

Race to the Top – Proposed Requirements as of July 24, 2009 Notice

Deadline for comments on proposed requirements: August 21, 2009

Process for comments:

- Submit through Federal eRulemaking Portal or by mail, commercial delivery, or by hand
- Include Docket ID (ED-2009-OESE-0006) and Race to the Top heading

Proposed eligibility for application:

- States that
 - Have approved applications for funding under both Phase I and II of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund
 - Do not have statutory or regulatory barriers to linking data about student growth and achievement to teachers for the purpose of teacher and principal evaluations

Proposed timing:

- Phase I applicants: late 2009 application, early 2010 awards
- Phase II applicants: late spring 2010 application, early fall 2010 awards

Proposed application requirements:

- Must be signed by governor, chief state school officer, and president of state board of education
- Description of progress made in each of four education reform areas, including how ARRA funds and other federal and state funds have been used to pursue reforms in these areas
- Provision of financial data showing whether and to what extent the percentage of total revenues available to state used to support public K-12 and higher education for FY 2009 increased, decreased, or remained the same compared to FY 2008
- Description of statewide support from stakeholders and LEAs
- Budget that details how grant funds will be used to meet targets, including
 - How funds will be used to improve student achievement and graduation rates and close achievement gaps
 - How priority will be given to high-needs LEAs (in addition to providing 50 percent of funding to LEAs)
 - *Note – high need LEAs are those with one or more high-poverty schools; high-poverty school is school in highest quartile of state with respect to poverty level*
- For each State Reform Condition Criterion, a description of state's current status plus information requested as supporting evidence
- For each State Reform Plan Criterion:
 - The key activities to be undertaken
 - The goals and rationales for the activities (including evidence of past effectiveness)
 - Timeline for implementing activities

- Party/ies responsible for implementing activities
- Resources to be used by the state in supporting activities
- State's annual targets with request to proposed performance measures for each criterion
- Information requested as supporting evidence
- Certification from state attorney general regarding statements of state law

Proposed requirements for states receiving funds

- Compliance with core performance measures
- Annual report to DOE
- Accountability for meeting goals, timelines, budget, and annual targets (to be tied to drawdown of funds)
- DOE may require written performance or cooperative agreement
- State and participating LEAs must use funds to participate in national evaluation (DOE soliciting comments on whether states must also use funds to evaluate its own activities)
- Participation in all technical assistance activities
- Make all outputs (materials, tools, processes, systems, etc.) freely available, for example by posting on websites

Five priorities:

- Absolute priority: Comprehensive approach to the four education reform areas
- Competitive preference priority: Emphasis on STEM
- Invitation priorities;
 - Expansion and adaptation of state longitudinal data system
 - P-20 coordination and vertical alignment
 - School-level conditions for reform and innovation

Absolute Priority: Comprehensive approach to four education reform areas

Proposed selection criteria:

Standards and Assessments

- State Reform Conditions Criteria
 - (Phase I applicants) Participation in consortium of states working towards a common set of K-12 standards
 - Participation in consortium of states working towards common high-quality assessments
- State Reform Plan Criteria
 - High-quality plan for:
 - Supporting statewide transition to internationally benchmarked standards building towards college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation
 - Developing high-quality assessments tied to standards
 - Activities may include:
 - Aligning HS exit and college entrance requirements with new assessments
 - Development of curricular frameworks and materials, formative and interim assessments, and professional development activities
 - Other strategies that translate into effective classroom practice

Data Systems to Support Instruction

- State Reform Conditions Criteria
 - Implementation of a statewide longitudinal data system complying with all requirements of the America COMPETES Act
- State Reform Plan Criteria
 - High-quality plan to ensure that data from longitudinal data system
 - Are accessible to and used to inform and engage key stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, principals, LEA leaders, community members, unions, researchers, and policy makers)
 - Support decision makers in the continuous improvement of instruction, operations, management, and resource allocation
 - Comply with FERPA
 - High-quality plan, in collaboration with LEAs, to
 - Increase the use of instructional improvement systems by teachers, principals, and administrators
 - Make data accessible and available for researchers evaluating the effectiveness of instructional materials, approaches, and strategies for educating different types of students

