



Information Notice



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Seattle, South King County school districts teaming up to compete for \$40M Race to the Top grant

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SEATTLE/SOUTH KING COUNTY – The leaders of seven King County school districts announced today that they are joining forces to compete for up to \$40 million in federal Race to the Top grant money.

The superintendents of Auburn, Federal Way, Highline, Kent, Renton, Seattle and Tukwila have committed to working together and with their communities to complete the grant application, which is due Oct. 30. This is the first time the federal Race to the Top competition has been open to districts; previously, the grants had only been offered to states. Awardees will be announced in December.

The seven districts actively work together as part of the Road Map Project, a region-wide effort to achieve dramatic improvement in student education from cradle to college. The project's goal is to double the number of students in South Seattle and South King County who are on track to graduate from college or earn a career credential by 2020 and to close achievement gaps for low-income students and children of color.

Dr. Edward Lee Vargas, superintendent of Kent Public Schools, the consortium's official "lead applicant," points to the strong spirit of teamwork and collaboration among the districts.

"The quality of a child's education shouldn't vary depending on where he or she lives. Every student deserves the best opportunities," Vargas said. "The districts are banding together to more effectively create real, lasting change across boundaries and systems. Together, we are working hard to produce a winning proposal that builds on existing momentum to accelerate achievement for all our students."

The districts, which will submit their application under the name “The Road Map District Consortium,” intend to leverage the Road Map Project’s existing framework and action plans to jump-start the application development. The proposal will highlight the region’s partnerships with educators, early learning providers, community colleges, University of Washington, Seattle University, mayors, housing authorities, libraries and many other youth- and parent-serving community-based organizations.

Community input is a big part of the proposal development process and will be woven into the application. (Future announcements will provide further details regarding public input and comment opportunities.)

It is very important to note that the grant proposal must be approved by the participating districts’ school boards and union leadership. Before submission, the plan will also be reviewed by the region’s mayors and state officials.

Seattle Public Schools Superintendent José Banda thinks the region’s application has a competitive edge because it builds on a foundation of cross-district collaboration and shared goals.

“I’m thrilled to see all the work the region has done to position itself for success,” Banda said. “Seattle Public Schools is excited to be part of this consortium of districts and compete together. We all share a commitment to increase student achievement and will do what it takes to get results for our students.”

A letter of intent to compete for the federal grant was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education by the Road Map Consortium on Thursday. For more information and updates about the region’s Race to the Top application, go here: <http://www.roadmapproject.org/collective-action/race-to-the-top/>

Participating superintendents are available for comment.

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About the Road Map Project

The [Road Map Project](http://www.roadmapproject.org) is a community-wide effort aimed at dramatically improving student achievement from cradle to college and career in South King County and South Seattle. The project builds off the belief that collective effort is necessary to make large-scale change and has created a common goal and shared vision in order to facilitate coordinated action, both inside and outside schools. The Road Map Project is staffed by the Community Center for Education Results. For more information, go to [roadmapproject.org](http://www.roadmapproject.org).

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