that the way teachers are evaluated today- will change to include a component directly connected to student performance on state achievement tests has been a scary concept for some educators. However, Talawanda is committed to working with our teachers to develop evaluation processes that lead to increased achievement for students, faculty, administration, and the school district as a whole.

The Ohio plan is simple, but will greatly impact student success in Ohio.

By 2014 the *Race to the Top* Plan will...

1. Increase graduation rates by .5% annually.
2. Reduce graduation rate gaps by 50% between underrepresented/minority groups versus majority.
3. Reduce performance gaps by 50% on national and state assessments.
4. Reduce the gap between Ohio and the best performing states by 50% on NAEP on reading and math.
5. Double the projected increase in college enrollment of students ages 19 and younger.

Ohio already has state standards for curriculum that apply to schools, so in many ways Ohio is ahead of the curve. Educators have been using data to improve the quality of instruction for some time, and certainly this is one of the keys for student success in Talawanda. Collecting data and analyzing it to determine professional development needs for teachers and administration is also a component. Talawanda prides itself on making data driven decisions, so developing and implementing a plan locally will continue to involve our teachers in analyzing data, identifying gaps, and developing strategies to address them. Talawanda already does this through an annual improvement plan/process- now named the *Ohio School Improvement Framework*.

Ohio's plan is based on providing a student centered learning environment. Talawanda has made great strides in recent years with the implementation of the *Student Assistance Program*, which focuses on the whole child. So...the framework is already here. The Ohio plan will provide direction on how we can make enhancements to meet the needs of our students in addition to the mandates given by this grant and the state of Ohio.

Talawanda received word today from the Ohio State Superintendent, Deborah Delisle, that Ohio was in fact awarded \$400 million in *Race to the Top* funds and that she would be in contact with districts signed on to the program very soon for planning purposes..