

December 2, 2009

Key Requirements of Race to the Top Grants: Review of Final Application

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

Presented to:

Assembly Education Committee

Hon. Julia Brownley, Chair





Update on Race to the Top (RTTT) Timeline

- ☑ Final RTTT application released on November 17, 2009.
- ☑ Finalized phase 1 timeline:
 - The state must submit its intent to apply by December 8, 2009.
 - Phase 1 applications due January 19, 2010.
 - Phase 1 awards to be announced during April 2010.
- ☑ Phase 2 applications due June 1, 2010, with awards to be announced during September 2010.
- ☑ Interaction with round 2 State Fiscal Stabilization Funding (SFSF):
 - Round 2 SFSF applications have been released.
 - State must have an approved round 2 SFSF application before receiving RTTT funding.



Final RTTT Criteria and Point System

Selection Criteria	Points
State Success	
Articulating state's reform agenda and local participation in it	65
Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30
Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30
Subtotal	(125)
Standards and Assessments	
Developing and adopting common standards	40
Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and assessments	20
Developing and implementing common assessments	10
Subtotal	(70)
Data Systems to Support Instruction	
Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24
Using data to improve instruction	18
Accessing and using state data	5
Subtotal	(47)
Effective Teachers and Leaders	
Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58
Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25
Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21
Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20
Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14
Subtotal	(138)
Turning Around Lowest-Performing Schools	
Turning around lowest performing schools	40
Intervening in lowest performing schools	10
Subtotal	(50)
Other	
Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools/other innovative schools	40
Implementing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs	15
Making funding a priority	10
Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5
Subtotal	(70)
Total	500



Final Application Places Significant Emphasis on Implementation Plan

- ☒ Of total points, 25 percent based on state's reform agenda and its capacity to implement that agenda.
- ☒ Specifically, state will be evaluated on its ability to:
 - Secure district commitment.
 - Translate commitment into statewide impact.
 - Ensure capacity to make reforms in an effective manner.



Final Application Makes Some Changes to Four Reform Areas



Major changes include:

- Deadline for adopting common standards extended from June to August 2010.
- Clarifies that teachers should be evaluated based on multiple factors, though student achievement data should be a significant consideration.
- Reemphasizes charter school accountability.

Changes to Major Reform Areas

Change

Standards and Assessments

Extends deadline for adopting common standards to August 2010.
Clarifies states should try to have a memorandum of understanding for common assessments.
Places greater emphasis on development of local assessments and data to drive instruction.

Effective Teachers and Principals

Increases emphasis on development of effective teacher evaluation systems.
Emphasizes evaluation systems should be developed at local level.
Emphasizes monitoring teacher shortages and addressing them through teacher training programs.
Rewards states for plans to expand credential programs identified as effective using Race to the Top (RTTT) definition.

Turning Around Low-Performing Schools

Removes some restrictions on use of transformation model.
Places emphasis on turning around failing high schools not eligible for Title I funds.
Fully aligns RTTT and Program Improvement requirements.
Awards points for past performance turning around failing schools.

General Reforms

Reemphasizes charter school accountability.
Provides points for noncharter schools that have been granted additional flexibility in return for outcomes-based accountability.



California in Good Position to Earn Points in Key Areas



Standards and assessments:

- Already part of Common Core State Standards Initiative.
- Those standards are likely the foundation for common assessments that measure individual student growth.



Data systems:

- Already have student and teacher data systems in place meeting many RTTT requirements.
- “Firewall” between student and teacher data has been removed.



Effective teachers and principals:

- California has alternative pathways for credentialing teachers and principals.
- State has beginning teacher support program and data system to evaluate effectiveness of teacher training.
- State has plan for ensuring equitable distribution of qualified teachers.



Turning around low-performing schools:

- California has no statutory barriers to intervening in low-performing schools.
- Several districts have intervened in low-performing schools using RTTT turn around models.



State Still Has Opportunities to Increase Competitiveness



Implementation plan:

- Ensure enough district leaders have committed to participating such that reform plan could have a major impact statewide.



Standards and assessments:

- Identify criteria for evaluating/adopting common standards.
- Develop an implementation plan, including providing support for educators.



Data systems:

- Formalize strategy for integrating components of P-20 data systems.
- Develop a plan for obtaining data not currently collected.



Effective teachers and principals:

- Authorize additional pathways to a credential.
- Explicitly connect student achievement data to preparation programs.
- Clarify that evaluations are to be performance-oriented, involve student achievement data, and serve as basis for personnel decisions.



Turning around low-performing schools:

- Define the bottom 5 percent of schools.
- Develop a coordinated plan for using over \$600 million in federal School Improvement Funds.



Developing Effective RTTT Budget Will Be Key

- ☒ Costing out RTTT plan for California cannot be accomplished without knowing what specific reforms will be implemented.
- ☒ Budget should be crafted so it does not place any demands on educational system in the short term that cannot be supported with federal funds.
- ☒ With RTTT grant (estimated at roughly \$700 million) and \$600 million in School Improvement Funds, as well as federal assessment and data grants, state should be able to pay for initial reforms/transitions with federal dollars.
- ☒ The state's RTTT budget should ensure districts receive adequate support during transition.
- ☒ State should develop a plan for how to sustain reforms using existing assessment, data, and professional development resources after 2013-14.