

Stimulus What?!

By John Chapman

If you watch the news, within five minutes you will hear the word “STIMULUS” in some form or fashion. All across the United States people have the opportunity to take advantage of our “new” money. Comfort ISD is no exception.

What are Stimulus Funds? These funds are one-time investments of more than \$100 billion – more than \$6 billion in Texas. For school districts there are three key programs: *Title I Part A*, *IDEA-Parts B & C*, and *State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF)*. The basic “Guiding Principles” for using the funds are--spend quickly to save and create jobs, improve student achievement through school improvement and reform, and ensure transparency, reporting and accountability.

Title 1 Part A Funds: These funds are in addition to a district’s 2009-2010 Title 1 fund. The uses must be consistent with Title I statutory and regulatory requirements. Also, they can be used in Title I eligible campuses (all CISD campuses fall into this category), and the funds provide a large increase in Title I school improvement. The potential use of these funds is to develop instructional leaders for Title I School-wide Programs, implement intensive teacher and administrator training to address academic achievement issues, strengthen and expand Early Childhood Education to align Title I Programs with state early childhood and PK – 3 standards, implement online courseware to supplement math and science instruction, use longitudinal data to drive continuous improvement – train teachers in the use of data, implement instructional coaching and extend learning opportunities.

IDEA Funds: These funds are in addition to a district’s 2009-2010 IDEA funds. The funds’ uses must be consistent with IDEA B statutory and regulatory requirements. IDEA funds must be used for excess costs of providing Special Education services. Potential Uses of IDEA funds are to procure and provide training in assistive technology to increase access to the general curriculum, provide professional development for special education and regular education teachers to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and expand capacity to collect and use data, expand inclusive placement options and program capacity for pre-schoolers with disabilities and hire transition coordinators to work with employers to develop job placements for youth with disabilities.

State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF): This program uses funds to restore state support for PK – 12 education and provides funds through state funding formulas. Potential uses: Any activity authorized under ESEA, IDEA, Adult Education, or Perkins statutes; modernization and greening

of school facilities, salaries to avoid teacher layoffs, advance core reforms, advance college and career readiness, establish Pre-K to College data systems, improve teacher effectiveness and the equitable distribution of effective teachers and improve low-performing schools.

There are long term issues to keep in mind when using Stimulus funds—funds end 9/30/2011, maximize short-term investments, minimize ongoing commitments, Supplement / Supplant rules apply and Stimulus funds are supplemental to state and local funds.

If there is further need for explanation, please feel free to come to central office and set up an appointment. I would be glad to go over any information concerning stimulus funds as they pertain to school districts.