

Rep. Greg Lavelle criticizes 'Race to the Top' program

Originally posted by *The News Journal* on their website: www.delawareonline.com

March 29, 2010 - Not everyone is hailing Delaware's "Race to the Top" grant as good news.

"I wish I could get excited about this, but I'm feeling kind of empty," said Rep. Greg Lavelle, R-Sharples.

Lavelle said the program will create additional bureaucracy and impede on states' rights. And he worries there have been few specifics given on how the money will be spent. He said one Delaware superintendent described Race to the Top as a "consultant's dream," and Lavelle said he's skeptical it will produce concrete results.

That only two states were named was surprising, said Michael Horn, executive director of education at Innosight Institute, a non-profit advocate of innovation in education.

Another surprise was that Delaware made the cut, he said.

The strengths of the state's application were its use of data and how it ties that to teacher evaluations, Horn said. But the plan falls short in other areas, he said, including innovative programs and a student-centric focus.

Many will be watching as the state moves to make its plan happen, Horn said. Many state applications were short on details of how the plans will be put into place, he said.

"There's a lot of great jargon, but when you step back from it, it's hard to figure out what they just said they were going to do," Horn said.