

PARTICULARISM VS. ENTREPRENEURIALISM: PRESIDENT OBAMA AND
RACE TO THE TOP

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Lee Hoalst, who patiently waited for me to “just finish this sentence” and for tirelessly listening to me talk about President Obama. I would also like to dedicate this thesis to my daughter, Sofia, for being patient with me when she wanted to spend time together and I had homework to do. I could not have done this without you both.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis compares two contending political science theories about why presidents use their unilateral authority as I investigate whether President Obama acted as an entrepreneurial president or a particularistic president when awarding grants to states through the Race to the Top competition. To do so, I evaluate the 12 winning states in two areas. First, I analyze how each of the states ranked nationally in the Editorial Projects in Education Quality Counts Report 2009 and then determine whether each of the winning states needed education reform policies. If so, then it is likely the Obama Administration was acting in a manner consistent with the entrepreneurial presidency model to advance their education policy agenda. Then I examine how each of the winning states voted in the 2008 election to determine which of those states would be the most competitive in the 2012 election. If I found that the winning state was also a swing state, then it is likely the Obama Administration was acting in a manner consistent with the particularistic presidency model to gain electoral support through grant allocation. My results indicate that the Obama Administration's Race to the Top grant decisions are most consistent with the entrepreneurial presidency model, thereby advancing his education policy agenda outside of legislative action.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

American Recover and Reinvestment Act	ARRA
Annual Year Progress	AYP
D.C. Public Schools	DCPS
District of Columbia	D.C.
Department of Homeland Security	DHS
Editorials in Education	EPE
Elementary and Secondary Education Act	ESEA
Local Education Agencies	LEA
Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System	MCAS
National Assessment of Educational Progress	NAEP
No Child Left Behind	NCLB
Race to the Top	RTTT
State Fiscal Stabilization Fund	SFSF
Tennessee's Value Added Assessment Program	TVAAP
U.S. Department of Education	USDOE

INTRODUCTION

What explains unilateral decision-making by a president? The power of the president to use unilateral action has been claimed since George Washington. In much of the history of the presidency, most unilateral actions have been for administrative purposes. In the last 50 years, however, the construct of unilateral decision-making has shifted toward decisions that affect the national political process. Political scientists studying this change in the modern presidency have posed theories about why presidents have made this change.

Presidency scholars have taken note of what motivates the president, and based on those motivations, what they might do in the future. John Hudak (2014) and Douglas Kriner and Andrew Reeves (2015a) developed the theory of presidential particularism that expands on the idea that presidents are motivated by politics. These scholars argue presidents use their unilateral authority to benefit their own electoral motives or the electoral needs of other people in their party. William Howell (2013), on the other hand, expands on what is called presidential entrepreneurialism, which contends that presidents use their unilateral authority to advance their policy agenda. Presidents pursue a series of goals during their presidency, including good public policy, expanded institutional power, and enhanced presidential legacy (Moe and Howell 1999; Neustadt 1960). However, before any of those goals can be pursued, presidents must have electoral success (Hudak, 2011, 8). Additionally, Hudak writes that “beyond the obvious benefits

of an individual's initial election to the office of president, reelection allows the president the most immediate and continued influence over public policy" (Hudak, 2011).

In this thesis, I examine the Obama Administration's decision-making concerning the Race to the Top (RTTT) Initiative to test these two competing theories. I ask whether the Obama Administration awarded federal grants to advance its education policy agenda or to states that would have the most electoral benefit. Based on evidence presented by Hudak, the two theories do not work in tandem, because without re-election, policy objectives cannot be met. According to Howell, a president can make innovative policy decisions simply to advance his agenda. Examining the RTTT winners will allow me to determine if one, both or neither of the theories apply to the innovative grant program developed by the Obama Administration.

UNILATERAL ACTION AND RACE TO THE TOP

In February 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) into law, which designated a \$4.35 billion “executive earmark” for the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). An executive earmark allows the president to direct funds to a specific recipient while circumventing the merit-based or competitive funds allocation process at spending is allocated. Obama used his executive authority to earmark funds for the Race to the Top (RTTT) program. To understand the forces that drove President Obama’s decision-making concerning which states to award RTTT funds, I apply two unilateral authority theories. Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves (2012) and John Hudak (2014) claim the president uses the power of federal grant allocation to further their political goals. William Howell (2013), however, theorizes that a president will use this unilateral action to advance their policy agenda when Congress is unable or unwilling to cooperate.

Kriner and Reeves (2012, 2014, 2015) pose the question of whether voters reward presidents for federal spending at the local level. In a study of presidential elections from 1988 to 2008, evidence suggests that voters reward incumbent presidents (or their party’s nominee) for increased federal spending in local communities. They argue that presidents possess strong electoral and partisan incentives to pursue policies that prioritize the needs of some Americans over those of others. According to Hudak, executive earmarks are one way to accomplish that electoral goal. In his book, *Presidential Pork: White House Influence over the Distribution of Federal Grants*, Hudak details how presidents from

both parties have used federal funds for political and electoral purposes. “In the wake of the congressional earmark ban—no matter how porous its constraints—the executive branch has been empowered to dole out even more federal funding than ever before” (Hudak, 2014). Kriner, Reeves and Hudak assert that these presidents are acting in a particularistic manner by directing federal dollars to specific constituents for political gain (Kriner & Reeves, 2014; Hudak, 2014).

Conversely, William Howell (2013) argues that presidents use their various forms of unilateral authority in ways that suit their policy interests, rather than their political goals. For example, President Obama had to use the institutional powers granted to the office of the president to fulfill his domestic policy promises to the American people (Howell, 2013). Presidents face extraordinary public expectations to change policy yet have very little constitutional authority to do so. Despite this, presidents, have historically created many mechanisms to advance their policy objectives (Howell, 2013).

Although Obama campaigned mightily to repeal the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002, he failed to garner majority support in Congress to take swift action once elected. Having been elected on the promise of change, Obama was forced to push the boundaries of his office in order to accomplish his agenda. In addition to rewriting certain provisions of the NCLB, he hoped to expand K-12 education to include college and career readiness and create strong pre-school education in every state. Without the cooperation of Congress to expediently pass new education legislation, the Obama Administration used their capacity to allocate federal dollars to develop the RTTT competition. As part of the application process, RTTT required states to adopt policies in line with the Obama agenda to win federal grant money. The design of the RTTT

competition makes it an ideal mechanism to evaluate why presidents use their unilateral authority. In this study, I seek to determine, through RTTT, whether Barack Obama was motivated by the desire to advance his political aspirations and that of the Democratic party or if he used his unilateral authority to establish his education policy.

