

**Democrats for Education Reform**  
**Policy Briefs and Memos**  
**August 24, 2010**

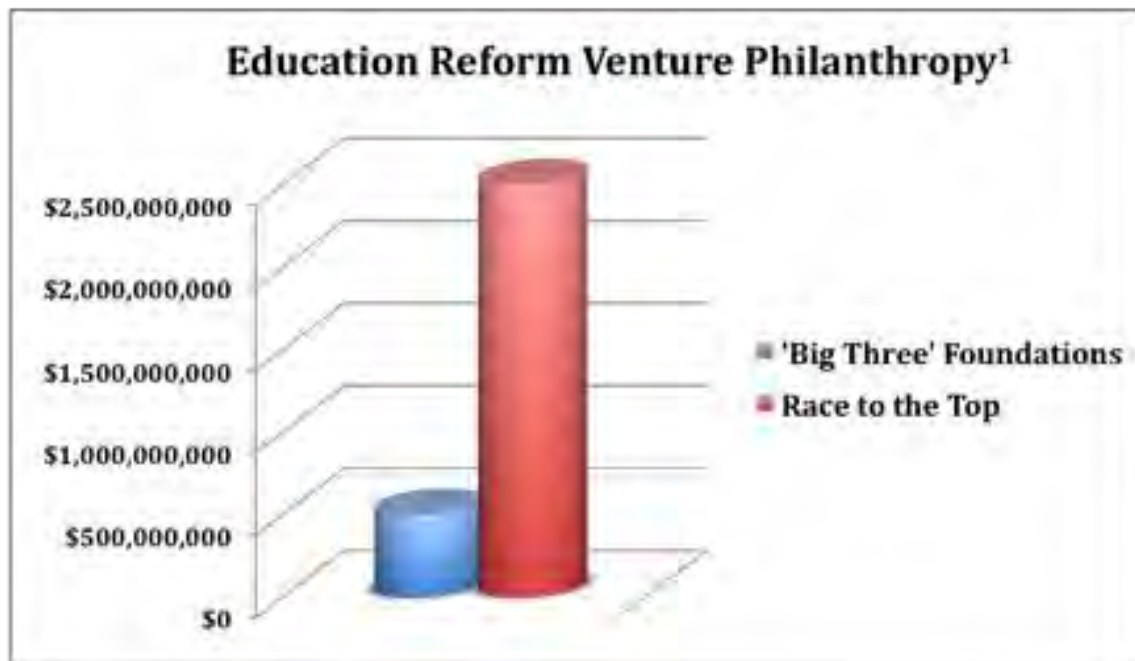
## **Race to the Top: By the Numbers**

Of the record \$100 billion in federal education funds appropriated under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in 2009, Congress and President Obama set aside \$5 billion to be awarded at the discretion of the Secretary of Education to states, districts, and consortia that develop robust education reform plans. The \$5 billion is broken down as follows:

- \$4 billion – Race to the Top State Incentive Fund (individual states)
- \$650 million – Investing in Innovation or i3 Grants (local, regional collaborators)
- \$350 million – Race to the Top Assessment Grants (multi-state consortia)

In total, these funds represent less than 1% of the \$600 billion (federal, state, and local funds) spent on U.S. public elementary and secondary schools.

This unprecedented infusion of federal education reform funds, coupled with unprecedented latitude afforded to a U.S. Secretary of Education, catapulted the Obama Administration to the role of top U.S. venture philanthropist in the education policy world.



<sup>1</sup> These are 2009 figures. RttT total \$5 billion was halved to reflect two rounds of grant awards. The "Big Three" numbers represent grants awarded by the Broad, Gates, and Walton Foundations, provided exclusively to Democrats For Education Reform on the condition that dollar amounts would not be broken out separately.

## State Participation

- 41 states applied in Round 1. 36 states applied in Round 2.
- Only four states sat out both rounds: Alaska, North Dakota, Texas and Vermont.
- Two states – Delaware (\$100 million) and Tennessee (\$500 million) – received grants in Round 1.

States from coast to coast made significant – and unprecedented – policy changes as part of the Race To The Top competition.

**23 states passed education reform legislation or changed regulations as part of their Race to the Top proposal process.**

**In terms of volume, scope, and substance, this is more change in state and local education policies than in the prior 8 years combined.**

## Standards and Assessments

### Standards

- 48 states are participating in the Common Core Initiative, to develop “college and career ready” standards.
- 37 states have adopted the Common Core Standards.<sup>2</sup>

