

- The Foundry: Conservative Policy News. - <http://blog.heritage.org> -

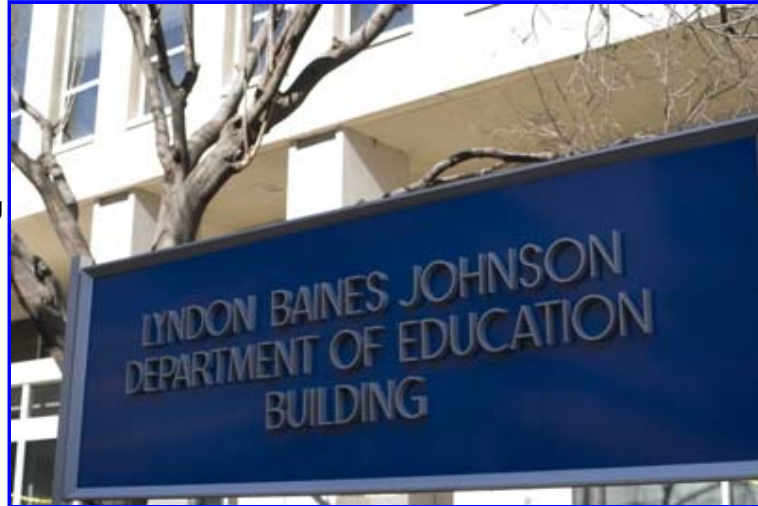
States Win Race to the Top Battle but Lose the Education Autonomy War

Posted By [Rachel Sheffield](#) On August 25, 2010 @ 10:00 am In [Education](#) | [No Comments](#)

5
tweets
Yesterday,
retweet [Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the round 2 Race to the Top \(RttT\) winners](#) [2]. Nine states, along with the District of Columbia, will divide \$3.4 billion in federal grant money.

The winners included D.C., Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Rhode Island. Delaware and Tennessee won

grants in round 1 of the competition. Neal McCluskey, associate director of the Center for Educational Freedom at the Cato Institute, [isn't impressed](#) [3];



[1]

New York? Recent revelations about [dumbed-down Regents exams](#) [4] hardly make it seem like a paragon of honest reform. Hawaii? How did last year's [school-free Fridays](#) [5] help them stack up so high? Maryland? Fostering charter schools was supposed to be important, but it has one of the [most constricting charter laws](#) [6] in the nation. And Massachusetts? Well, it's easy to see how it won—it just dropped its own, often-considered [nation-leading curriculum standards](#) [7] to adopt national standards demanded by Race to the Top.

McCluskey is right to point out the most concerning outcome of RTTT: that it's possible that the burdens associated with the federal red tape could outweigh the benefits.

To be eligible for the money, states were required to indicate that they would adopt national education standards and tests. For some states, adoption will likely mean lowering education requirements. Massachusetts, for example, which has signed on to adopt the national standards, already boasts some of the highest education standards in the country. That the state is so quickly tossing out its much-lauded standards and testing program in favor of national standards is concerning to many, including Senator Scott Brown (R-MA), who yesterday [expressed his uncertainty](#) [2] about the standards overhaul.

And rightly so. National standards are unlikely to improve education and will [put more power into the hands of federal bureaucrats and pull power away from parents.](#) [8]

Besides watering down education standards, the amount of money it will take for states to overhaul their current standards will be significant. According to Robert Scott, Texas's Education Commissioner, the price for their state to implement the standards would cost the state up [to \\$3 billion](#) [9]. On the other hand, the average RTTT award to states in this second round is only [\\$333 million](#) [10].

Moreover, states won't have any financial help with the standards implementation process, adding more costs to already overburdened budgets. Past examples provide plenty of evidence that when the federal government increases school funding, bureaucratic red tape grows. Red tape means more administration, which subsequently ends up costing schools, not to mention taxpayers. And for that reason, the non-winners could end up being the real winners in this competition.

?

Article printed from The Foundry: Conservative Policy News.: <http://blog.heritage.org>

URL to article: <http://blog.heritage.org/2010/08/25/states-win-race-to-the-top-battle-but-lose-the-education-autonomy-war/>

URLs in this post:

- [1] Image: <http://blog.heritage.org/wp-content/uploads/DeptEducation.jpg>
- [2] Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the round 2 Race to the Top (RttT) winners: http://www.boston.com/news/local/breaking_news/2010/08/mass_named_a_wi.html
- [3] isn't impressed: <http://www.cato-at-liberty.org/race-to-the-top-round-two/>
- [4] dumbed-down Regents exams: <http://www.cato-at-liberty.org/education-standards-at-work-the-ny-debacle/>
- [5] school-free Fridays: http://online.wsj.com/article/NA_WSJ_PUB:SB125635093976805443.html
- [6] most constricting charter laws: <http://www.charterschoolresearch.com/laws/maryland.htm>
- [7] nation-leading curriculum standards: http://boston.com/community/blogs/rock_the_schoolhouse/2010/08/here_comes_the_skills_agenda.html
- [8] put more power into the hands of federal bureaucrats and pull power away from parents.: <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Factsheets/Education-Standards-The-Next-Federal-Takeover>
- [9] to \$3 billion: <http://www.klbjam.com/News/Story.aspx?id=1184440>
- [10] \$333 million: <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/nine-states-and-district-columbia-win-second-round-race-top-grants>

Copyright © 2008 The Heritage Foundation. All rights reserved.