

Harkin: \$2.9 Million Coming to Iowa to Turn Around Lowest Achieving Schools

Written by Sen. Tom Harkin
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Washington, D.C. – March 25, 2011 - Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) today announced that the U.S. Department of Education's had awarded Iowa \$2.9 million through the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program to turn around its persistently lowest achieving schools. Harkin is the Chairman of the Senate panel that funds education initiatives and the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee.

"Investing in our children's future means directing resources where they are needed most. When schools consistently have low graduation rates, it is important we focus our attention there," Harkin said. "Today's funding is a step in the right direction. It will help districts take the necessary steps to improve their weakest schools. And, it could not have come at a better time for districts that are already struggling with tough budgeting decisions."

The \$2.9 million made available to Iowa is being distributed by formula to the state and will then be competed out by the state to school districts. Iowa's application, which includes its list of persistently lowest-achieving schools, as defined by the state, can be found [here](#).

School districts will apply to the state for the funds this spring. When school districts apply, they must indicate that they will implement reforms to the lowest achieving schools.

Once schools receive SIG funds, they will be able to begin to spend them immediately to turn around schools this fall. Iowa may apply to the Education Department for a waiver to allow them to spend funds over a three-year period.