



# Stimulus Act Information

(Compiled with the help of the National Middle School Association)

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provides funding to increase student achievement through school improvement and reform. The [Department of Education](#) has provided examples of potential uses of the recovery funds that are allowable under Title I and consistent with ARRA principles, including:

- Making progress toward rigorous college and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable for all students.
- Establishing a system for identifying and training highly effective teachers to serve as instructional leaders in Title I schoolwide programs.
- Providing professional development to teachers in Title I targeted assistance programs on the use of data to inform and improve instruction for Title I-eligible students.

NELMS has the programs and resources that will help you address these issues.

## NELMS Title I/ARRA Eligible Resources

1. *NELMS whole school assessment*, a data-driven tool that helps focus on improvement that matters.
2. *Customized, long-term, on-site professional development* to meet your unique needs.
3. An *online bookstore* full of resources on hot topics including connecting standards-based instruction to assessment and differentiated instruction.
4. Specific *research-based professional development opportunities* designed for principals, assistant principals, district staff developers, and other key school leaders.
5. *NELMS Annual Conference* - The world's largest and most comprehensive middle level professional development opportunity!
6. A "Money on Account" program which allows you to use Title I funds on future purchases of NMSA products and services. (Call for details)
7. Book studies based upon the 14 characteristics of successful middle schools using *This We Believe* and *This We Believe in Action* from NMSA.

Contact NELMS today at 978-887-6263 and receive professional advice on how to impact on your students and your district.

**For ongoing updates and additional resources regarding the ARRA, check out NELMS [web site](#) for the latest information.**

# NELMS Can Help: Government's Stimulus and Budget Money!

The New England League of Middle Schools can help you to achieve goals in the following areas through quality professional development funded by local communities or government grants for your school or district.

- Improving student achievement:
- Improving curriculum, instruction and assessment:
- Building a stronger inclusionary model:
- Helping to develop solid literacy and mathematics programs across grade levels and contents:
- Assisting teachers in differentiating their instruction in classes:
- Improving teaming and establishing teaming protocols: building a more workable master schedule for your school:
- A host of other activities that our consultants can offer to your school for professional development

NELMS will also assist schools and districts to develop plans and professional experience that fall within government guidelines. Call the Professional Services Team at NELMS 978-887-6263 or email them to begin the process at [pst@nelms.org](mailto:pst@nelms.org).

## **Literacy**

Under what is currently known as Striving Readers, the proposed budget includes \$70.4 million for Striving Readers (FY 2009 funding was \$35.4 million) which will fund up to 87 competitive awards.

In addition, the request would fund new /Early Literacy Grants /at \$300 million that would allow LEAs to test a variety of strategies designed to improve children's reading comprehension (includes reading and writing) for children in the elementary grades. This request will fund up to 70 grants. Funding will allow for professional development and to pay for literacy coaches and such.

Early Reading First was also funded at \$162.5 million (FY 2009 funding was \$112.5 million). This basically provides the first funding for the comprehensive literacy bill a coalition of organizations has been working on.

## **School Improvement Grants**

This is funded at \$1.516 BILLION. (FY 2009 funding was \$545.6 million). This is a \$1 billion increase. This request would require "States to ensure that at least 40% of their SIG allocations are spent on school improvement activities in their middle and high schools, unless the State can serve all eligible middle and high schools with a lesser amount. This targeting reflects the Administration's determination to take immediate action to begin addressing the factors that contribute to the high school dropout crisis in America.

The latest data from the "Promoting Power" project at the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Social Organization of Schools suggests that there are more than 2,000 high schools that graduate 60% or fewer of each entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade class. These schools enroll an estimated 2.6 million students and thus, account for nearly all of the roughly 1 million young people who drop out of high school each year. Nearly 60% of these so-called "dropout factories" have poverty rates of 40% or higher, and the Department believes that one-third or more are Title I schools that are virtually certain to be identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. In addition, increasing the share of SIG funds

used in middle schools makes sense because middle schools are almost twice as likely as elementary schools to be identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring (22% vs. 13 %).

