

Excellent Schools Now Coalition

Washington State has a tremendous opportunity to compete for its share of the \$4.3 billion discretionary Race to the Top funds. These funds are part of the federal stimulus package and are specifically designed to drive education reform across the country.

The legislation outlined below, if enacted, will help ensure every child is ready for college, work and life. And, in these challenging economic times, it is fiscally irresponsible to ignore the possibility of significant financial support from the federal government.

Race to the Top Criteria

Standards and Assessments

- Develop and adopt common standards.
 - Participate in consortium developing high-quality standards.
 - Adopt standards.
- Develop and implement common, high-quality assessments.
- Support the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments.

Legislation Needed to be Competitive for Race to the Top

Standards and Assessments

- Direct OSPI to adopt the common core K-12 standards being developed by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (to be released in January).
- Develop and implement common, high-quality assessments aligned with the above-mentioned K-12 standards.
- Support the State Board of Education's proposal on CORE 24 to create a meaningful high school diploma.
- Maintain current law by staying the course on math and science graduation requirements.

Race to the Top Criteria

Data Systems to Support Instruction

- Fully implement a statewide longitudinal data system.
- Access and use State data.
- Use data to improve instruction.

Great Teachers and Leaders

- Provide high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals.
- Improve teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance.
 - Measure student academic growth.
 - Develop evaluation systems.
 - Conduct annual evaluations.
 - Use evaluations to inform key decisions.
- Ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals.
 - Ensure equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools.
 - Ensure equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas.

Legislation Needed to be Competitive for Race to the Top

Data Systems to Support Instruction

- Monitor implementation of legislation passed in 2009, which will ensure Washington provides data that links students and teachers and provides statewide longitudinal data to policymakers and researchers.
- Direct OSPI to develop a clear approach to measuring student academic growth, and measure it for each individual student.

Great Teachers and Leaders

- Strengthen and expand alternative routes for great teachers and leaders.
 - Pilot alternate route programs for principals that recognize previous leadership experience in different sectors.
 - Allow teachers to be certified through effective alternate route programs not associated with colleges or universities, such as a teaching fellows program or Teach for America.
 - Allow districts to hire non-traditional teaching candidates (such as community college professors or industry professionals) in non-shortage areas.
 - Enhance the cultural competence and diversity of current and future educators, including expanding pathways to prepare, recruit and retain diverse teachers and leaders.

Race to the Top Criteria

- Improve the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs.
- Provide effective support to teachers and principals.

Legislation Needed to be Competitive for Race to the Top

- Establish a fair, transparent and equitable process for differentiating and evaluating teachers and principals that requires the use of multiple ratings and student academic growth data as a significant factor. Publicly report the data.
- Extend the probationary period for new teachers from the current two years to three years. Provide school districts the ability to actively “grant”, “deny” or “extend” provisional status based on teacher performance.
- Authorize districts to use teacher and principal evaluations and student academic growth data to inform decisions about staffing and compensation.
- Support differential pay and performance pay for teachers, especially in STEM fields. Provide extra pay for teachers who work in high poverty, high minority or low achieving schools and hard-to-staff subject areas, and who demonstrate effectiveness in low-performing schools.

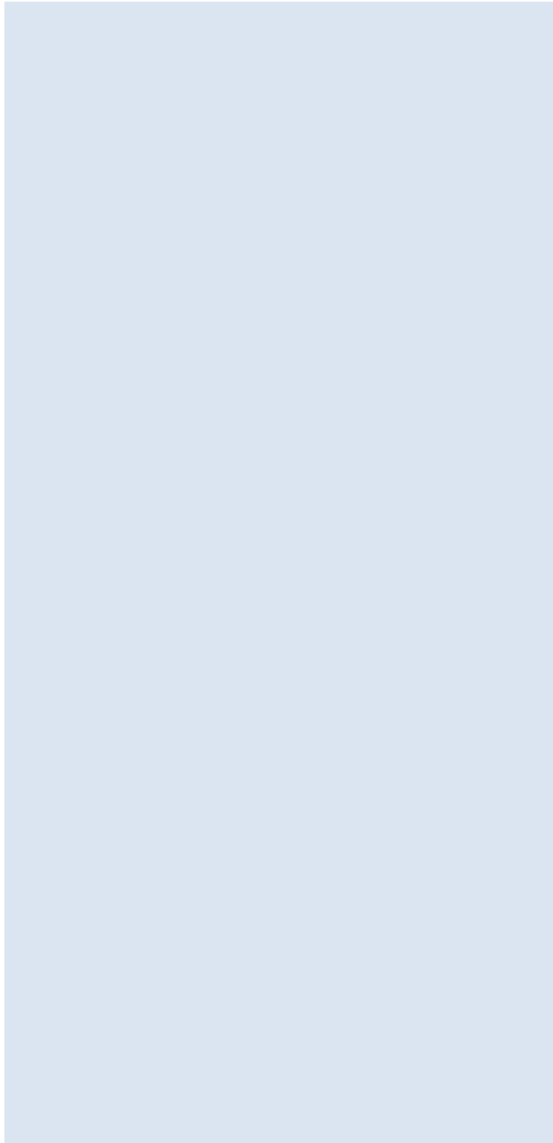
Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

- Identify the state’s lowest-achieving schools and districts.
- Intervene in the lowest-achieving schools and districts.
- Turn around the lowest-achieving schools and districts.

Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

- Direct OSPI and SBE to use federal school improvement grant criteria to identify the 5% lowest achieving schools in the state. Designate districts with the highest percentage of these low achieving schools as Required Action Districts. The criteria used to identify the Required Action Districts should be transparent and legally defensible.

Race to the Top Criteria



Legislation Needed to be Competitive for Race to the Top

- Grant the State Board of Education the authority to intervene in persistently low achieving schools and districts through a new mandatory process called “Required Action.”
- Direct SBE to establish performance metrics and goals that a Required Action District must meet within three years in order to exit required action status.
- Direct “Required Action Districts” to develop a plan (in collaboration with their local school boards) to turn around their lowest achieving schools by implementing one of four federally funded school improvement models: 1) turnaround, 2) restart, 3) closure or 4) transformation. SBE must authorize the Required Action District’s plan.
- Enable SBE a range of tools to enact improvements in Required Action Districts that repeatedly submit inadequate turnaround plans, are unable to reach agreements on a turnaround plan with local collective bargaining units, or fail to make progress within three years.

There are additional changes needed for a competitive proposal; they are not listed here because they do not require legislative action this session.

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 Spark, College Success Foundation, Executive Council for a Greater Tacoma, League of Education Voters, Pacific Science Center, Partnership for Learning, Tabor 100, Technology Access Foundation, Technology Alliance, Stand for Children, Washington Alliance of Black School Educators, 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.