

From the New York Times – Obama's Reform to No Child Left Behind

The administration has already made its mark on education through Race to the Top, [a federal grant program](#) in which 40 states are competing for \$4 billion in education money included in last year's federal stimulus bill. In his [State of the Union address](#), Mr. Obama [hailed the results so far](#) of that competition, which has persuaded states from Rhode Island to California to make changes in their education laws. States that prohibit the use of test scores in teacher evaluations, for example, are not eligible for the funds. The competition has also encouraged states to open the door to more [charter schools](#), which receive public money but are run by independent groups.

Now the administration hopes to apply similar conditions to the distribution of the billions of dollars that the Department of Education hands out to states and districts as part of its annual budget.

"They want to recast the law so that it is as close to Race to the Top as they can get it, making the money conditional on districts' taking action to improve schools," said Jack Jennings, president of the [Center on Education Policy](#), who attended a recent meeting at which administration officials outlined their plans in broad strokes. "Right now most federal money goes out in formulas, so schools know how much they'll get, and then use it to provide services for poor children. The department thinks that's become too much of an entitlement. They want to upend that scheme by making states and districts pledge to take actions the administration considers reform, before they get the money."

One section of the current Bush-era law has required states to certify that all teachers are highly qualified, based on their college coursework and state-issued

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