Looking at these competing theories, side by side, will provide us greater insight into presidential politics and how unilateral authority is used. I may find that President Obama had both political and policy motivations for RTTT or I may find that neither of these theories applies. To further understand the environment that made RTTT possible, it is important to know the context of RTTT and what makes it unique.

CONTEXTUALIZING RACE TO THE TOP

In February 2009, Congress signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, which granted \$787 billion in tax cuts and stimulated the economy by saving existing jobs, and creating new ones, and providing temporary relief for programs most effected by the recession. In addition, the ARRA set aside nearly \$100 billion for education. Approximately \$48.5 billion of ARRA education funding was allocated for the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) to help states recover from budget shortfalls and prevent teacher layoffs, \$5 billion of which was intended to be leveraged by states to implement innovative education reforms (Burke, 2010).

The SFSF required states to show progress in four reform areas previously authorized under the bipartisan Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the America Competes Act of 2007. State education systems receiving SFSF funds had to make significant progress toward rigorous college and career readiness standards and high-quality assessments that were valid and reliable for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities; schools had to establish pre-K to college and career data systems to track progress and foster continuous improvement; schools had to make significant improvements in teacher effectiveness and provide intensive support; and create effective intervention programs for the lowest-performing schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

The Race to the Top Fund

As part of the SFSF, the Obama Administration created the RTTT competition to award \$4.35 billion to states based on education policy reforms that had already been enacted or to states that had a comprehensive plan to adopt new reforms (Howell, 2013). RTTT was tailored after the requirements of the SFSF but focused on the policy priorities of the Obama Administration. Unlike RTTT, the SFSF grants focused on the prior success of schools to raise student achievement, equitable distribution of teachers, the strength of their longitudinal databases, how well they had improved standards and assessments, how well the state supported struggling schools, and the quality of their plan for continued progress in those areas (Whitehurst, 2010).

RTTT was designed to be a nationwide competition open to all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The initiative was designed to address the major flaws with NCLB and was intended to award federal funds based on four core education reform areas: 1) states had to adopt standards and assessments that prepared students for success in college and the workplace, and to compete in the global economy; 2) states were required to build data systems that measured student growth and success; 3) states had to recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals, especially in school districts with the most need; and 4) states were required to turn around the lowest-achieving schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). According to Joseph P. Viteritti, the Thomas Hunter Professor of Public Policy at Hunter College, CUNY, creating the policy criteria was the federal government using its power and resources to move the country toward national standards designed collectively by the

states, rather than forcing states to follow federal standards coming from Washington (Viteritti, 2012).

States were required to submit a comprehensive application to the USDOE, detailing current policies and plans to implement policies that aligned with the criteria of RTTT and the Obama Administration. The applications would be scored based in six core areas that included state success factors, standards and assessments, data systems to support instruction, great teachers and leaders, turning around the lowest achieving schools and state local education agency participation. Daniel H. Bowen of the American Enterprise Institute, raised concerns about the objectivity of the scoring process of RTTT. Bowen was concerned that the scoring assumed that the application process started with a level playing field. The 2010 Economic Stimulus Watch report states that political influences are possible because of the ambiguous scoring rubric. He wrote that effective rubrics establish methods for measuring the extent to which the criteria are met. The RTTT rubric failed to provide objective methods for measuring how well the criteria were met by each state which left significant room for discretion by the reviewers (Bowen, 2010). These reviewers had expertise in education policy, education reform, operational and organizational management, and experience with application review and evaluation (U.S. Department of Education, 2009) but the rubric itself may have made it impossible for subjectivity. (See Appendix A for a breakdown of Phases 1 and 2 scoring).

Once the evaluations were completed, the states with the top scores would be awarded grants. In phase one the grants were based on need and in phase two were based on the state's population. States like New York and California could be awarded up to \$700 million, while the smallest states like Idaho and New Hampshire were eligible for

awards up to \$75 million. The USDOE determined the actual size of the award based on state budget requests, the level of local education agency (LEA) participation, and the proposed activities (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

For the Obama Administration, RTTT was an innovative way to provide incentive for state and local leaders to work together on ambitious reforms, and develop plans to change policies and practices to improve outcomes for students without moving comprehensive education reform through Congress. Although RTTT was a unique way of distributing funds under the SFSF by the Obama Administration, the phenomenon of a president using executive action to create policy is not. We do not know what motivated President Obama to create RTTT, however the political science research on executive unilateral action has evolved to the point that there are theories for why presidents use their unilateral authority in certain situations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many scholars have looked at what modern presidents do to influence policy. Early research focused on the skills, temperament and experience of a president rather than the formal authority given to the president. In his 1960 book, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*, Richard Neustadt argues that in a government with separate institutions sharing powers the chief power of the president is the power to persuade. He claims that if the president has to resort to his formal powers to achieve his objectives, he has already failed and is likely to pay a high price that will further undermine his persuasive capital in future endeavors. "The essence of a President's persuasive task, with congressmen and everybody else, is to induce them to believe that what he wants of them is what their own appraisal of their own responsibilities requires them to do in their interest, not his" (Neustadt, 1960, 40). In practice, the use of unilateral authority requires a president to secure the cooperation of other political actors through persuasive tactics. Neustadt's ideas dominated the study of presidential power for decades.

Neustadt's ideas established that the behavior of the president reigned supreme. Subsequent scholars suggest that skill, personality, style, and reputation are components for presidential power (Barber, 1972; George, 1974; Greenstein, 2000). Power was contingent on persuasion and the power to persuade rests in the personal qualities of a president. Post-Neustadt scholars contend that unilateral authority allows presidents to act alone and more efficiently than Congress (Deering and Maltzman, 1999; Krause and Cohen, 1997, 462). Moe and Scott Wilson (1994, 13) contend that the presidential

strategy of going public to get the support of the electorate is a strategic way that allows them to maneuver the system to get their desired outcome. Described by other scholars as the “strategic model,” presidents are strategic actors, who issue unilateral orders to bypass or evade Congress (Fine and Warber, 2012; Morgan, 1970; Nathan, 1983).

Scholarly research of Presidency studies shifted in the 1980s and 1990s to a very different perspective. In two important essays, Terry Moe (1985, 1993) urged scholars to shift attention from analyses of presidential strategy and style within fixed constraints to studies of how presidents factor into the broader “logic of institutional development” (1985, 236). This was at odds with Neustadt’s view of the weak president.

Moe and William G. Howell (1999), together, offer an institutional theory of presidential power. They conclude that the “president’s powers of unilateral action are a force of American politics because they are not specified in the formal structure of government” (Moe and Howell 1999, 852). Most institutional theorists look at the formal powers given to the institution, while Moe and Howell (1999) look specifically at the powers given to the president that are not a formal structure of government. They contend that presidents will push the envelope, while at the same time, use their unilateral powers strategically and with moderation. This expanded power of the president is a way to rescue the nation from congressional inactivity. When the president uses unilateral action to alter the status quo, it forces Congress to act or acquiesce to the new presidentially-made law (Moe and Howell, 1999).

