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## **News Release**

### ***Colorado Named Finalist For Round 2 “Race To The Top” Grants***

The U.S. Department of Education today named Colorado one of 19 finalists for Phase 2 of the federal Race to the Top grant competition. The finalists were chosen from applications submitted by 35 states and the District of Columbia. Winners are expected to be announced in September.

“We are extremely pleased to make the final round of the Race to the Top contest,” said Gov. Bill Ritter. “We are working hard to win this competition because we want to bring every dollar we can to Colorado to provide a world-class education system for our children so they have the tools to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.”

Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones said Colorado’s 193-page application details the state’s plan for improving education across the state. “While we were disappointed not to win in Phase 1, we have taken the opportunity to sharpen our focus on the more critical elements of our reform agenda,” said Commissioner Jones. “We are eager to partner with school districts that have committed to this important work. Colorado’s plan is about improving achievement for all students and closing gaps in achievement.”

Colorado’s application represents 112 school districts, the Charter School Institute and the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. In all, the application covers 740,000 students (90 percent) in the state.

“Colorado’s application includes strong bipartisan support from the Colorado State Legislature and the Colorado State Board of Education,” said Lt. Gov. Barbara O’Brien. “Our application also represents teamwork and participation from the Colorado Association of School Boards, Colorado Association of School Executives and the business community. We fully expect the grant reviewers to see that Coloradans are in this together and determined to tackle the hard work ahead.”

Colorado State Board of Education Chairman Bob Schaffer said the board is fully committed to the reform elements of the Phase 2 application, which include turning around under-performing schools, improving data systems to generate accurate and relevant performance data, implementing internationally benchmarked standards, and installing the right tools to identify and improve teacher effectiveness.

“The board stands strongly behind Commissioner Jones and department staff on these reforms,” said Chairman Schaffer. “These are the right action steps to make substantive improvements that our students deserve and all parents expect.”

Colorado was one of 15 states (and the District of Columbia) named as finalists for Phase 1 earlier this year. Only Delaware and Tennessee received grants during that round.

In Phase 2, Colorado applied for \$175 million over four years. About \$90 million would go directly to participating districts, with the rest being used to directly support statewide efforts on behalf of districts. The program requires at least half of the dollars to go to local education agencies. The Race to the Top competition is distributing \$4.35 billion nationwide for education reform efforts.

The state will send a delegation to Washington, D.C. in August to defend its application before a review panel. More information on Colorado’s Race to the Top proposal, including a link to the entire application and appendices, is available on the CDE Web site at: [www.cde.state.co.us/scripts/federalstimulus/detail.asp?itemid=806271](http://www.cde.state.co.us/scripts/federalstimulus/detail.asp?itemid=806271)

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