

U.S. Department of Education: Race to the Top Program

Presentation to National Conference of State Legislatures

April 9, 2010

Joanne Weiss
Director, Race to the Top Program



About Race to the Top

- \$4.35B competitive grant, authorized under ARRA, to encourage and reward states implementing comprehensive reforms across four key areas:
 - Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace
 - Recruiting, rewarding and retaining effective teachers and principals
 - Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices
 - Turning around the lowest-performing schools
- With an overarching goal of:
 - Driving substantial gains in student achievement
 - Improving high school graduation and college enrollment
 - Narrowing achievement gaps

Two Competitions

- **Race to the Top State Competition**

- \$4B to States for education reform
- Two chances to apply:
 - Phase 1 (winners announced in March) – \$600M awarded to TN and DE
 - Phase 2 (due June 1) – \$3.4B to be awarded
- The Department has requested a third phase of Race to the Top, for \$1.35B, in its FY2011 budget.

- **Race to the Top Assessment Competition**

- Up to \$350M to consortia of States to create next generation assessment systems
- Applications due: June 23

Key Lessons from Phase 1

- **Build on your State's Strengths.** Understand and capitalize on the assets you have in your districts, universities, and nonprofits. Use your legal infrastructure. Build from what you know is working in your State context, rather than simply importing plans from elsewhere.
- **Implementation Matters.** Reviewers were looking for specific evidence that plans were high-quality and were apt to be carried out successfully – in many cases, the State's laws and regulations lent significant credibility to those plans.

Where legislation fits into Race to the Top

The framework: The two types of criteria

State Reform Conditions Criteria

- What you've *already done* in your State related to the four ARRA education reform areas.
- Examples: laws on alternative certification or charter schools; building statewide longitudinal data systems.

Reform Plan Criteria

- What you *will do* with a Race to the Top grant, related to the four ARRA education reform areas.
- Laws matter here, too. The winning States passed laws that served as the backbones for their plans, making them stronger and more credible.

Where legislation fits into Race to the Top

Specific criteria

Standards and Assessments

- Developing and adopting common standards **Condition**
- Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments **Condition**

Great Teachers and Leaders

- Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals **Condition**
- Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance **Plan**
- Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals **Plan**
- Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs **Plan**
- Providing effective support to teachers and principals **Plan**

For more detail on these criteria, see the Executive Summary at www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop

Where legislation fits into Race to the Top

Specific criteria (continued)

Turning around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

- Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs **Condition**
- Turning around the lowest- achieving schools **Plan**

General Selection Criteria

- Making education funding a priority **Condition**
- Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charters and other innovative schools **Condition**
- Demonstrating other significant reform conditions **Condition**

For more detail on these criteria, see the Executive Summary at www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop

Examples

Delaware's New Law on Teacher/Principal Effectiveness

- No educators can be rated as “effective” unless their students demonstrate satisfactory levels of growth.
- Teachers rated as “ineffective” for 2-3 years can be removed from the classroom.

Tennessee's Legislation

- Allowed meaningful use of value-added data for teacher and principal evaluations.
- Required State intervention in persistently lowest-achieving schools.
- Raised caps on charter schools and strengthened authorization.

Resources

Website

www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop

Questions

racetothetop@ed.gov

racetothetop.assessment@ed.gov