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Race to the Top: An Update and Key Issues for Phase 2

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

Presented to:
Senate Education Committee
Hon. Gloria Romero, Chair





Federal Race to the Top Competition

- ☑ As part of the federal stimulus program, the United States Department of Education (ED) created a \$4 billion state competition called "Race to the Top" (RTTT).

- ☑ Designed to promote changes in four major areas:
 - Common standards and assessments.
 - Student achievement data.
 - Teaching and school leadership.
 - Improving low-achieving schools.

- ☑ Competition has two phases:
 - Phase 1 grant recipients were announced on March 29, 2010.
 - Phase 2 deadlines rapidly approaching:
 - Applications due on June 1, 2010.
 - Grant recipients will be announced in September 2010.



California Passed Legislation to Increase Competitiveness for Phase 1



State passed three pieces of legislation addressing RTTT issues: (1) Chapter 159, Statutes of 2009 (SB 19, Simitian); (2) Chapter 2, Statutes of 2010 (SBX5 1, Steinberg); and (3) Chapter 3, Statutes of 2010 (SBX5 4, Romero).

Item	Description ^a
Standards and Assessments	
Student growth	State shall consider options for measuring individual student growth based on academic assessments.
Common standards and assessments	Legislature intends for state assessments to incorporate common assessments.
Common Core Standards Initiative	The California Department of Education (CDE) and Governor shall participate in the initiative.
Academic Standards Commission	Establishes a commission that shall develop standards in math and Language Arts that consider common standards.
Revised standards	The State Board of Education (SBE) shall either adopt/reject the proposed standards by August 2, 2010.
Data	
Teacher evaluations	Student data may be used for teacher evaluations and personnel decisions (Chapter 159).
Career technical education (CTE) data	The Legislature intends that workforce data be collected for CTE programs.
Data integration	Institutions may enter into interagency agreements to create a single P-20 data system.
Data availability	The CDE shall develop policies for making data available.
New federal stimulus data	An LEA shall retain data to comply with stimulus requirements.
Wage data	Educational agencies in the P-20 system shall have access to individual wage data.
Teachers and Leaders	
Alternative pathways	The state shall authorize new alternative pathways for credentialing CTE and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) teachers.
Lowest-Achieving Schools	
Lowest-achieving schools	The Superintendent and SBE shall identify the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools as defined in federal law.
Intervention models	Districts participating in RTTT with a persistently lowest-achieving school shall implement one of the four reform models.
Parent-driven intervention	If 50 percent of parents of students in a low-performing school agree, then the school is required to implement an intervention model (Chapter 3).
Open enrollment	Students in the bottom 1,000 schools in the state may transfer to another district (Chapter 3).
STEM accountability	The CDE and SBE shall recommend ways to increase accountability in math and science.
^a Reflects provisions contained in Chapter 2, unless otherwise noted.	



California's Phase 1 RTTT Application

- California submitted a Phase 1 application to receive \$1 billion.
- Would have funded projects in all four reform areas.
- Costliest projects focused on bolstering regional support, particularly for low-achieving schools, and creating Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) training programs for teachers.

Major Components of State's Race to the Top (RTTT) Expenditure Plan		
<i>(In Millions)</i>		
Proposal	Description	Amount
Statewide or Regional Activities		
Regional support systems	Provide more regional support for low-performing schools.	\$72.6
STEM training	Fund Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to train teachers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).	64.4
County Offices of Education	Create regional leads to support RTTT LEAs.	32.7
Principal training	Establish a training program for new principals.	20.5
RTTT Evaluation	Hire contractor to evaluate RTTT effectiveness.	14.5
Evaluating teachers and principals	Hire contractor to develop and implement evaluation models.	11.6
Learning in All Ages Grants	Allow low-performing schools to apply for a competitive grant to expand early education, STEM, multiple pathways.	10.0
Mentor schools	Fund partnerships between low- and high-performing schools.	10.0
Regional Office of Charter Innovation	Create regional office to support charter reforms.	10.0
California Department of Education (CDE) oversight	Fund CDE support positions.	8.9
Foster LEA partnerships	Fund 22 pairs of LEAs to share innovative practices.	8.8
Professional Learning Communities	Fund county office staff and a CDE regional coordinator.	7.7
Assessment development	Embed common standards in new student assessments.	7.1
Online instructional practices	Develop online database of best instructional practices.	6.4
Other reform proposals	All proposals under \$5 million.	14.9
Subtotal		\$300.0
Local Activities	Implement local improvement plans.	\$700.0
Total		\$1,000.0