Presidents historically have fashioned all sorts of mechanisms by which to advance their policy objectives: through unilateral directives such as executive orders, proclamations, and national security directives, all of which have received a good

measure of scholarly attention (Howell, 2005 and Mayer, 2009); but also through signing statements (Jackman, 2014; Kelly, Marshall, and Watts, 2013; Thrower, 2013), executive agreements (Martin, 2000), memoranda (Woolley, 2014), procurement provisions (Gitterman, 2013), and distributive policies (Berry, Burden, and Howell, 2010; Kriner and Reeves, 2015; Hudak, 2014). Presidents have either discovered or manufactured ways to shape public policy outside of the traditional legislative process using these unilateral devices. There is also literature that suggests presidents have increasingly adapted unilateral tools to achieve their policy and political ends (Cooper, 2002; Howell, 2003; Mayer, 2001; Rudalevige, 2005).

In this paper, I compare two conflicting theories about why presidents make policy through their own administrative devices. Douglas Kriner and Andrew Reeves contend that a president will use their power of unilateral decision-making to maximize their prospects of reelection and will respond disproportionately to the interests of Americans in constituencies with the most influence in the next presidential contest (Kriner and Reeves, 2015a). Northwestern University Law Professor Jide Nzelibe wrote “One of the most widespread contemporary assumptions in the discourse about the separation of powers is that while the president tends to have preferences that are more national and stable in nature, Congress is perpetually prone to parochial concerns” (2006, 1217). Cronin and Genovese (2004, 198) argues that presidents are not supposed to act with their eyes on the next election or favor any group or party because they represent the nation in national matters. Kriner and Reeves agree that the universalistic framework emphasizes the difference between presidents and legislators, however, it does not fully explain presidential behavior. They argue that presidents face strong incentives to be

particularistic: which means “a president will prioritize the needs and desires of some citizens over others when pursuing their policy agendas” (Kriner and Reeves, 2015a, 155).

Particularistic presidents will geographically target federal dollars, often in order to assist in their reelection efforts. According to the particularistic theory, “presidents have incentives to respond disproportionately to the interests of Americans, in constituencies with the most influence, in the next presidential election” (Kriner and Reeves, 2015a, 156). These are often the battleground states like Virginia and Florida.

The president often has the power to influence the geographic allocation of federal grants to serve their political needs. Although Congress has the power of the purse and determines the amount of money allocated to a specific department or agency, the President often uses this capacity to shape how those federal dollars are allocated after they are appropriated. One of the ways that a president can do this is through the budgetary process. The president has direct involvement in shaping precisely where and how federal dollars are spent. The 1921 Budget and Accounting Act gave the President the responsibility to present Congress with the annual budget. Presidents use this power to shape policy implementation. Presidents have multiple opportunities to shape budgetary outcomes at both the proposal and implementation stages (Berry, Burden, and Howell, 2010).

For example, Kriner and Reeves use disaster declarations and military base closures to illustrate that this particularistic, unilateral power has both electoral and partisan implications that influence presidential actions about national security and the geographic distribution of federal resources. This work demonstrates that the President,

like members of Congress, has a dual role: national leader and partisan leader. As partisan in chief, presidents have an incentive to make policy decisions that systematically channel federal dollars disproportionately to parts of the country that form their partisan base (Kriner and Reeves 2015, 685).

Kriner and Reeves contend that the theory of presidential particularism has substantial influence over the disaster declaration process. According to their research, counties in core states (states that supported the president) and counties in swing states (states that are not necessarily partisan) were more likely to receive disaster declarations than counties in other states. This was also more evident in election years. The universalistic approach contends that a president will issue disaster relief aid based on need. The particularistic view asserts a president will look past need and award disaster funding based on the electorate. In 2012, the Obama administration awarded disaster declarations to counties in core states 4.7 times more often than non-core states and 3.7 times more often in swing states than non-swing states during that election year (Kriner and Reeves 2015, 690).

Kriner and Reeves also look at the unilateral authority of the president over military base closures. Since the 1960's, there has been controversy over the base closure authority of the president. It often appears that there is political motivation behind the closures rather than an interest in national security. To keep the president from making base closures based on politics, Congress passed a law in 1976, stripping the president of the unilateral power to close military bases. However, with the destruction of the Berlin Wall, Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense under George H.W. Bush, believed that base closures were necessary in a post-cold war world, and that the Commander in Chief had

authority to make that decision. Under the direction of the president, the Department of Defense presented Congress with a list of 35 base closures, 29 of which were in districts strongly represented by Democrats (Kriner and Reeves 2015, 692). Most of the bases in states that supported the president were not included in the list of closures. This is an example of how, in matters of the distributive politics of national security, the Commander in Chief prioritizes the needs of some Americans over those of others (Kriner and Reeves 2015, 698).

John Hudak also offered the presidential particularism argument. In his book, *Presidential Pork*, Hudak argues that the President has the incentive to use the power of their office to advance their electoral interest. Hudak also focuses his research on the distributive policies of the president. According to Hudak, the structure of the Electoral College makes some states more important than others, therefore, persuading the median voter in every state would be a waste of time and resources for a president, especially in non-competitive states (Hudak 2014, 26). Hudak uses the example of California, which is traditionally considered “blue” and will not likely change to a “red” state under most conditions, rendering it pointless to spend time, money and influence on a state that theoretically does not matter (Hudak, 2014).

Not all states are as ideologically entrenched as California, making it necessary for the president to strategically target the electorate in competitive states. The importance of these presidential electoral interests is critical to understanding why presidents act in a particular way. The particularistic theory that a president has electoral motives in the distribution of federal funds is central to Hudak’s research on presidential pork. To explain his theory, Hudak looks at the “pork barrel politics” that happens at the

presidential level. More specifically he explores the \$300 million alternative energy grants that come from the Power Plan Improvement Initiative and the Clean Coal Initiative, and how they are distributed. President George W. Bush promoted these programs as the country demanded more clean energy, however, he did not distribute the funds equally across states or to all constituencies who were making strides toward clean energy consumption. Instead, as the election day approached, the Bush Administration announced that they would award grants to the five most electorally competitive states in recent history (Hudak 2014, 32). Ohio, New Mexico, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin were chosen to receive most the grant money allocated for the program. However, some smaller awards were granted to other states. The politically competitive states received multi-million dollar grants, large public announcement ceremonies, and a visit from the president or Secretary of Energy, Spencer Abraham, just before the 2004 election. Florida, Ohio, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin account for 62.4% of George W. Bush's television advertising for the 2004 campaign, despite those states only making up 16.6% of the nation's population (Hudak, 2014, 33).

