

Discussion of SB5X 1

January 2010

Introduction

This item provides information on SB5X 1 (Steinberg) which contains various provisions to make California more competitive for federal Race to the Top education grant funding. The attached summary has been prepared by staff from the Commission's Office of Governmental Relations.

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item.



Staff Summary
SBX5 1 (Steinberg)
Chapter 2, Statutes of 2010

Race to the Top

SBX5 1 (Steinberg) contains various provisions to make California more competitive for federal Race to the Top education grant funding. As it pertains to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing's (Commission) programs and policies, the bill:

- States the intent of the Legislature to recruit, develop, retain, train for continual improvement and reward effective teachers and principals especially in the state's lowest performing schools and provide alternative routes to certification for those who want to teach science, technology, engineering and math subjects in order to attract professionals with hands-on experience in the classroom.
- States the intent of the legislature to create robust data systems linking prekindergarten, K-12, higher education and workforce data to measure student success, improve instruction and student learning, and inform teachers, principals, students, policymakers and the public about school performance.
- Establishes the Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) and Career Technical Education (CTE) Educator Credentialing Program for purposes of providing alternative routes to credentialing, in accordance with the guidelines for the federal Race to the Top Fund, that do not compromise state standards.
- Requires the Commission [in consultation with the Committee on Accreditation (COA)] to develop a process by June 1, 2010 that authorizes additional high-quality alternative route educator preparation programs in the areas of science, mathematics and career technical education, provided by school districts, county offices of education, community-based organizations (CBO) and nongovernmental organizations (NGO).
- Requires the Commission to authorize CBO and NGO accredited by organizations recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education, to initiate STEM and CTE Educator Credentialing Programs.
- Allows the Commission to establish alternative criteria for approval of entities not recognized by either the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education, as necessary.
- States that for the purposes of this Act, an independent college or university in California is not a CBO or NGO.
- Allows the Commission to charge a fee to CBO or NGO entities seeking approval to participate in the alternative route educator preparation programs.
- Requires alternative route educator preparation programs participants to electronically submit credential applications to the Commission.

In addition, the bill includes: (1) a process for the possible revision of the K-12 Academic Content Standards; and (2) statutory revisions to facilitate the further development of a robust education data system.

SBX5 1 becomes effective 90 days after the Governor signs the bill.

Background—Federal Law¹

The federal Department of Education has issued an invitation to the states to compete for approximately \$4.35 billion of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) one-time funding as Race To The Top (RTTT) grants, provided that the individual states meet the following requirements:

Each state must meet the following two criteria in order to apply for funds:

1. Are approved for State Fiscal Stabilization Fund money, and
2. Have no legal barriers to linking student achievement data to the evaluation of teachers and principals. (aka "a firewall")

In addition, each state must comprehensively address four assurances or areas of priority in education including:

1. Adopting high quality standards and assessments to prepare students for higher education or work.
2. Recruiting, developing, retaining and rewarding effective teachers and principals.
3. Creating data systems to measure student success and support instruction.
4. Turning around the lowest performing schools.

States that fail to meet any of the above criteria are barred from competing for RTTT funds, but competition for RTTT funding among those states that meet the basic criteria will be determined by the quality of the states' plans and that will be determined by the degree to which the states address nineteen competitive criteria. The criteria include the state's progress in closing the achievement gap, setting ambitious future achievement targets, adopting nationwide standards, implementing a statewide longitudinal data system to improve instruction, assessing and reporting teacher and principal effectiveness, removing barriers to the initiation of charter schools and assisting struggling schools. It appears that the failure to address one or more of these 19 criteria

¹ SBX5 1 Senate Floor Analysis, January 14, 2010, pages 3-4

will not disqualify a state entirely, but each state's competitive standing will be affected by the depth and quality of the manner in which most, if not all, of the criteria are addressed.

Each reform plan criterion has an associated performance measure, for which states must set annual targets. Finally, each state's application must include certification from the state's attorney general that all elements accurately reflect the state's legal framework; and be signed by the Governor, the chief state schools officer (Superintendent of Public Instruction in California) and the president of the state board of education. States that are awarded funds must meet annual reporting requirements and progress measures, participate in national and state-level program evaluations, and make results publicly available.