



MAMARONECK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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NEWS RELEASE

MAMARONECK SCHOOLS SEEKS SLICE OF “RACE TO THE TOP” FEDERAL FUNDING

MTA, School Board, Administration Collaborate to become eligible for \$60,000+

MAMARONECK, NY, January 7, 2010 – Superintendent Dr. Paul Fried today announced a collaborative effort between the Mamaroneck Teachers Association (MTA), the School Board and the Administration to become eligible for federal *Race to the Top* Funds, a nationwide competitive grant program encouraging education reform. By signing a Memorandum of Understanding outlining the “Preliminary Scope of Work” that would be required of the District in exchange for these dollars, the District will meet tomorrow’s deadline letting the State Education Department know its interest.

Of the \$700 million available to New York State if its application is accepted, \$350 million would be divided among school districts willing to approve this Memorandum and agree to specific measures aimed at improving teaching and learning. At the School Board meeting earlier this week, when the Board voted unanimously to sign the Memorandum, Dr. Fried said Mamaroneck’s allotment of funds would amount to about \$60,000 if all districts in New York participated. (Given the likelihood that some districts will choose not to participate, the potential amount of funds could actually be higher.)

“We are grateful that we have been able to review and act upon this opportunity quickly to help ensure Mamaroneck’s receipt of important funding at a critical time,” Dr. Fried said. “The fact that the MTA has chosen to support this initiative as well is both admirable and appreciated.”

The Memorandum of Understanding is the first step school districts must take to become eligible for Race to the Top funds. Then, the State itself needs to be approved for the grant. If the State wins the grant, districts have 90 days to submit plans detailing the action steps they will take to support the State initiatives.

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“Although specifics still need to be fleshed out, we feel comfortable as a district agreeing in principle to support the mission behind this agenda,” Dr. Fried added. Among other things, Race to the Top rewards schools for improving teacher quality, bolstering data systems, and improving the use of data and assessments to guide instruction – all areas that Dr. Fried says Mamaroneck has in fact been focusing on via the District’s annual goals.

In completing the Memorandum in a timely manner, Mamaroneck agreed to a significant portion of the areas that will hopefully enable the District to become a candidate for the funds. The document reads, “The Mamaroneck School District hereby agrees to participate in implementing all or significant portions of the State Plan...”

MTA President Ann Borsellino said, “After carefully reviewing the documents and selecting only the areas we believe will benefit our district, we feel that participating in the application for the RTTT funds is worthwhile. Mamaroneck teachers are already working on many of the RTTT reforms through the district goals, building goals, and through our individual APPR programs.”

The balance of the State’s award – the remaining \$350 million -- would be used to support statewide services benefitting all school districts and to fund competitive in-state RFP activities. States have until January 19th to submit their applications, which are judged in large part by the amount of support shown by their local school districts. For more information on Race to the Top, visit the New York State Education Department’s website at <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/>.

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