Clearly, the use of unilateral authority by the president provides the perfect opportunity to behave in electorally strategic ways. Douglas Kriner, Andrew Reeves, and John Hudak all agree that presidents are electorally motivated and regardless of the circumstance will make decisions to benefit their political advancement or that of their down ballot cohorts. Accordingly, I base my first hypothesis upon this logic.

Hypothesis 1: President Obama will award grant money from RTTT to states that will advance his presidency. This will affirm the particularist argument developed by Kriner, Reeves, and Hudak, when using his unilateral authority in distributive policies.

However, the use of unilateral action by a president to influence voting behavior is not the only way scholars look at why presidents make use of the unilateral tools at their disposal. Other presidency scholars contend that presidents have policy agendas and will act both with and without the support of Congress. In his 2014 State of the Union Address, President Obama said “Wherever and whenever, I can take steps, without legislation to expand more opportunity for more American families, that is what I am going to do” (Obama, 2014).

Matthew Dickinson and Jesse Gubb (2016) examine unilateral actions of the president and contend that presidents are not signing executive actions to bypass Congress but rather to put down an initial policy marker while waiting for eventual congressional action. Their research agrees with Moe and Howell (1999), concluding that presidents are more likely to utilize policy-related executive orders when Congress is less likely to produce legislation (Dickinson and Gubb, 2016). However, they assert that presidents are strategic in the way they use the various policy making mechanisms. For example, George W. Bush, signed executive order to establish the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and simultaneously introduced bills in Congress to put the department on solid footing (Dickinson and Gubb, 2016). In this example, Bush believed that establishing the DHS could not wait for the lengthy Congressional approval process. By using his unilateral power of executive order, he established the department and then

allowed Congress to make it a cabinet-level agency. This is often the role that executive orders play in the legislative process.

The conclusions reached by Dickinson and Gubb are consistent with a broader theoretical argument offered by William Howell. Given the ambiguity of Article II of the Constitution, Howell writes that the president has the ability to be the most entrepreneurial in their efforts to establish policy. Indeed, among political actors, presidents may hold the prize for being the most entrepreneurial (Howell, 2014). Presidents face extraordinary public expectations and yet have little constitutional authority. “Presidents historically have fashioned all sorts of mechanisms by which to advance their policy objectives: through unilateral directives such as executive orders, proclamations, and national security directives, all of which have received a good measure of scholarly attention” (Howell 2014, 1)

In his book, *Thinking about the Presidency: The Primacy of Power*, Howell (2013) writes that we see signs of presidential entrepreneurialism at every turn. Modern presidents create new policy devices over which they can exert nearly complete control, and in others reorganize the federal bureaucracy in ways that better suit their policy interests. For example, while Barack Obama’s 2008 campaign focused on “hope” and “change” when he was elected, his agenda faced great opposition. In order to deliver on his promises, Obama had to use the institutional powers granted to his office (Howell, 2015). The ability of a president to promote a policy agenda through unilateral action was common practice during the Obama administration. For example, President Obama signed an executive order raising the minimum wage of federal workers when Congress failed to enact legislation that would accomplish this goal. Obama was only able to exert

this unilateral authority over an agency under his control. He called on mayors, governors, and state legislators, hoping that this federal policy change would ignite other state and local municipalities to raise the minimum for all workers.

During a time of divisive government, presidents will exercise their unilateral authority when Congress cannot or will not adopt the policies of the president. In his theory of presidential entrepreneurialism, Howell postulates that presidents will use their unilateral authority to advance their policy agenda in entrepreneurial ways (Howell, 2015). Accordingly, I base my second hypothesis upon this logic.

Hypothesis 2: President Obama will award grant money from RTTT to states with the most need for education policy reform. This will affirm Howell's argument that the president will be entrepreneurial when using their unilateral authority to establish policy.

METHODOLGY

To assess whether the Obama Administration used the RTTT grants as an entrepreneurial policy making tool or as a way to channel federal dollars to key constituencies for electoral benefit, I will examine the winners of the first two phases of the RTTT program. For each of the winning states I will evaluate both their educational ranking and political context, to test each state against my hypothesis.

I first look at state education data to determine how each of the winning states rank nationally and, among the 12 RTTT winners. I use data from the Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) Research Center's Quality Counts Report 2009 to evaluate the overall score, from the six key indicators, that help determine the success of students in K-12 schools. The EPE Quality Counts report has been published annually since 1997 to track state education policies and outcomes which draws on the EPE annual state policy survey. The key indicators in the report are aligned with the policy objectives of the Obama Administration and include: the state's chance for success; K-12 achievement; standards, assessments & accountability; transitions & alignment; teaching profession; and school finance¹. I use this data to evaluate whether the presidential entrepreneurialism theory applies to the RTTT awards. If Howell's theory applies, the Obama Administration would award states with the greatest need for education reform policies to improve education. I elected to focus on a state's need for education reform

¹ A detailed report with the individual factors for each of the six indicators can be found at http://www.edweek.org/apps/qc2009/state_compare.html?intc=ml#table_1

based on the June 22, 2009 speech by U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, articulating that their focus would be to turn around the bottom 5% of schools (USDOE, 2009). For this research, I define states with the most need as those states that score less than 80% in the overall state score. In analyzing the EPE Quality Counts Report, it was apparent that most of the schools that fell below 80%, in the overall score, often had policy areas with a D or F in one or more categories. Only 2 states that scored above an 80% had a D or F. Georgia received a D+ in K-12 achievement and received a failing grade in K-12 achievement.

I then look at the political context of each winning state, this will allow me to determine what, if any, electoral benefit could be derived from granting a particular state federal education dollars. To better understand electoral competitiveness, I classify each state in one of three political contexts: core state, swing state, and lost cause state (Hudak, 2014, 34). Core states are defined as states where more than 55% of the electorate voted for Barack Obama and are likely to support him in the 2012 election. Lost cause states are those states that John McCain received more than 55% of the vote in 2008, and are likely to vote for Obama's opponent in 2012. Swing states are those states that were decided by fewer than 10 percentage points and are likely to be the most targeted by the Obama administration for the 2012 election. Following the theory put forth separately by Douglas Kriner, Andrew Reeves, and John Hudak that presidents seek electoral motives in the distribution of federal funds (Kriner and Reeves, 2015a; Hudak, 2014), an individual state would be awarded RTTT funds based on whether a particular state would be a wise electoral investment. For the particularistic theory to apply, the Obama Administration would award RTTT grants to only swing states because they would

provide the most electoral benefit in the 2012 election. It is possible that the president could have rewarded states an RTTT grant for their electoral support in the 2008 election, however, that would be more difficult to quantify, so I elected to exclude it from my research.

