Race to the TOP

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"America will not succeed in the 21st century unless we do a far better job of educating our sons and daughters... And the race starts today. I am issuing a challenge to our nation's governors and school boards, principals and teachers, businesses and non-profits, parents and students: if you set and enforce rigorous and challenging standards and assessments; if you put outstanding teachers at the front of the classroom; if you turn around failing schools – your state can win a Race to the Top grant that will not only help students outcompete workers around the world, but let them fulfill their God-given potential."

- President Barack Obama
July 24, 2009

Presentation Outline

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Race to the TOP Summary

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Race to the top was announced in 2009 by president Barack Obama. It is an attempt for school reform that provides states who best meet the standards of the policy to receive additional money for k-12 education.

http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf

How do States receive the funding?

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A specific set of criteria was set forth by the committee and each set of criteria was given a point value.

States provide documentation on how they meet the set criteria and then are scored on what they submit.

The highest scoring states received funding.

States that did not receive funding could make changes and resubmit for the following round in hopes of scoring higher and receiving funding.

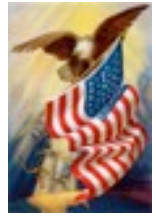Three rounds of submissions were accepted.

Criteria for Funding

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*Great Teachers and Leaders (138 pts)
*State Success Factors (125 Pts)
*Standards and Assessments(70 pts)
*General Selection Criteria(55 pts)
*Turning around the lowest-achieving schools (50pts)
*Data system to support instructions (47pts)

- *Funded by the ED Recovery Act as part of the [American Recvery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Economic Stimulus Plan).](#)
- *4.35 billion dollars total allotted for funding
- *4 billion was allotted for state reform plans
- *350 million was allotted to develop common test and assessments
- *Funding Race to the Top received a lot of criticism because of the state of the economy but President Obama defended the spending citing education as the root of improving the United States economy.

- [Watch President Obama defend use of the Economic Stimulus money to fund Race to the Top](#)

Dates of Submission

Phase 1-january 19, 2010

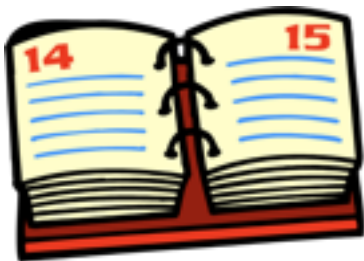Results announced March 4, 2010

Phase 2-June 1, 2010

Results announced August 24th, 2010

Phase 3-November 22, 2011 and December 16, 2011

Results to be announced

1. Strong focus on early childhood education and the reform and investment of K-12 Education.
2. Provides all states with the opportunity to secure more funding in a time when school funding is at its weakest.
3. Promotes high standards of student and teacher performance across the board.
4. Encouraged states to review their policies and procedures and evaluate their effectiveness.
5. Mandated that in order to receive funding states had to make changes to improve the lowest achieving schools in their state.
6. Using student growth to determine teacher effectiveness regardless of race, religion, socioeconomic status, or disability.

Arne Duncan (Secretary of Education) Race to the Top Announcement Video

Strengths connection to text
"It's time to make education America's national mission"
President Barack Obama, November 4th, 2009.

- Policy has strong focus on the critical early years of ALL children that influence learning, and helps prepare and support them for educational success.

- "early intervention can lead to improved educational achievement and cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional capabilities-"(Luke, 2011, p.371).

- Improvement of low achieving schools starts with this focus on early education of ALL children, "-and children from poor and cultural minority backgrounds are most at risk" (Luke, 2011, p.371).

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- Through funding and reform this Policy seeks an education that will prepare ALL children for success in the global work world.

- "a better educated population as necessarily good for the economic development of a nation..." (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010, p. 140).

- "Education has long been recognized as an important contributor to economic growth, but now has become the imperative ingredient for success in the world economy" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 394).

- Race to the Top seeks to help America win the future by out-educating our competitors.
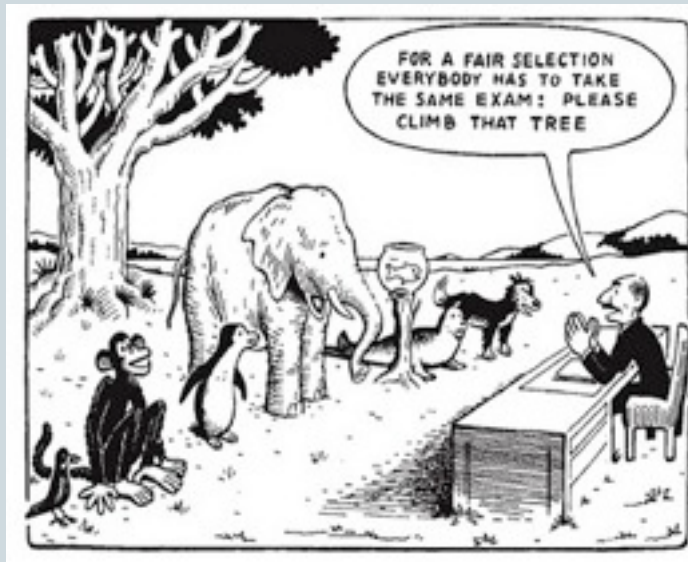
Assumptions of Race to the Top

