DES MOINES, IA (01/15/2010)(readMedia)-- Iowa's schools won a major victory today as the Iowa House joined the Senate in passing legislation supporting Iowa's application for Race to the Top (RttT) funds.

Iowa could potentially be awarded $60 million to $175 million to support improvements in Iowa's educational system over the next four years if the RttT grant application is approved. Iowa has various components required in the application already in place, but Iowa law needed to be changed in a few key areas to make the application more competitive.

The Iowa State Education Association's (ISEA) Executive Board submitted a letter in support of the application and voted unanimously to encourage its local associations to make their own decisions to sign their local RttT Memorandums of Understanding (MOU). Over half of the ISEA's local associations signed their local MOUs.

The National Right to Work Committee, an anti-worker organization joined the School Administrators of Iowa, the Iowa School Boards Association, and the Urban Educators Network in opposing House File 2033, which placed teachers at the table alongside administrators in deciding how School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds will be implemented in the 35 identified Persistently Low Achieving School (PLAS) districts in Iowa.

"We are grateful that level heads prevailed with today's vote and Legislators weren't swayed by the selfish arguments of a bureaucrat stuck in the old way of doing business as usual," said Chris Bern, President of the ISEA. "It is appalling that some administrators were more concerned about their territorial rights than listening to a child's classroom teacher," added Bern.

Iowa is one of only seven states that limit mandatory bargaining topics to a specific list. Iowa teachers need a special Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) allowing them to work with administrators in PLAS districts to develop school improvement and intervention plans.

"We are always willing to come to the table and talk about what is in the best interest of students. Doesn't it make sense to have the people who are in the classroom every day also

sitting at the table helping make important decisions about how to implement strategies and programs to improve their achievement?" Bern said.

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