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*Schools Could Get More Stimulus Cash*

*By Marci Natale*

(Schenectady, N.Y.) — In just a few weeks you'll be voting on your local school budget. Although taxes may go up for some districts— a 5-billion dollar boost may help to offset that, thanks to the Federal Government. "The Race For The Top" grant is 5 billion dollars in extra stimulus money that the Secretary of Education is planning to offer to state. Where does the money come from? As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, states received 48.6 billion dollars. Now the Education Secretary has another 5 billion to award to states, for "The Race for the Top" program. The money will be awarded based on proposals submitted by the states. If New York State gets a portion of that 5 billion, The State Education Department will determine if and how to filter the money to local school districts.

**Schenectady Schools Superintendent, Eric Ely was at SUNY'S Rockefeller Institute of Government Monday, where State Education Commissioner Richard Mills talked briefly about the program.** Ely says from what he understands, the money will be awarded to states which can prove they can meet at least one of four goals. Those goals are: academic standards, such as, making progress to college and career standards. Assessments, Data Systems and Teacher Effectiveness. This is a way to make sure that students in poor an urban schools have the same quality teachers suburban districts have. Ely explained:

"What I think it will do is help to innovate school districts. In our case, to develop new ways of doing things. Create data systems that allow us to track students on a daily basis and track their progress, creatively use what we all think will work."