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Your education road map

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## List of Race to the Top Contenders Continues to Grow

By Michele McNeil on December 15, 2009 2:34 PM | No Comments | No TrackBacks

Yesterday, the U.S. Department of Education released a **list of 36 states** that plan to apply for Race to the Top Fund grants in Round 1. I **blogged** about this, making clear that the department's list wasn't necessarily the final word on Round 1 applicants for the economic-stimulus money.

And, indeed, it's becoming clear that several states that did not file their letters of intent *do* plan on applying in Round 1. Thanks to those who left **comments**, or called me, to fill me in on their states' plans. Informally, it seems that North Carolina, Rhode Island, and Michigan also plan to apply. Michigan, which is **working furiously** in the legislature this week to change its laws to be more competitive in Race to the Top, tried to submit its letter of intent online, but ran into technical difficulties, a state education department official told me today.

(UPDATE: I've also heard Texas is planning to apply, even despite some **strong words** from its education commissioner. It's worth noting that the Lone Star State tends to hold its cards close to the vest. For example, it turned in its State Fiscal Stabilization Fund application dead last, just 18 minutes before the deadline back in July.)

However, a couple of states definitely are not applying. Maine, **for example, is waiting** until Round 2 so it can make legislative changes to improve the link between student and teacher data.

And Maryland, too, is definitely not applying in Round 1. The thing that tipped the balance in favor of Round 2 is interesting: **not winning** a technical assistance grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (although technically the awards were made by and will be administered by the **New Venture Fund**, a grant middleman of sorts). Bill Reinhard, a spokesman for the Maryland Department of Education, said his department used that grant as a "litmus test," which indicated Maryland needs to make some changes in state law (such as those that address teacher tenure) to be more competitive.

As I **tweeted** last week, 10 of 24 states received these Gates/New Venture Fund grants of **up to \$250,000**. This is in addition to the **original Chosen 15**. At least in the case of Maryland, the Gates Foundation, through its grants, is certainly affecting the Race to the Top competition.

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