



The Urban Education Network (UEN) is dedicated to the needs of students in preparing them for success in 21<sup>st</sup> Century work and life. The UEN's eight urban member school districts and eleven associate member districts enroll nearly 40 percent of Iowa's students, but when it comes to poverty, minority or non-English speaking status, the proportion of students served is even larger. We are committed to improving outcomes for all students and advocate for the resources and flexibility necessary to match our commitment. Our positions are based in experience, best practice and are heart-felt in that we want the very best for all students.

### *Issue Brief*

## **Accelerate Second Year of TLC Grant Participation for Qualified Applicants**

The UEN supported the Education Reform Initiative contained in HF 215 of the 2013 Legislative Session and many UEN districts, as well as our non-UEN neighbors, worked hard to submit an application to participate in the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System grants for the 2014-15 school year. The Legislature and Governor approved a three-year budget with \$50 million annually, beginning 2014-15 school year and the subsequent two school years. The original appropriation was based on an estimate that districts representing 1/3 of the students in Iowa would participate in the first year. From the [DE Press Release](#): "Based on the recommendations of the 19-member Commission on Teacher Leadership and Compensation, Director Buck selected 39 school districts out of 146 applicants from across the state. The districts – serving a mix of urban, suburban and rural communities to best reflect Iowa's district landscape – enroll about one-third of Iowa students. Two of the districts will share teacher leadership systems."

The TLC commission is to be thanked for their hard work in reading and scoring the grants. The Commission received applications from 146 school districts/consortiums, representing nearly 2/3rds of the students in Iowa. The rubric used to score the applications delivered a range from a high of 89 to a low of 48. The process to select among districts within AEAs to ensure geographic representation was a good process. However, there are school districts in Iowa with rubric scores on the grant application that are higher than other scores for districts approved to participate, simply because of the geographic representation and size distribution requirements. As a comparison, the highest score submitted that was not approved was 81, while the lowest score submitted and approved was 73. The districts that received approval are deserving and have amassed energy to get started. Other districts that were not approved have also built up internal capacity and enthusiasm to begin the work. The students in these districts would be well served if the legislature and the governor capitalize on their enthusiasm this year to include an additional 29 school districts.

The system of compensating teachers for leadership and coaching work to improve instruction and creating capacity for increasing the skill level of teachers so all students learn at high levels is a worthy goal. The time is right to build on the enthusiasm of the team work local districts demonstrated during the application process.

**The UEN supports advancing a portion of the 2015-16 TLC allocation into the 2014-15 school year to allow all districts with a score of 73 or greater to participate beginning July 1 of this year.** It is our estimate that approximately \$26 million would accomplish that goal. Since the money is already included in the budget for 2015-16, this acceleration would be using one-time money, not obligating a future legislature beyond what has already been put into place. We support including this appropriation in the one-time funding and bonding bill discussions. The attached spreadsheet, ranking the districts high-low based on rubric score of their TLC application, shows the impact of including 29 school districts educating over 84,000 students in the first year of participation.

**Lew Finch, Executive Director, UEN**  
1543 Bilgarie Ct NE  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402  
[lfinch@mchsi.com](mailto:lfinch@mchsi.com)  
319.329.0547 Cell

**Margaret Buckton, Lobbyist**  
1201 63rd Street  
Des Moines, IA 50311  
[Margaret.buckton@isfis.net](mailto:Margaret.buckton@isfis.net)  
515.201.3755