



Race to the Top Federal Grant and Washington State Education Reforms

QUICK FACTS

Race to the Top is a \$4.35 billion competitive grant fund, and part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. To qualify for funds, states must demonstrate alignment with the four assurance areas highlighted by President Obama. The four assurance areas are:

- Adopting internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;
- Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most;
- Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction; and
- Turning around our lowest-achieving schools.

LEGISLATION REQUIRED TO PURSUE RACE TO THE TOP FUNDING

Governor Gregoire has requested legislation that is needed to make WA eligible to apply for Race to the Grant application.

SB 6696, prime sponsored by Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, is the Senate vehicle.

In the House the same governor-request legislation is divided into three separate bills:

HB 3035, Educator Performance and Evaluation, prime sponsored by Rep. Dave Quall

HB 3038, Standards and Accountability (adopting high standards, turning around low-performance schools), prime sponsored by Rep. Marcie Maxwell

HB 3059, Alternate Routes to Become Teachers, prime sponsored by Rep. Tina Orwall

MESSAGE POINTS

Keep our state -- and our children -- competitive by pursuing Race to the Top funds that will help us accelerate reforms and innovate our schools.

- Urge legislators to pass the Governor's request legislation for Race to the Top funding.
- Race to the Top moves the focus away from resources (how much we spend) and onto outcomes (how well students are learning). The goal is student success.

- The four assurance areas -- effective teachers and principals, turning around low-performing schools, better data systems and higher standards -- are the fundamentals for improving education, and help implement last year's Basic Ed Reform law (HB 2261).
- Race to the Top funds could mean between \$150 and \$250 million in new funding that could jumpstart the innovations that our schools need. And taxpayers will appreciate!
- These reforms are needed to ensure all Washington students receive a quality education, and are worth implementing, even if Washington did not win a single Race to the Top dollar.
- The required action steps in this new accountability system align with the new Student Improvement Grant guidelines. If we don't pass this legislation, it appears that we will be putting significant Title One money in jeopardy.
- The Excellent Schools Now Coalition supports a strong Race to the Top application. The focus that Race to the Top places on great teachers and leaders, better use of data, college and career ready standards and assessments, and turning around our lowest performing schools is the right one for our state and our country. It's clearly what is in the best interest of our kids and their future. It's the path that other states and the federal government are going down. We expect Race to the Top to be the new frame for the re-authorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This Race to the Top competition is good because it is driving the conversation and work that we need to do anyway. If we make these changes and put together a bold, compelling reform plan, we could win significant new federal money. And if we don't make these changes, we could lose existing federal money.

***Excellent Schools Now Coalition** includes the following members: Alliance for Education, ArtsEd Washington, Black Collective, Black Education Strategy Roundtable, Coalition for Equal Education Rights, College & Work Ready Agenda, College Spark, College Success Foundation, Communities in Schools of Seattle, Executive Council for a Greater Tacoma, King County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, League of Education Voters, Pacific Science Center, Partnership for Learning, Powerful Schools, Rainier Scholars, Seattle Biomedical Research Institute, Seattle Breakfast Group, Stand for Children, Tabor 100, Technology Access Foundation, Technology Alliance, WashACE, Washington Alliance of Black School Educators, Washington Global Health Alliance, Washington Roundtable, Washington State PTA and Washington Technology Industry Association. Our goal is to achieve meaningful education reform that increases student achievement, closes the achievement gap and prepares students to be college and career-ready.*