Great Teachers and Leaders

- *Note: proposed definition of “effective” must include at least acceptable demonstration of student growth, such as at least one grade level in an academic year; “highly effective” would demonstrate high rates of growth, such as more than one grade level in an academic year*
- State Reform Conditions Criteria
 - Providing alternative pathways for aspiring teachers and principals
- State Reform Plan Criteria
 - High-quality plan and annual targets for
 - Determining an approach for measuring student growth
 - Employing rigorous, transparent, and equitable processes for differentiating the effectiveness of teachers and principals using multiple rating categories that
 - take into account student growth as a significant factor
 - provide data and rating to each teacher and principal
 - use this information to make decisions about
 - evaluation and development
 - compensation and promotion, including additional pay and responsibilities for highly effective teachers
 - tenure and dismissal, including the removal of teachers who have not improved despite ample opportunities
 - Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals in high-poverty schools and teaching hard-to-staff subjects, which may include the implementation of incentives and strategies in areas such as recruitment, compensation, career development, human resource practices and processes
 - Reporting the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs by linking student achievement data to teachers and principals, and then to preparation programs, including the public reporting of findings for each program with more than 20 graduates annually
 - Providing effective support to teachers and principals by using rapid-time data to inform and guide appropriate support for improving instruction, and to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of supports

Turning Around Struggling Schools

- State Reform Conditions Criteria:
 - Extent to which state has the formal authority to intervene directly in persistently low-performing schools and districts
 - Extent to which state does not discourage establishment of charter schools or charter school enrollment through use of caps or other measures
 - Extent to which state has statutes and guidelines governing establishment and operation of charter schools, and the extent to which these statutes and

- guidelines are used to hold charter schools accountable for student achievement
- Extent to which charter schools receive equitable funding and fair share of local, state, and federal funds
- Extent to which state provides facilities funding for charter schools, assistance with finding facilities, access to public facilities, sharing in bond and mill levies, or other supports, and does not impose facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to other public schools
- State Reform Plan Criteria
 - High-quality plan and annual targets to
 - Identify at least the persistently lowest-performing five percent of schools
 - Support LEAs in turning around those schools by
 - Putting in place new leadership, staff, governance, and improved instructional programs, and providing school-level flexibilities
 - Converting low-performing schools to charter schools or contracting with EMOs
 - Closing the school and putting students in high-performing schools, or, if the above strategies are not possible,
 - Implementing a whole-school transformation model

General Selection Criteria

- State Reform Conditions Criteria:
 - Extent to which the state has, in the past several years
 - Made progress in each of the four education reform areas
 - Used ARRA and other federal and state funding to pursue reforms in these areas
 - Created conditions favorable to education reform and innovation
 - Increased student achievement and decreased achievement gaps (using NAEP), and increased graduation rates
 - Extent to which the state has made education funding a priority (demonstrated through comparison of funds available for education in 2009 compared to 2008)
 - Extent to which the state has demonstrated commitment, support, and/or other funding from the following key stakeholders:
 - State teacher unions
 - State charter school authorizers
 - Other state and local leaders (business, community, civil rights, education association leaders)
 - Grant-making foundations and other funding sources
 - LEAs, with an emphasis on high-needs LEAs, participation by LEAs, schools, students, and students in poverty, and strength of MOUs between state and participating LEAs (must be signed by superintendent, school board president, and local union president)

- State Reform Plan Criteria:
 - Raising achievement and closing gaps
 - Annual targets for increasing achievement overall and by subgroups
 - Annual targets for closing gaps among subgroups
 - Annual targets for increasing graduation rates overall and by subgroup
 - Building statewide capacity to implement, scale, and sustain proposed plans
 - Capacity to oversee grant
 - Capacity to support success for participating LEAs, ensure dissemination of effective practices, and hold participating LEAs accountable for progress
 - Capacity to use the economic, political, and human capital resources of the state to continue reforms
 - Collaborate with other states on key elements
 - Coordinate, reallocate, or repurpose education funds from other sources to align with R2T goals

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