1. Assumes that states have equal access to resources necessary to improve.
2. Assumes that all students in each state have the same needs, opportunities, and abilities both physically, mentally, and emotionally.
3. Assumes that standardized tests are the key to measuring success and that they are authentic, unbiased, and reliable tools that effectively gauge students' ability to succeed in society and at a global level.
4. Assumes that continually raising bars of achievement, regardless of whether the previous expectations were met, will ignite motivation for success for the lowest performers.
5. Assumes that the top concern for students and educators is gaining the ability to compete in Race to the Top.
6. Assumes that all people will benefit from gaining an edge in a globalized economy as a result of meeting Race to the Top requirements.

Resources, Needs, and Ability

Race to the Top assumes that each state has the same resources and means for improvement. However, states will continue to be unsuccessful if not given assistance in overcoming barriers that may exist in their schools.

"Relevant in the development of a policy are pragmatic considerations relating to what is in fact possible, for example the level of resources that are available to implement a policy" (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010, p. 71).

FOR A FAIR SELECTION EVERYBODY HAS TO TAKE THE SAME EXAM: PLEASE CLIMB THAT TREE

"At the core of the failure of urban education in the USA, including liberal education policy, has been the persistent refusal to address underlying issues of race, gender, and class inequality and oppression" (Lipman, 2003, p. 349).

In addition, the policy assumes that all students in each state have the same needs, opportunities, and abilities both physically, mentally, and emotionally to be successful in the race to the top.

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Assumes that standardized tests are the key to measuring success and that they are authentic, unbiased, and reliable tools that will effectively gauge students' ability to succeed in society at a global level.

"Some commentators argue that more competition will lead students to raise their game and raise levels of examination achievement, but this does little to improve the relative chances of individuals entering tough-entry universities and jobs" (Brown, 2007).

"There is a new common sense: that standards will enable equity" and "teachers and professors will perform better if there are stronger merit incentives and performance benchmarks" (Luke, 2011, p. 372).
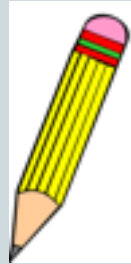
"Teaching to standardized tests...teaches students that they have little role in the construction or deconstruction of knowledge or its use to solve real-world problems" (Lipman, 2003, p. 340).

Assumes that continually raising bars of achievement, regardless of whether the previous expectations were met, will ignite motivation for success for the lowest performers.

Assumes that the top concern for students and educators is gaining the ability to compete in Race to the Top.

"Globalization has created new patterns of social inequality around an emerging logic of social exclusion" (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010, p. 145).

Many students and teachers are more concerned about competing for survival in their environments and learning ways to rise above their circumstances rather than competing in a globalized economy.

The primary motivation of many students does not reflect an expression of personal freedom and intellectual curiosity because it is secondary to the requirements of the competition for a livelihood" (Brown, 2007).

Assumes that all people will benefit from gaining an edge in a globalized economy as a result of meeting Race to the Top requirements.

Limitations of Race to the Top

1. Educational focus is based on Neoliberalism and Globalization

2. Lacks Language of Diversity

3. Schools could become focused on receiving race to the top grant, instead of actual education, leading to standardization.

4. Focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics)

Neoliberalism & Globalization Focus in Educational Policy Race to the Top

- "A world-class education is the single most important factor in determining not just whether our kids can compete for the best jobs but whether America can out-compete countries around the world. America's business leaders understand that when it comes to education, we need to up our game. That's why we're working together to put an outstanding education within reach for every child"

- ‑President Barack Obama, July 18, 2011

Neoliberalism   Globalization

- Education is not the sole focus of this policy, it is a means to an end so kids can compete for top jobs in the American economy once educated.

➢ "the discourse of education for participation and leadership in democratic society is overtaken by the economic discourse of production and consumerism" (Ayers, 2005, p.531).

➢ "the learner is reduced to an economic entity" (Ayers, 2005, p. 538).

- In addition to this, Race to the Top wants these same children to out-compete the other countries of the world in the global job market.

➢ "Our nation's economic competitiveness and the path to the American Dream depend on providing every child with an education that will enable them to succeed in a global economy that is predicated on knowledge and intervention" (President Obama, July 18, 2011).

Policy lacks Language of Diversity and does not address Multiculturalism in Education

➢ "Most nation-states now confront a dilemma of how to develop public policies which acknowledge the importance of cultural diversity and at the same time acknowledge that in a globalizing world our problems and their solutions are interconnected and transcend national boundaries" (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010, p. 163).

• Race to the top seeks to provide an outstanding education for every child, but fails to discuss what a diverse group of children will be striving for this education, and how and why these differences may affect their educational abilities, goals and dreams.

➢ "Corporate and liberal multiculturalism consigns the "other" to recognizable standards of difference but fails to question the power relations that define for the "others" how and why they are different" (Hu-Dehart, 2000, p.42).