In this analysis, I am concerned with why President Obama chose certain states for the distribution of federal grant money in the RTTT Competition. By evaluating the winning states based on their overall need for education reform and whether awarding a grant would provide electoral benefit in the 2012 election, I will be able to determine if President Obama utilized the entrepreneurialism theory or particularism theory to award RTTT grants.

Table 1: Quality Counts Data

	State	Grade	Score	Chance for Success	Transition s and Alignment	School Finance	K-12 Achievement	Standards, Assessments and Accountability	Teaching Profession
1	Maryland	B	84.7	B+	A	B	B	B	C-
2	Massachusetts	B	84.6	A-	C	B	B	A-	C
3	New York	B	84.1	B	B+	B+	C-	A-	C+
4	Virginia	B	83.2	B	B-	B-	C	A	B-
5	New Jersey	B-	81.9	A-	C+	B+	B-	B-	C
6	Ohio	B-	81.2	B-	B-	B-	C-	A	C+
7	Pennsylvania	B-	80.3	B	B-	B-	C+	C+	C+
8	Georgia	B-	80	C	B	C+	D+	A-	B
9	West Virginia	B-	80	C-	A	A	F	A	C+
10	Arkansas	B-	79.6	C-	B	C	D+	B+	B+
11	Florida	B-	79.6	C+	C+	C-	C	A-	B
12	Vermont	B-	79.5	B+	C-	C-	C+	B-	C-
13	Indiana	C+	79	C+	C+	C+	C-	A-	C-
14	South Carolina	C+	78.9	C	C	C	D	A	A-
15	Wisconsin	C+	78	B	C-	C-	C-	C+	C+
16	Michigan	C+	77.8	C+	B	B-	D	A-	D+
17	Maine	C+	77.7	B-	B-	B+	C	C+	D
18	Delaware	C+	77.4	B-	D	B-	C-	B+	C+
19	Texas	C+	77.1	C	B	B	C	B+	C
20	Connecticut	C+	77	A-	C-	B+	D	C	C-
21	Tennessee	C+	77	C-	B+	B+	D+	A-	C
22	New Mexico	C+	76.9	D+	A	C	D-	A-	C+
23	Iowa	C	76.3	B	C+	C	C-	D+	B-
24	Minnesota	C	76.2	B+	C	C+	C	C	D+
25	California	C	76.1	C	B-	C	D+	A-	C-
26	Oklahoma	C	76.1	C-	C+	C+	D	A-	B-
27	Kentucky	C	76	C	C	C+	D+	B+	B-
28	Rhode Island	C	76	B-	C-	A-	D	B+	D
29	New Hampshire	C	75.9	A-	C-	B-	C	C	D
30	North Carolina	C	75.5	C+	D+	D+	D+	A-	B
31	Alabama	C	75.4	C-	C+	C-	F	A-	B-
32	Washington	C	75.2	B-	C	C	C-	B-	C
33	Hawaii	C	75.1	C+	C		D	B-	C+
34	Louisiana	C	74.4	D+	C	D	D-	A-	B
35	Wyoming	C	74.4	B-	D	D	C-	C+	D-
36	North Dakota	C	73.7	B	D+	D+	C	C	D+
37	Colorado	C	73.6	B	D	C	C-	B-	D+
38	Kansas	C	73.3	B	D-	C+	C	C+	D+
39	Utah	C	73.3	B-	C-	C-	C-	C+	C-
40	Alaska	C	73.2	C	C-	B-	D+	B	D-
41	Illinois	C	72.9	B-	D+	C-	D+	C+	D+
42	Missouri	C-	72.4	C+	D+	C	D	C	C
43	Arizona	C-	72.2	C-	C-	D+	D+	A-	D+
44	Oregon	C-	71.5	C	C+	C+	D	C+	F
45	Montana	C-	71.2	C+	D	C	C-	C	D+
46	South Dakota	C-	71.1	B-	D-	D-	C-	C+	D
47	Nebraska	C-	69.8	B	F	C+	D+	D	D+
48	Mississippi	D+	69.4	D+	C	D+	F	B	D
49	Idaho	D+	69.1	C+	D-	D	C-	C	D
50	Nevada	D+	68.8	D+	D-	D	D-	C+	C-
51	DC	D+	68.3	C+	D+		F	C+	D-

Source: Editorials in Education Quality Counts Report 2009

Phase 1 Winners

Phase 2 Winners

Table 2: 2008 Election Data

State	2008 Presidential Election Winner	% of Vote	% to loser	Diff	Core	Swing	Lost Cause
Alabama	McCain	60.32%	38.74%	21.58%			X
Alaska	McCain	59.42%	37.89%	21.53%		X	
Arizona	McCain	53.64%	45.12%	8.52%		X	
Arkansas	McCain	58.72%	38.86%	19.86%			X
California	Obama	61.01%	36.95%	24.06%	X		
Colorado	Obama	53.66%	44.71%	8.95%		X	
Connecticut	Obama	60.59%	38.22%	22.37%	X		
DC	Obama	92.46%	6.53%	85.93%	X		
Delaware	Obama	61.94%	36.95%	24.99%	X		
Florida	Obama	51.03%	48.22%	2.81%		X	
Georgia	McCain	52.20%	46.99%	5.21%		X	
Hawaii	Obama	71.85%	26.58%	45.27%	X		
Idaho	McCain	61.52%	36.09%	25.43%			X
Illinois	Obama	61.92%	36.78%	25.14%	X		
Indiana	Obama	49.95%	48.91%	1.04%		X	
Iowa	Obama	53.93%	44.39%	9.54%		X	
Kansas	McCain	56.61%	41.65%	14.96%		X	
Kentucky	McCain	57.40%	41.17%	16.23%			X
Louisiana	McCain	58.56%	39.93%	18.63%			X
Maine	Obama	57.71%	40.38%	17.33%	X		
Maryland	Obama	61.92%	36.47%	25.45%	X		
Massachusetts	Obama	61.80%	35.99%	25.81%	X		
Michigan	Obama	57.43%	40.96%	16.47%	X		
Minnesota	Obama	54.06%	43.82%	10.24%		X	
Mississippi	McCain	56.18%	43.00%	13.18%			X
Missouri	McCain	49.43%	49.29%	0.14%		X	
Montana	McCain	49.51%	47.25%	2.26%			X
Nebraska	McCain	56.53%	41.60%	14.93%			X
Nevada	Obama	55.15%	42.65%	12.50%	X		
New Hampshire	Obama	54.13%	44.52%	9.61%		X	
New Jersey	Obama	57.27%	41.70%	15.57%	X		
New Mexico	Obama	56.91%	41.78%	15.13%	X		
New York	Obama	62.88%	36.03%	26.85%	X		
North Carolina	Obama	49.70%	49.38%	0.32%		X	
North Dakota	McCain	53.25%	44.62%	8.63%		X	
Ohio	Obama	51.50%	46.91%	4.59%		X	
Oklahoma	McCain	65.65%	34.35%	31.30%			X
Oregon	Obama	56.75%	40.40%	16.35%		X	
Pennsylvania	Obama	54.49%	44.17%	10.32%		X	
Rhode Island	Obama	62.86%	35.06%	27.80%	X		
South Carolina	McCain	53.87%	44.90%	8.97%		X	
South Dakota	McCain	53.16%	44.75%	8.41%		X	
Tennessee	McCain	56.90%	41.83%	15.07%			X
Texas	McCain	55.45%	43.68%	11.77%			X
Utah	McCain	62.58%	34.41%	28.17%		X	
Vermont	Obama	67.46%	30.45%	37.01%	X		
Virginia	Obama	52.63%	46.33%	6.30%		X	
Washington	Obama	57.65%	40.48%	17.17%	X		
West Virginia	McCain	55.71%	42.59%	13.12%			X
Wisconsin	Obama	56.22%	42.31%	13.91%	X		
Wyoming	McCain	64.78%	32.54%	32.24%			X

