

CALHOUN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT RECEIVES AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT FUNDING

CISD has received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) money on behalf of the 13 districts that we serve. Also known as stimulus money, the funds are being received as an addition to our Special Education (IDEA) allotment, using the criteria and requirements already set forth in Federal Legislation. ARRA funding is to be used to help retain jobs and to help fund innovative changes to instruction. We are doing both.

Collectively, CISD constituent schools have opted to use the nearly \$6 million dollars received over 27-months in two ways. The first is what is known as Coaches4Learning. This program has engaged Instructional Coaches which are placed strategically throughout the CISD service area to offer embedded (directly in the classroom) Professional Development for teachers. Some districts had already embraced this concept and in those situations would be reimbursed. In either case, the ARRA funding is helping to coordinate the process.

This model complements the Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) model already in place in most of our districts. The particular use of this funding creates a best practice model leading us to the next generation for Continuous Improvement. Changes in instruction and practice are based on real-time data which is collected during a lesson (formative assessment) instead of data collected at the end of a lesson (summative assessment). It is a way of modifying instruction as soon as it is identified that students are not grasping the concepts of the lessons so that instruction can be modified to improve student learning.

As an organization we were well prepared for this funding...as it truly extends to the next level the work we and our districts already had well under way with instructional improvement.

The second way ARRA one-time funding will be used is to supplement local millage funding to our local districts for the increasing cost of Special Education programs and services.

STATE FUNDING FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION CONTINUES TO BE A CHALLENGE

Receiving the ARRA funding is a one-time windfall that is being put to very good use recognizing that it is only temporary. It still does not address the long term structural deficit that we face as a state.

We have seen continued erosion over the past nine years of school funding. It is unfortunate that such deep cuts to the per pupil funding come at this time during the school year. Our local districts have been diligently working to align curriculum to the State's standards and benchmarks and have been demonstrating marked gains in student achievement.

In addition, there has been a regional approach to the training of educators in the use of data to make decisions that directly improve instruction and teacher practice. Several initiatives that use both historical and current data are well underway.

Regardless of differences in political views, one thing is certain, *as an Educational Service Agency, it is our job to advocate for all students*. Our State faces a structural deficit. If we are to correct this, we are going to have to look at long term solutions. The one time fixes that have worked in the past have only bought us time and brought us to this place that we presently find ourselves in now. This challenge is going to take strong leadership, courage, and civility on both sides of the Political aisle and in our communities.

There is one other given, if this state is going to return to its position as one of the leading states in the nation, leading a 21st century economy, it is going to have to have an *educated and flexible workforce*. I am confident that through this challenge can come great opportunity if we have the will and the desire to work together...as advocates for the children we serve.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terance Lunger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Terance Lunger, CISD Superintendent