Comparing California's Phase 1 RTTT Application to Other States

- ☑ Application ultimately unsuccessful: California finished 27th out of 41 states that applied.
- ☑ Fifteen states were Phase 1 “finalists.”
- ☑ Two states, Delaware and Tennessee, received Phase 1 grants.
- ☑ In addition to high participation rates, many high-scoring states have already made progress towards developing “P-20” data systems and use them to inform school personnel decisions.

Comparison of California's Race to the Top Participation to Top-Performing Phase 1 States					
State	Percent of Districts	Percent of Schools	Percent of Students	Percent in Poverty	Percent of Unions
Delaware	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Kentucky	100	100	100	100	100
North Carolina	100	100	100	100	99
Tennessee	100	100	100	100	93
South Carolina	95	98	99	98	100
Rhode Island	92	94	93	97	4
Florida	89	82	81	80	80
Colorado	74	90	94	94	41
Louisiana	67	48	47	51	78
New York	66	40	82	94	61
Massachusetts	65	73	72	86	51
D.C.	53	83	85	85	—
Ohio	51	53	50	57	37
California	47	56	58	61	26
Illinois	42	64	74	81	32
Pennsylvania	28	36	38	58	100
Georgia	13	39	41	46	100



A Closer Look at California's Phase 1 RTTT Score

- ✓ California's application lost points in several areas.
- ✓ Biggest deductions related to district participation, teacher and principal evaluation, data systems, and support for STEM.

U.S. Department of Education Evaluation of California's Phase 1 Race to the Top Application

Reform Item	Available Points	Earned Points	Lost Points
Securing Local Education Agency (LEA) commitment	45	23	22
Implementing a statewide data system	24	6	18
Supporting Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM)	15	—	15
Using evaluations to inform personnel decisions	28	15	13
Ensuring conditions for high-performing charters	40	29	11
Improving student outcomes	25	15	10
Using data to improve instruction	18	8	10
Turning around low-achieving schools	35	26	9
Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	8	7
Ensuring capacity to implement reforms	20	13	7
Supporting teachers and principals	20	13	7
Supporting transition to new systems	20	15	5
Developing evaluation systems	15	10	5
Equitably distributing teachers in "high poverty/minority" schools	15	11	4
Securing broad stakeholder support	10	6	4
Providing credential pathways for teachers and principals	21	18	3
Creating reform conditions	5	3	2
Equitably distributing teachers in hard-to-staff subjects	10	8	2
Making education funding a priority	10	8	2
Improving teacher and principal preparation programs	14	12	2
Conducting annual teacher and principal evaluations	10	8	2
Accessing and using data	5	4	1
Measuring student growth	5	4	1
Implementing common assessments	10	9	1
Developing a coherent reform agenda	5	4	1
Other reforms	60	60	—
Totals	500	337	163



Many Questions Associated With Phase 2 Competition

- Administration's Delay, Rationale for Participating in Phase 2.** Why did the administration delay so long before deciding to participate in Phase 2? What is the administration's primary rationale for submitting a Phase 2 application?
- Administration's Plan for Improving Application.** How does the administration intend to improve California's application? Does it intend to address the major weaknesses identified in the Phase 1 application?
- District Involvement.** How does the administration intend to involve school districts in the development of the Phase 2 application? How will district involvement in Phase 2 differ from Phase 1? Has ED indicated that California's approach of involving only a few large school districts will improve California's participation score?
- Legislative Involvement.** Does the Legislature want to have primarily an over-sight role in the Phase 2 process? Does it intend to develop a legislative plan for addressing statutorily some of the weaknesses identified in the Phase 1 application?
- Alignment of Goals.** Are the policy goals and interests of the administration, school districts, and the Legislature in alignment?
- Likelihood of Success.** Given California finished 27th in Phase 1, what is the likelihood that the administration's ultimate Phase 2 application will result in a RTTT grant? Why does the administration think California's chance of winning in Phase 2 is better than in Phase 1?