Source: Federal Elections Commission (2008)

Phase 1 Winners

Phase 2 Winners

ANALYSIS

The RTTT competition caused many states to scramble in order to better position themselves to win a piece of the \$4.35 billion that the Department of Education was planning to award states that could prove that they would be able to meet the high standards that the Obama Administration had set for the grant funding. Of the 46 states and the District of Columbia that applied for federal grant money, 12 states were awarded funds in phases one and two.² Delaware and Tennessee were the only phase one³ winners, while the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Rhode Island received awards in Phase 2 of the competition⁴.

Phase One

Delaware

The highest scoring participant in phase one of Race to the Top was Delaware. Prior to entering RTTT, education had been a top policy priority for over a decade in Delaware. In 2006, a coalition of education, government, business, and civic leaders formed the Vision Coalition to improve public education in Delaware and move them out of the middle of the pack in the national education ranking. Their program, *Vision 2015*,

² An additional 7 states were awarded Early Childhood Education grants in Phase 3. This was awarded with a completely different set of guidelines and therefore, I did not use that phase of the program in my analysis.

³ Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming all applied for Phase 1 but failed to adequately meet the criteria of the Obama Administration for funding.

⁴ 7 states did not reapply for consideration (Idaho, Minnesota, Oregon, South Dakota, Virginia, West Virginia, Wyoming) while Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, and Washington submitted first time applications in Phase 2.

had 6 major elements to reform their education system. Their goals were to invest in early childhood education, develop and support great teachers, empower principals to be great school leaders, encourage innovation, require accountability, and establish a simple and fair funding system (Vision, 2006).

In 2009, Delaware ranked 18th in the EPE Quality Counts rankings. They received a C+, with an overall score of 77.4%. The state did not score an A in any of the six key indicators for success. However, Delaware scored above average in three categories, school finance; standards, assessments and accountability; and chance for success. Conversely, K-12 achievement received a 72.2% largely based on their low percentage of proficiency in math and reading and their 62% graduation rate. Delaware also failed to create policies that defined and assessed elementary school readiness and lacked interventions to help students who were not prepared for school which gave them a score of 64.3% for transition and alignment. Based on the low scores given in the EPE Quality Counts report, Delaware met the criteria of an education system in need of improvement.

In 2008, Delaware overwhelmingly supported Barack Obama for president, awarding him nearly 62% of the statewide vote. This is not surprising because Joseph Biden, a 36-year Senator from the state, was the vice-presidential candidate on the ticket. As a core state, Delaware would not be a strategic investment for the 2012 election.

Based on my analysis, Delaware was a core constituency for President Obama, and it would not benefit his 2012 reelection efforts to award the state RTTT funds. However, Delaware was in the bottom 2/3 in the Quality Counts 2009 rankings and was prepared to utilize a RTTT grant to benefit the state's education system. I conclude that Howell's presidential entrepreneurialism theory applies to the state of Delaware.

Tennessee

Tennessee had been making efforts to improve the state's education system through its Value Added Assessment program for more than a decade. However, based on the requirements of RTTT, the state had to convene a special session of the legislature. During the speedy 2-week session, legislators signed Tennessee's First to the Top Act of 2010 and the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010. Through these new policies, Tennessee Governor Phillip Bredesen, hoped to create an opportunity for the state to be awarded a RTTT grant (Sher, 2009).

Like Delaware, Tennessee settled near the middle of the pack in the EPE education rankings, just slightly behind Delaware at 21st. They received a score of 77%, with an overall grade of a C+. Their A- in the Standards, Assessments and Accountability category, was overshadowed by a D+ in both K-12 achievement and school finance. The state had assessment tests that were aligned with state standards at every grade level and the assigned ratings to schools based on their annual year progress (AYP) placing them in the top 5% in that category. Conversely, the state had a less than 30% efficiency in both math and reading in 4th and 8th grade and spent \$7620 per student, ranking them 47th in per pupil expenditure. According to my methodology, Tennessee, based on their overall score of 77%, was in need of improvement in education.

John McCain came out on top among the voters in Tennessee receiving 56.9% of the vote. For President Obama, this made Tennessee a lost cause state. It was unlikely that awarding the state a RTTT grant would shift the voting behavior in his favor in 2012. As a lost cause state, Tennessee would not be a strategic electoral investment for President Obama.

Based on my analysis, Tennessee was a lost cause state for President Obama, therefore, it would not benefit him to invest RTTT funds for his reelection efforts. However, Tennessee did have areas of improvement in education that made awarding a RTTT grant a benefit to the policy objectives of the Obama Administration. For those reasons, I conclude that the presidential entrepreneurialism theory applies to the state of Tennessee.

Phase Two

District of Columbia (D.C.)

In 2005, the Washington Lawyers' Committee issued a report on D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) and found that when compared to surrounding school districts in Maryland and Virginia, they underperformed in almost every area. To help facilitate educational improvement, a fundamental change was made to the governance of the District's public schools. The Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 separated the DCPS from the D.C. Board of Education and put it under the direct control of the mayor's office (Withycombe, 2010). Mayor Adrian Fenty then appointed Michelle Rhee as the DCPS Chancellor, who set out to close failing schools and introduce new teacher performance evaluations. By the end of 2008, Rhee had closed 23 under enrolled schools and dismissed 250 teachers who had not met certification deadlines (Maxwell, 2008).