### Assessments†

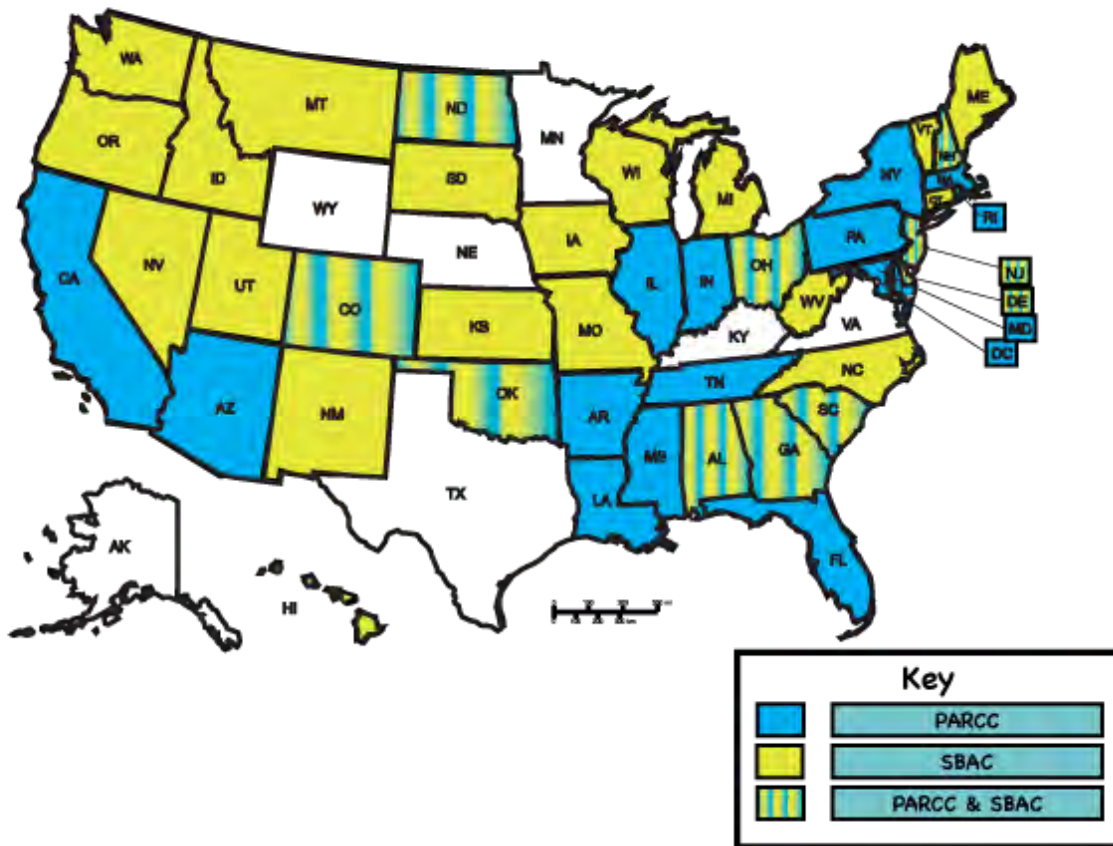
Two large consortia of states are competing for the \$350 million in Race to the Top Assessment Grants to develop broad, new, high-quality tests tied to college and career ready standards that move beyond the crude “fill-in-the-bubble” approach most states use now.

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<sup>2</sup> For up-to-date info on the states that have adopted the Common Core Standards, go to the [Curriculum Matters blog](#) by Catherine Gerwertz at Education Week.

- 38 states are participating in one or both consortia.
- The 26 states in the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium alone educate over 60 percent of the K-12 students in the United States.

**Map: State Consortia to Develop Better College and Career Ready Assessments**



**Public Charter Schools**

At least 13 states – Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New York, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Utah – altered laws or policies to create or expand the number of public charter schools.

## Teacher Quality

- Five of the six states with “firewalls” that previously barred student achievement data from being used in teacher evaluations repealed those laws: California, Wisconsin, Nevada, Maine, and Indiana. (New York simply let its law expire.)
- 17 states reformed their teacher evaluation programs.
- At least 11 states – Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Tennessee – enacted legislation that requires student achievement data to be used in teacher evaluation or tenure decisions.
- Zero states are using a single test result to evaluate teachers, despite some of the rhetoric that is used by opponents of these policies. The highest weighting any state has given student tests in teachers evaluations is 50%.

## Organizational Support

Round 1 awardees Delaware and Tennessee had 100% and 93% union support respectively.

But union support varied much more widely than that in both rounds.

- Round 2 finalists had support from local unions ranging from
  - ✓ low: 0% (DC) and 2% (NJ);
  - ✓ middle: 30% (RI), 33% (CA), 49% (IL), 50% (AZ);
  - ✓ high: 100% (HI, NC, PA, KY)

Nationwide, of the Round 2 finalists: 1,859 total local unions signed on as did:

- More than 4,000 LEA's;
- 3,853 local school boards;
- Hundreds of local and statewide civil rights, child advocacy, education reform, and business groups, including chapters of these nationally known groups:
  - ✓ The state NAACP chapter in seven states: CA, NY, CO, LA, MD, MA, and OH
  - ✓ The Urban League in four states: CA, LA, OH, SC
  - ✓ The PTA in seven states: FL, GA, KY, MA, NC, OH, RI
  - ✓ Teach for America in six states: AZ, CA, CO, GA, HI, NC

