

## **Please Contact Your Members of Congress during Congressional Recess**

**Congress is on recess until September 9.** During this time, most members of Congress return to their hometowns and meet with constituents in their home offices. Please take this opportunity to communicate the following information to them during August, using local examples. You can call their office using the Capitol switchboard at 202.224.3121 or use NSBA's legislative action center at [nsba.org/advocacy](http://nsba.org/advocacy) to find their local contact information. [View the background and talking points for four priority legislative issues.](#)

### **New Race to the Top - District grant opportunity incorporates NSBA recommendations**

School districts and consortia may apply for \$120 million in new Race to the Top - District (RTT – D) grants in a competition announced this week by the U.S. Department of Education. Final priorities for Phase 2 of RTT – D reflect two of NSBA's comments/recommendations. NSBA supported a new proposed Priority for RTT –D grants that would permit school districts to integrate public or private resources in partnerships to provide innovative health, safety and community stability programs to high need students. The new priority recognizes that capacity-building for school districts is a critical factor in the success and sustainability of programs initiated under this priority. As Congress struggles to respond to tragic events such as those at Sandy Hook Elementary School, the new priority will allow LEAs to move forward with much needed support and prevention programs.

Further, NSBA's recommendation to clarify that applicants will not be penalized if they cannot provide a detailed sustainability budget beyond the grant award period was acknowledged and agreed to. The Department will enhance technical assistance for applicants and peer reviewers to assure clarity on this issue. NSBA made additional [recommendations](#) to eliminate requirements that undermine school district leadership and unnecessarily discourage districts from pursuing much needed funding for innovation but unfortunately they were not included in the final priorities.

The RTT – D competition invites applicants to demonstrate how they can personalize education for all students in their schools. An LEA or consortia of LEAs receiving an award under this competition will build on the lessons learned from States and districts in implementing reforms in the four core educational assurance areas through Race to the Top and other Departmental programs.

The Department will conduct Technical Assistance webinars for potential applicants on [August 7](#), August 13, August 27, and September 4, 2013. Letters of Intent to Apply are requested by August 23, 2013 and applications are due October 3, 2013. Five to 10 awards are projected, ranging from \$10 million to \$40 million. Further information is available on the [Race to the Top website](#).

**The weekly highlights will return on Friday, September 13. We hope that you enjoy the rest of your summer!**

**Sincerely, Kathleen Branch & NSBA's Advocacy Team**

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