According to the EPE Quality Counts Report, D.C. had not yet made significant improvements in 2009 and ranked last among all states, receiving a 68.3%. This included a failing grade in K-12 achievement, a D- in the teaching profession, and D+ in transitions and alignment. D.C. was not graded for school finance since it is a single-

district jurisdiction making it impossible to measure financial equity among districts. The K-12 achievement numbers were startling. The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) reports math and reading proficiency for the EPE studies and reported that only 8% of 8th grade student were proficient in math and only 12% in reading in the D.C. schools. The need for reform and improvement was evident. Based on my methodology, D.C. was in the most need of education reform.

The District of Columbia overwhelmingly supported the Obama ticket in 2008. I would classify D.C. as a core state given the margin of victory, 92.46% for Obama to a mere 6.53% for his opponents. D.C. has participated in 14 presidential elections and has voted Democrat in every one (Presidential Elections, n.d.). Based on my criteria, Obama would not receive any greater electoral benefit by awarding an RTTT grant to D.C.

Based on my analysis, D.C. was a core state for President Obama. According to Hudak's theory, a president will not benefit in an upcoming election by awarding a federal grant to a core state (Hudak, 2014). Therefore, presidential particularism does not apply to the District of Columbia. However, D.C. was the state in most need of improvement, based on my criteria. Awarding D.C. the \$75 million Phase 2 award would align with Howell's presidential entrepreneurialism theory.

Hawaii

Applying for the Race to the Top grant was part of an intensive effort to transform Hawaii's school system from one of the nation's worst, by some metrics, to one of its most improved. The governor and the state legislature worked together to pass legislation to improve their chances in RTTT. This included initiatives changing the kindergarten entrance age to align with other states, improve data sharing among the Department of

Education and University of Hawaii to improve the state's longitudinal data system, and they formed a task force to recommend ways to strengthen Hawaii's early education system (Brown, 2010).

However, Hawaii is a geographically-challenging state, the eight-island chain 2,400 miles off the coast of California features a single state-run school district of 185,000 students with 255 schools. One million of its 1.3 million residents live on the island of Oahu, which includes Honolulu, meaning much of Hawaii is extremely rural and its schools are very remote (McNeil, 2013).

In the EPE Quality Counts Report 2009, Hawaii ranked 33rd with a 75.1%. Hawaii had some similarities to D.C. as it is a single-district jurisdiction, therefore it did not have a ranking for school finance and it struggled with K-12 achievement. Although the state did not receive a failing grade in the state achievement index, their 65.1% was a reflection of low percentages in both Math and English proficiency. Based on my criteria for need, the 75.1% score by Hawaii fits my model.

Like D.C., Hawaii overwhelmingly supported Barack Obama in the 2008 election. The Obama ticket received 71.85% of the vote, making it a core state for President Obama. Hawaii is predominantly a one-party state. Democrats have dominated the politics of Hawaii for decades and the electoral votes have gone to a Republican candidate only twice in history (Sutter, 2012). Based on my criteria, Hawaii would be considered a core state and therefore President Obama would not benefit electorally in 2012 from awarding Hawaii an RTTT grant.

Based on my analysis, Hawaii was a core state for President Obama. The president would not benefit in an upcoming election by awarding a federal grant to a core

state, according to the particularist theory. Therefore, presidential particularism does not apply to Hawaii. However, based on the criteria I established for presidential entrepreneurialism, Hawaii was a state in need of improvement in education. Therefore, the entrepreneurialism theory applies to the RTTT grant awarded by the Obama administration in Hawaii.

Rhode Island

Rhode Island was a little state with big problems in education when the state was preparing their application for RTTT. In 2009, the state appointed Deborah Gist as Education Commissioner. Shortly after taking office, she announced that staffing decisions would be based on teacher qualifications, not seniority (Ripley, 2010). She also supported a decision by Central Falls School District superintendent Frances Gallo to fire all teachers, administrators, and support personnel at one of the worst schools in the state after they rejected a series of proposed reforms made by the commissioner (Kaye, 2010).

For most states, lack of education funding is a big problem. However, Rhode Island was one of only two states to receive an A in the school finance category in the EPE report. The per pupil expenditure was in the top six states (Vermont, \$15,139; Wyoming, \$14,126; New Jersey, \$13,238; New York, \$13,064; Maine, \$12,985; Rhode Island, \$12,478) and 100% of the districts had a per pupil expenditure above the national average. Despite the willingness to spend money on education, Rhode Island's K-12 achievement and the teaching profession both received a D in the EPE Quality Counts Report 2009. The low graduation rate and low math and reading proficiency contributed to the low score in K-12 achievement. There was also a large list of deficiencies in the teaching profession. Even though teacher salaries were 111.8% of the salaries in

comparable occupations, teachers were not required to have any formal coursework in the area they teach and they were not required to take a written test to assess their basic teaching skills. At the time of the report, Rhode Island also did not have any type of evaluation system for teacher performance. The combination of these factors gave Rhode Island an overall score of 76% on the EPE report indicating that the state was in need of policies to improve education.

Rhode Island is among the most Democratic-leaning states. It ranks as the fourth bluest state in the nation in the FiveThirtyEight Presidential Voting Index (Cohen, 2012). The 2008 presidential election was no exception, where Barack Obama received 62.86% of the vote. According to my methodology, if Obama received more than 55% of the vote, I classify it as a core state, therefore, awarding Rhode Island an RTTT grant would not have benefitted the 2012 election.

Based on my analysis, Rhode Island had a need for education policy reform to improve its struggling system. Therefore, presidential entrepreneurialism applies in this case. Further, presidential particularism does not apply to Rhode Island because, according to my criteria, it was a core state and therefore, would not provide electoral benefit to President Obama in the 2012 election.

Maryland

To prepare for the RTTT grant application process, Governor Martin O'Malley signed an executive order in June of 2010 to expedite teacher performance evaluation policies while Maryland policy makers drafted The Education Reform Act of 2010. The act significantly changed Maryland's teacher and principal evaluation process and required the State Board of Education to adopt regulations establishing general standards

for performance evaluations of certificated teachers and principals which required student achievement to be a significant component of those evaluations (Anderson, 2010).

In the EPE Quality Counts report in my study, Maryland ranked highest among all states with an 84.7%. The only area that carried any low marks was in the teaching profession category, based on their lack of teacher accountability measures. Their C-score was attributed to the lack of policies that evaluate teachers based on student achievement on an annual basis (the study was completed prior to the 2010 policy changes) and that the state does not have a cap on the number of out-of-field teachers. In all other areas, Maryland scored at least a B. Based on my criteria, Maryland was not a state in need of reform policies that would benefit the Obama Administration's education policy objectives.

Maryland has historically been a state that supports Democrats. In a 2008 Gallup Poll, Maryland ranked in the top ten of the most Democratic leaning states, at number 8 (Jones, 2009). The 2008 Presidential election supported that outcome. Barack Obama defeated John McCain by over 25 percentage points, validating the survey data from Gallup that indicated that Democrats had a 26-point advantage going into the 2008 election (Jones, 2009). That resounding defeat made Maryland a core state according to my methodology, therefore Maryland would not have been a strategic state to award a RTTT grant in order to receive any electoral benefit in the 2012 election.