### **High School Graduation Initiative**

New initiative funded at \$50 million which “would provide LEAs grants to support effective, sustainable and coordinated strategies that will increase high school graduation rates, particularly in the “dropout factories” (and their feeder schools) that produce the great majority of high school dropouts...In addition to supporting a range of local activities, the FY 2010 request would give the Department the opportunity to evaluate approaches to dropout prevention and high school completion in order to determine which are most effective and to identify and disseminate information on best practices.”

### **Other Resources:**

#### **Stimulus money Includes:**

(As reported by ASCD)

#### **Nearly \$80 billion of funds for schools to follow 5 avenues**

About \$48.6 billion, nearly half of the total economic-stimulus funds for schools, is being sent to states to reduce the effect of the recession on state education aid. Another \$13 billion for Title I and \$12.2 billion for special education will be sent directly to schools according to existing funding formulas. U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan has the authority to grant states and districts another \$5 billion for innovative programs, and another \$650 million will be dedicated to education technology. [ASCD's "Planning the Possible" report](#), page 4.

#### **Funds should help schools improve, not just restore cuts**

Education stimulus funds are meant to help states and districts restore education funding and reduce teacher layoffs, but they are also meant to reform education. To ensure the one-time funds are used to meet all of these goals, the U.S. Education Department has advised schools to use their funds to better prepare all students for college and careers, improve systems to track student data, make teachers more effective and intervene to help struggling schools. [ASCD's "Planning the Possible" report](#), page 3.

#### **Some stimulus funds can be used through 2011**

While most education stimulus funds will be sent to states by fall 2009, states and districts are not required to commit the funds until September 2011. At least 85% of Title I funds should be budgeted by Sept. 30, 2010. Special-education funds, which should be available to districts by May 31, should mostly be applied to this school year and the 2009-10 school year, although remaining funds can be used in 2010-11. [ASCD's "Planning the Possible" report](#), page 10.

#### **Most state stabilization funds dedicated to education**

At least 82% of the \$48.6 billion being sent to states as stabilization funds is meant to restore K-12 and higher-education funding. The remainder can be used for school repairs or other public safety or government operations. The stabilization funds can be used to avoid teacher layoffs, to modernize or renovate buildings, for special or adult education, or for career-technical education. The funds cannot be used for district reserves, maintenance or district vehicles. [ASCD's "Planning the Possible" report](#), page 6.

#### **Duncan: Use special-education funds to train all teachers**

The \$6.1 billion in extra special-education funds included in the federal economic-stimulus package is perplexing some educators, who are hesitant to introduce special-education initiatives while laying off teachers in other areas. U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan recommended the one-time funds be

used in part to better train classroom teachers to work with students with special needs. [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of EdWeek.org\)](#) (3/18)

### **Flexibility included in special-education stimulus funds**

More than \$11 billion of special-education stimulus funds are intended to reduce districts' expenses in educating children with disabilities by providing funds for better teacher training and assistive technology. Another \$400 million is dedicated to programs for preschoolers with special needs and \$500 million for infants and toddlers with special needs. Up to half of the funds may be used to free up local funds for other one-time expenses. [ASCD's "Planning the Possible" report](#), page 6.

### **Most Title I funds intended for training, expanded schedules**

Nearly all of the \$10 billion in Title I, Part A, stimulus funds are intended to be used to improve low-income schools through job-embedded professional development, expanded preschool programs or longer school days or years. Another \$3 billion in Title I funds are dedicated to helping schools struggling to meet NCLB accountability provisions to hire more effective teachers and add more time for staff collaboration. [ASCD's "Planning the Possible" report](#), page 5.

### **District may extend funds through Title I designations**

A Florida district is considering increasing its Title I designations by 18 schools, including some elementary, middle and high schools. The move would make 41 of the district's 85 schools Title I. The district's Title I coordinator hopes the move will save educators' jobs at the middle- and high-school level. [Florida Today \(Melbourne\)](#) (4/28)

### **On the Budget Front!**

(As reported by National Forum)

The president's budget was released and the news is very good for Middle Grades Education. In the President's proposed budget there is a great deal of new money for: