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Overview of Federal Race to the Top Grants

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

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Joint Hearing of Senate Education Committee and
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Hon. Gloria Romero, Chair





Race to the Top (RTTT) Grant Process Now Underway

- ☑ The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes both formula-driven and competitive grants for K-12 education.
- ☑ California is receiving about \$6 billion in formula-driven grants.
- ☑ An additional \$5 billion nationwide is available in competitive grants.
 - ***RTTT State Incentive Grants (\$4 Billion Nationwide).*** Information on federal priority areas and application criteria was recently released.
 - ***RTTT State Standards and Assessments Grants (\$350 Million Nationwide).*** These potential grants are still under development at the federal level.
 - ***RTTT District Innovation Grants (\$650 Million Nationwide).*** These grants to school districts are still under development at the federal level, but federal priority areas are expected to be released soon.
- ☑ California could qualify for between \$500 million and \$1 billion in RTTT incentive grant funding, depending on the number of states that apply and various other factors.



The Stakes Likely to Be High

- ☒ Federal government has indicated it likely will link its RTTT priorities with other federal funding.
- ☒ The RTTT funding could become linked to some of the one-time, formula-driven ARRA funding California is receiving.
- ☒ The RTTT funding could become linked to annual ongoing federal funding. California receives about \$4 billion in annual ongoing federal funding for K-12 education.
- ☒ The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 is up for reauthorization—meaning RTTT priorities could become bedrock components of reauthorized legislation.



Narrow Window for State to Act

- ☑ If California wants to compete in phase 1 of RTTT funding, it would need to begin developing its plan now.
- ☑ Plans will be due in the fall of 2009.
- ☑ If California misses the phase 1 window, it can compete in phase 2. Under phase 2, California would have until spring 2010 to complete its plan.

Race to the Top (RTTT) Timeline	
Date	Process
Phase 1:	
July 29, 2009	Federal guidance on RTTT funding published.
August 28, 2009	End of 30-day public comment period on federal guidance.
Fall 2009	Notice inviting applications made available. States have 60 days to develop and submit applications.
First half 2010	Winners announced.
Phase 2:	
Spring 2010	Notice inviting applications available.
September 2010	Winners announced.



Overview of RTTT Application Criteria



The federal government has proposed various types of application criteria for RTTT grants.

■ Criteria That Must Be Met:

- ***Eligibility Requirements (2).***
- ***Absolute Priorities (1).***

■ If Criteria Met, Points Earned:

- ***Selection Criteria (19).***

■ Other Criteria Allow States to Stand Out:

- ***Competitive Criteria (1).***
- ***Invitational Criteria (3).***



Three Criteria Must Be Met



Two Eligibility Requirements:

- States must have received approval for second-round State Fiscal Stabilization Funding (SFSF).
 - To be eligible for second-round SFSF, states must meet 33 specific data and reporting requirements.
- States must not have any legal barriers to linking student achievement data to teachers/principals for the purposes of evaluation.



One Absolute Priority:

- States must have a coherent and comprehensive plan for addressing four reform areas:
 - High-quality standards and assessments.
 - Data systems that support instruction.
 - Effective teachers and principals.
 - Support for struggling schools.



Certain Selection Criteria Allow States to Earn Points

- ☑ States earn points based upon their ability to meet 19 selection criteria.
- ☑ Two types of selection criteria:
 - **Preconditions (9).** States earn points if they have met these criteria. Intended to reward states for past accomplishments in key reform areas.
 - **Plans (10).** States earn points based on the quality of their plans for meeting certain performance targets over the next few years. Intended to provide incentives for states to improve in key reform areas.

Race to the Top Selection Criteria by Reform Area

Reform Area/Criterion	Type of Criteria
High-Quality Standards and Assessments	
Develop and adopt common standards	Precondition
Develop and implement common assessments	Precondition
Support transition to enhanced standards and assessments	Plan
Data Systems That Support Instruction	
Intend to implement a statewide longitudinal data system that includes elements of the America COMPETES Act	Precondition
Have a plan to ensure access to and use of state data	Plan
Have a plan to use data to improve instruction	Plan
Effective Teachers and Principals	
Provide alternative pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	Precondition
Differentiate teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	Plan
Ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	Plan
Report the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	Plan
Provide effective support to teachers and principals	Plan
Support for Struggling Schools	
Intervene in lowest-performing schools and districts	Precondition
Increase supply of high-quality charter schools	Precondition
Turn around struggling schools	Plan
Other	
Demonstrate significant progress in each reform area	Precondition
Make education funding a priority	Precondition
Enlist statewide support and commitment	Precondition
Raise achievement and close gaps	Plan
Build strong statewide capacity to implement, scale, and sustain proposed plans	Plan



Four Other Criteria Also Allow States to Stand Out



Competitive Criterion (1): States are awarded bonus points if they place special emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.



Invitational Criteria (3): Though bonus points are not awarded, states appear more attractive if they:

- ***Expand Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems.*** States could have plans for expanding their systems to include data on special education, English proficiency, and early childhood programs and/or connecting data from K-12 schools to health, human resources, and finance agencies.
- ***Coordinate P-20 Education.*** States will appear more attractive if they have plans for improving the coordination between early childhood programs, K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, and workforce organizations.
- ***Expand School-Level Decision Making.*** States will appear more attractive if participating districts provide their schools with authority/flexibility to make employment, budget, and program decisions.



Major Issues for Consideration During Special Session

Several Race to the Top Areas to Address if California Wants to Make Itself as Competitive as Possible

Criterion	Cost? ^a
Legislation Likely to Be Needed (1):	
Have no firewall between student and teacher data	None
Legislation Likely to Be Needed to Make California More Competitive (16):	
Have coherent, comprehensive plan for addressing four reform areas	Minor
Support transition to enhanced standards and assessments	Minor
Intend to implement a statewide longitudinal data system that includes elements of America COMPETES Act	Minor
Have a plan to ensure access to and use of state data	Minor
Have a plan to use data to improve instruction	Minor
Provide alternative pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	Moderate
Differentiate teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	Minor
Report the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	Minor
Provide effective support to teachers and principals	Major
Intervene in lowest-performing schools and districts	Moderate
Increase supply of high-quality charter schools	None
Turn around struggling schools	Major
Enlist statewide support and commitment	Minor
Place special emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math	Moderate
Expand data systems	Minor
Enhance P-20 coordination	Minor
No Legislation Likely to Be Needed (9):	
Receive second-round State Fiscal Stabilization funding	None
Develop and adopt common standards	Minor
Develop and implement common assessments	Minor
Ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	None
Demonstrate significant progress	None
Make education funding a priority	None
Raise achievement and close gaps	None
Build strong statewide capacity to implement, scale, and sustain proposed plans	Minor
Facilitate school-level decision making	None
^a None = existing funding likely to cover cost. Minor = likely less than \$10 million annually. Moderate = between \$10 million and \$100 million annually. Major = more than \$100 million annually.	