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Collin County schools to receive stimulus money

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The Federal economic stimulus bill, signed into law on Feb. 17, allocates \$59 billion for education and training. Texas public schools will get \$4 billion and Collin County schools will receive \$28,819,000.

"The stimulus bill wheels are turning in D.C. and in Texas. Officials throughout the state are just waiting for guidelines about how to access the funding and how it can be spent," said Mary Scott Nabers, president and CEO of Strategic Partnerships, Inc., an Austin-based research and procurement consulting firm that is tracking the funding flows into Texas.

The allocated funds for Collin County schools will be for Title I and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act programs, two programs that help low-income students and special-education projects.

"Any financial assistance we can get is a help to the school district," said Tim Carroll, public information director.

The Allen ISD is projected to receive \$2.4 million. Mark Tarpley, chief financial officer for Allen ISD, said the money would be required to be used for special education and it does not supplant other money.

Some of the stimulus money is allocated by formula and other funds will come down to local school districts in the form of grants. School districts receiving money to be directed to special programs are expected to spend a large amount for technology, equipment, energy enhancement and construction.

As with other funding sectors in the bill, such as transportation infrastructure, technology, homeland security and energy programs, the funds will result in more work opportunities for Texans and hundreds of contracting opportunities for vendors and service providers.

"Those interested in selling to government -- whether to school districts, cities, counties or state agencies -- should get involved immediately," said Nabers.

At www.recovery.gov, a federal Web site, taxpayers can track how money from the stimulus package is allocated. A timeline on the site states that on Tuesday Federal agencies will begin reporting use of funds. Detailed agency financial reports will become available May 15, and by July 15 recipients of federal funding are expected to begin reporting how they will use funds.

According to Strategic Partnerships, Inc.'s (SPI) Web site, Plano ISD is set to receive \$3,199,000 in Federal stimulus money. SPI was founded in 1994 in Austin, Texas. Its staff of consultants, researchers and budget analysts are all former government executives who work in the area of government procurement.

The Plano ISD communications department declined to comment because details about how Federal money must be used are unknown at this time.

A complete breakdown of estimated amounts that Collin County public schools will receive from the Economic Recovery Package can be found at www.spartnerships.com

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