

Curriculum Report – October, 2010

1. **Race to the Top Update:** The application for Race to the Top must be submitted by noon on Friday, October 22, 2010. The Transformation Team, which will be the “governing body” of Race to the Top, met in late September to put together pieces of the application. There are three assurances that must be addressed: Standards and Assessments, Using Data to Improve Instruction, and Great Teachers and Leaders. Marlinton’s portion of funds totals \$167,396.19. Most of the money will be spent on two initiatives – first, transitioning to the new content standards which will be first tested in 2014-2015. Over this year and the next two years many pull out meetings with teachers will be held to analyze the new standards, write new curriculum maps and develop new interim assessments. A great deal of money will be spent on substitute teachers. The other large commitment is to support a K – 5 online grading program – Pinnacle Plus which will allow grades to be aligned to standards and will allow parents the ability to go online to view their student’s achievement status. Race to the Top mandates that every district have an Instructional Improvement System (see definition below). We are unsure at this time whether we will wait and go with the system that the state provides or go with a system developed by our county. That decision will unfold in the next year as those systems are developed, and we see what best suits Marlinton’s needs. Money has been budgeted for that expense as well. With the final assurance, Great Teachers and Leaders, we are at least ahead of the game because last year we revamped our teacher evaluation system to align with Ohio’s Teaching Standards which is mandated by Race to the Top and are implementing that system this year. One component remains to be defined and that is “growth” – how can value-added be measured for all teachers including the content areas in which we do not receive value-added reports (4th – 8th grade math and reading). The state also is working to figure out the growth part of a teacher’s evaluation. However, we do still need to develop a principal evaluation system that is aligned to Ohio’s Principal standards. We will be working on that process for this year and next.

Once the application is submitted, the state will review it and either accept it or send it back for us to make corrections or revisions. By November 22 all applications must be ready to submit to the federal government. December 1st is the first opportunity for us to be able to draw on any of the funds.

There will be an update EVERY month for the next four years on Race to the Top – that is mandated by the process!

Race to the Top definition of instructional improvement systems: Technology-based tools and other strategies that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement, including such activities as: instructional planning; gathering information (e.g., through formative assessments, interim assessments, summative assessments, and looking at student work and other student data); analyzing information with the support of rapid-time reporting; using this information to inform decisions on appropriate next instructional steps; and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken. Such systems promote collaborative problem-solving and action planning; they may also integrate instructional data with student-level data such as attendance, discipline, grades, credit accumulation, and student survey results to provide early warning indicators of a student’s risk of educational failure. (U.S. Department of Education)