



## Jeanne Allen: 'Race to the Top' Guidelines Diluted

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Federal guidelines for the distribution of \$4.3 billion in "Race to the Top" education funds to states are irresponsibly weak and filled with loopholes, according to the national nonprofit Center for Education Reform (CER). The long-awaited guidelines, which many education reformers hoped would push states to adopt meaningful education reforms, contain serious flaws.

The guidelines will provide states with a blueprint for developing their education reform plans - in return for federal funding - but, according to CER president Jeanne Allen, states that don't embrace real reform may very well end up with federal dollars.

"Throughout the entire evaluation formula proposed by the Department of Education's application, reform is deemphasized, and while states that are already doing good work will benefit, so might states that aren't," Allen said. "It is disappointing to see bold, exciting rhetoric on education reform from the Obama Administration turn into nothing more than lip service."

Specifically, the "Race to the Top" - which had been touted as a boon for charter schools - now deemphasizes charters, even allowing states without charter school laws to qualify for federal funding. Additionally, the guidelines also deemphasize the need for gauging student achievement gains when calculating teacher merit pay plans. These two changes to the "Race to the Top" funding formula are directly contradictory to President Obama's campaign platform and to recent statements by Education Secretary Arne Duncan.

CER has argued that states should not receive funding if they don't eliminate anti-charter and anti-performance pay language in school district rules and in collective bargaining agreements; these fundamental policy provisions are not present in the Education Department's guidance.

"The final 'Race to the Top' guidelines have moved the education reform finish line up and it doesn't seem like it will take much effort to cross it," said Allen. "This isn't a 'Race to the Top,' it's a race to the bank for folks who haven't tried hard enough."

**Full CER coverage at [In Focus: Race to the Top](#).**

### **In the News:**

[Education Legacy: . . . And Charter Schools Are the Way to Start](#) by Jeanne Allen, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, VA, November 17, 2009

[Race to the Top Heats Up](#), by Akilah Johnson, *Sun Sentinel*, Florida, November 15, 2009

[Obama Gets Inflated Grade on Education Reform](#), Commentary by Neal McCluskey, *Detroit News*, November 14, 2009

[Racing to Reform: The rules are set, but how the education funds are allotted is key](#), *Washington Post* editorial, November 13, 2009

*Also reprinted in:*



[St. Augustine Record](#), FL, November 16, 2009

[Press Democrat](#), Santa Rosa, CA, November 15, 2009

[Grant May Play Role in Teacher Pay Issue](#), By J. Brian Ewing, *News & Record*, North Carolina, November 13, 2009

[Final Rules On Charter Schools In \\$4 Billion Federal Grants Criticized](#), by Kris Alingod, *All Headline News*, November 13, 2009

[The Race for \\$4.35 Billion](#), by Diane D'Amico, *Press of Atlantic City*, November 12, 2009

[Compromising on Education Reform?](#), by George Stephanopoulos, *ABC News*, November 12, 2009

[White House Wants States to 'Race to the Top'](#), NPR's *The Takeaway*, November 12, 2009

[States Compete for Federal School Dollars](#), By Sam Dillon, *New York Times*, November 11, 2009

[The Race for \\$4.35 Billion](#), *Press of Atlantic City*

[Obama Uses School Dollars to Prod States to Change](#), By Libby Quaid, *The Associated Press*, November 11, 2009

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