In **Colorado**, at least a **dozen** child advocacy, civil rights, and education reform groups actively supported Senator Mike Johnston's (D-Denver) landmark teacher evaluation and tenure reform bill (SB 191; signed May 2010):

- A+ Denver
- American Federation of Teachers – CO
- Colorado Children's Campaign
- Colorado Concern
- Colorado Succeeds
- DFER-Colorado
- Denver Chamber of Commerce
- Education Reform Now
- Metropolitan Organizations for People
- NAACP –CO
- Padres & Jóvenes Unidos.
- Stand for Children

The **Race to the Top New York** Campaign generated:

- **8,500** postcards
  - **15,000** voice mail messages and,
  - **2,300** faxes
- to NY legislators

## Quotes on Race to the Top

“The President and Secretary are absolutely right on that the current state of American education is „morally inexcusable“ and „economically indefensible“ – and that the time is now for our nation to stop talking about doing things differently, and actually do it.”

- *Marian Wright Edelman, Children’s Defense Fund, [The Huffington Post](#)*

“The Obama-Duncan education agenda is the „most muscular federal education policy I’ve ever seen“... We’ve got your back.”

- *Hugh B. Price, former president of the National Urban League, [Education Week](#)*

“In just one year, we’ve already seen more reforms proposed and enacted around the country than in the preceding decade.”

- *Joel Klein, Chancellor, New York City, Michael Lomax, President and CEO, United Negro College Fund, Janet Murguía, President and CEO, National Council of La Raza, [Wall Street Journal](#)*

“At a time when our schools are squeezed for money in this difficult economy, this is a remarkable opportunity to help students and teachers by bringing innovative and proven approaches into classrooms.”

- *Matthew Cregor, Attorney, Southern Poverty Law Center attorney and member of the campaign, [SPLC’s website](#)*

“The ideas have gained currency at the national level. What was seen as bold is now reform, not revolution.”

- *Kurt L. Schmoke, Dean, Howard University Law School, [The Washington Post](#)*

“We should have done this stuff 20 years ago. We’re overdue. This stuff is common sense.”

- *Timothy Daly, President, The New Teacher Project, [Chicago Tribune](#)*

“The Obama administration’s reform initiatives are vital to closing the achievement gap... We must take serious steps to disrupt the education status quo...”

- *John D. Podesta, President, Center for American Progress, [The Washington Post](#)*

“We think [Race to the Top] brought real important discussions around key education reforms that we’ve been advocating for many years. It’s the right thing to do.”

- *Debbie Look, California State PTA, Director of Legislation, [Capitol Public Radio Sacramento](#)*

“Race to the Top represents an opportunity for California to demonstrate true leadership and a commitment to working collaboratively in the interest of our students.”

- *Ramon C. Cortines, Superintendent of Los Angeles Unified School District, [Press Release](#)*

“The RTTT grant has the potential to move our state forward through the implementation of ground-breaking, transformative education reforms.”

- Ken Swanson, President, Illinois Education Association, [Illinois Race to the Top Application](#)

“Connecticut has developed a comprehensive package of reforms that brings all of us to the table to work together in behalf of our students.”

- Connecticut General Assembly Legislative Black & Puerto Rican Caucus, download [here](#)

“We are extremely pleased that the State’s plan calls for secondary school reform that not only raises standards but provides new systems that will make sure that all students receive the support they need to succeed in school and to graduate on time, college and workplace ready.”

- Connecticut State Conference of NAACP Branches, download [here](#)

“States were willing to change their policies based on a gamble. I didn’t think they would invest the level of energy they really did.”

- Brenda Welburn, Executive Director, National Association of State Boards of Education, [McClatchy Newspapers](#)

“President Obama deserves an A+ for his agenda for education reform.”

- Ruben Navarrette Jr, Author of “A Darker Shade of Crimson: Odyssey of a Harvard Chicano”, [CNN](#)

“We need to have our parents and communities rally around their schools, and spread the word across Florida that Race to the Top can provide our schools with additional dollars that can have a lasting impact on our children’s learning environment and their future in a global world.”

- Karen Brown, President of the Florida Parent Teacher Association, [The Gainesville Sun](#)

“Gov. Crist has the wisdom to convene the working committee that he did and we had a much stronger application because of it ... When you include everyone, what you have is something that will work for Florida’s children.”

- Karen Aronowitz, President, United Teachers of Dade, [The Miami Herald](#)

“Georgia has committed significant resources to reforming and improving education in our state. The Race to the Top funds will build on this strong foundation and move achievement in our state to new heights.”

- Sheila Cornelius, President of Georgia PTA, [Georgia State Race to the Top application](#)

“We are going to do the work whether we get funded or not.”

- Terry Holliday, Kentucky Education Commissioner, [Courier-Journal](#)