Focus on Race to the Top Grant could lead to Standardization
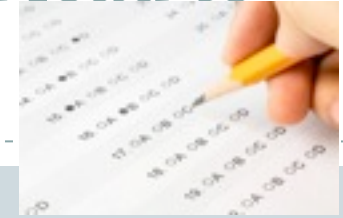
- The goal of receiving the Race to the Top grant could override educational goals and objectives, leading to a standardized education.

- "Standardization of educational practices has the potential to flatten out cultural, linguistic, intellectual, and educational diversity, with potentially deleterious effects on residual emergent educational traditions" (Luke, 2011, p.372).

- "Trying to ensure that every child would have access to as much education as every other child, we have failed to attend to the content of that education" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 398).

- Trying to educate ALL children, for the benefit of the policy, instead of for education, can lead to a flattened out education that is rationalized by the desire to achieve the policy objectives.

Focus on STEM

Science

Technology

Engineering

Mathematics

"includes efforts from the federal government and from leading companies...to work with young people across America to excel in Science and Math" (Race to the Top Policy,2009, p.4)

- The Policy's focus on STEM perpetuates the focus on neoliberalism and globalization, due to the fact that business leaders and companies, along with the government are pushing for this STEM focus in education to create a stronger, more knowledgeable workforce for the American and Global society.

- "This new economy...is characterized largely by science and technology, a shift from material production to information processing" (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010, p. 153).

- The market activity in the United States and throughout the world is driving what curriculum is taught, and why this policy has such a strong focus on STEM.
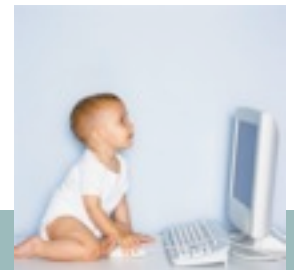
Recommendations

Establish Criteria that puts focus on multiculturalism.

Provide funding to help implement changes needed in order to qualify for Race to the Top funds prior to submission for the grant.

Remove the competition of the program by not awarding funding to the top scoring states, but rather to all states that receive a specific set of points.

Remove the focus from STEM and create a more rounded approach to education that increases expectations in all areas of education not just science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Multiculturalism

*Set standards that incorporate multiculturalism.

*Focus on educating the whole child to promote cognitive, emotional and communication skills that often result from multicultural education, and are essential to competition in the global market.

*Race to the Top was created to provide "every child with an education that will enable them to succeed in a global economy that is predicated on knowledge and intervention" (President Obama, July 18, 2011), but lacks any reference to multiculturalism which is a growing trend in many job markets.

* "multicultural education has been removed from public national education systems. In contrast, multicultural approaches have emerged with tremendous vigor in the field of business management" (Rensik, 2009, p.217).

* "An immense amount of management literature has recently appeared that urges global firms to 'convert' to multiculturalism if they want to keep pace with the latest transformations of the global economy" (Rensik, 2009, p. 223).

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Assist States with Jump-Start Funding

In order to compete, schools with poor circumstances need help to build critical resources and programs.

- Many states with low-income and minority students need assistance in reaching the Race to the Top goals because they lack the necessary resources and programs to meet the requirements.

- Suggest that states be given some funding in advance to help provide their schools with resources and programs.

- The more a state improves, the more funding they will receive to continue the advancement of their state in the race.

Many schools are, "situated in communities decimated by decades of disinvestment" and lack resources such as having, "no playground, no all-day kindergarten, no science labs, no reading specialist, and a non-operational library" (Lipman, 2003, p. 339).

Schools, "located in very low-income African American communities, are the schools with the fewest resources with which to make comprehensive, transformative changes, and their communities have the least political power" (Lipman, 2003, p. 339).

"Global money and credit are disproportionately available to the already privileged" (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010, p.141).

Take away the competition

Establish a policy where every state has a chance to receive funding.

*Set a point value based on the policy's criteria and any school that reaches that value receives funding.

*Any school that does not receive funding can make changes and try again in the next round.

*Currently the policy only provides the schools receiving the highest scores with additional funding creating a system of competition. This may result in state leaders (or school administrators) loosing focus on educating children and instead focusing on making changes to their systems only to receive more funding.

"One principal requires teachers to substitute *Test Best* booklets for the classroom texts for over one-quarter of the school year" simply to meet specific funding standards (Lipman, 2003, p.337).

"test preparation does not necessarily translate into learning" (Lipman, 2003, p. 337).

*The more states that receive additional funding, the more students that will benefit from the funding and in turn be better prepared to meet the needs of the global economy.

Create a broader focus, not only on STEM

- The Policy should create a well rounded approach to education that focuses on all areas of education and increases expectations in all these areas; not just Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics.

- "...dropped subject areas will quickly cease to receive attention. Thus civics education, or the study of citizenship, democracy and governance (in addition to history and geography), will quickly become 'irrelevant' as subjects of study" (Mitchell, 2003, p.398).

- One of these areas should include language as "the world is increasingly becoming multilingual" (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010, p. 178).

- "while the rest of the world is becoming multilingual, this trend is resisted in English-speaking countries, where a decline in second language has been noted" (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010, p.178).

- With only focusing on STEM the States is creating an education where language other than English is not an expectation.

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