Based on my analysis, Maryland does not meet the criteria for either presidential particularism or entrepreneurialism. The state ranked number one in the nation according to the EPE report, and it was a core state based on the its voting behavior in the 2008

election. Therefore I cannot make a conclusive determination about whether the RTTT award was based on the entrepreneurialism theory or the particularism theory.

Massachusetts

In 1993, Massachusetts developed the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) to raise the academic standards for the state by providing a testing framework in math, English and the sciences. The program identified weaknesses in both student learning and teaching methods and held teachers accountable for student outcomes (Kruger, 2009). Since that time, Massachusetts students have repeatedly ranked among the best in the nation. The Governor's Achievement Gap Act of 2010, was signed in late January 2010 and provided new and more immediate opportunities to turn around underperforming schools and close achievement gaps, expand access to successful charter schools, and authorize new 'Innovation Schools' to provide greater choice for students and their families (Governor Patrick, Congressional Delegation 2010).

In the 2009 EPE Quality Counts Report, only 0.1% separated number one Maryland and number two Massachusetts. The 84.6% for Massachusetts demonstrated that the state was solid in most categories, however, the report indicated that the changes proposed in 2010, were necessary to increase the C's they received in both transitions and alignment and the teaching profession. Overall, the state, according to my model, was not in need of education policies that would significantly change their national ranking.

Like Maryland, Massachusetts overwhelmingly supported Barack Obama in 2008. Since Obama received over 55% of the vote in the state, it is not likely the Obama Administration would choose Massachusetts to strategically target RTTT dollars in order

to gain electoral support for the 2012 election, therefore disqualifying presidential particularism as a motive for granting the RTTT award.

Based on my analysis, Massachusetts does not satisfy the criteria for either presidential particularism or entrepreneurialism. Based on the number two ranking by the Quality Counts report and the core classification based on the 2008 election results, I am unable to make a conclusive argument for entrepreneurialism or particularism.

Georgia

In 2008, Georgia Republicans controlled the majority in both the State House of Representatives and the Senate with Republican Governor Sonny Perdue at the helm. When President Obama introduced the RTTT competition, state lawmakers were not interested in entering the competition because they believed that the Obama Administration was attempting to exert federal authority over state education by bribing states to make changes to meet the RTTT application requirements (Badertscher and McWhirter, 2010). However, Governor Perdue believed that education reforms were needed despite the appearance of federal control and believed that the U.S. Department of Education did not want to have control over state education. According to Perdue, "The feds gave us no rules. They said, you put together a plan that you can implement"(Badertscher and McWhirter, 2010).

Georgia was not one of the worst states in need of sweeping education reform. In fact, they ranked number eight in EPE Quality Counts Report, with an overall score of 80%. The above average overall grade was due, in part, to the established standards, accountability and assessments for students and educators. The state had already adopted standards for all core subjects, including language arts, math, science and social studies

and used standardized assessments aligned to those standards. Despite those efforts, Georgia had the second lowest graduation rate in the nation at 56.1%. Although Georgia had areas of education in need of improvement, their overall grade of a B excluded them from meeting the criteria of need outlined in my methodology.

Like many southern states, Georgia voted Republican in the 2008 election. John McCain won the election with 52.2% of the vote, leaving some room for President Obama to persuade the voters to support him in 2012. In my model, any state won or lost by less than 10% would be considered a swing state and therefore, voters could be persuaded to vote for Obama in 2012. Therefore, awarding an RTTT grant to Georgia could benefit President Obama in the next presidential election.

Based on my analysis, presidential entrepreneurialism could not factor into Georgia winning the RTTT grant because it was not a state in “need” based on my model. However, as a swing state, it is possible that by the Obama Administration awarding the grant to Georgia, they could win the state in 2012, therefore, supporting the presidential particularism theory in this study.

North Carolina

North Carolina has a very large and diverse school system that often struggles to meet the needs of its students. The local education agencies (LEAs), which have approximately 2,500 traditional and charter schools, 191,000 staff, and a diverse population of over 1.4 million students (54.2% white, 31.2% black, 10.7% Hispanic, 2.5% Asian, and 1.4% American Indian), about half of whom are classified as disadvantaged (Henkel, 2010). For the state, entering the RTTT competition was an

opportunity to provide the additional resources needed to benefit more of its student population (Brown, 2010).

North Carolina proved to be a school in need based on the EPE report. The state received an overall score of 75.5%, with a D+ in three categories (transitions and alignment, school finance, and K-12 achievement transitions and alignment, school finance, and K-12 achievement). The lack of readiness standards and assessments, as well as a failure of the state to align their curriculum with post-secondary preparation attributed to the 67.9% in transitions and alignment. School finance came down to the extremely low per pupil expenditure of \$7835, the 2nd lowest among the winners and in the bottom 20% of all states. The 66.7% in K-12 achievement was a combination of low math and reading proficiency and a graduation rate below the national average at 66.1%.

Barack Obama won the state of North Carolina by the closest margin (0.32%) of any state, by either candidate. In recent years, many pundits have classified North Carolina as a swing state because it has not held constant to any party in any area of national and state government for decades (Cillizza, 2013). According to my model, I would categorize North Carolina as a swing state, making it possible that President Obama awarded the RTTT to the state, hoping for electoral benefit in 2012 election.

Both presidential entrepreneurialism and presidential particularism could apply to North Carolina. The state was both in need of education reform policies to improve their struggling system, and North Carolina was a hotly contested presidential race in the 2008 election. In my analysis, I am unable to draw a definitive conclusion based on my decision rules for entrepreneurialism and particularism as they both apply.

Ohio

In 2010, Ohio had 1.8 million students who were educated in 3,545 school buildings. Those children spoke 112 different home languages, and 40% of them were considered economically disadvantaged (Provance, 2010). Governor Ted Strickland believed that winning the RTTT would help lift the entire state, though large cities like Cleveland with the most disadvantaged students would likely receive the most money (Starzyk, 2010). To win a portion of the \$4.35 billion offered by the Obama Administration, states had to have letters of commitment from local education agencies (LEA). As an incentive to gain support of teachers in Ohio school districts, the State Department of Education offered \$100,000 to each district that signed a letter of commitment. Eventually, 500 districts and charter schools pledged their support to the education reform plan. This meant that nearly every public-school student in the region would benefit directly if Ohio received a grant (Provance, 2010).

Going into Phase two of RTTT, Ohio ranked 6th in the EPE Quality Counts Report with an 81.2%. The B- score for the state meant that its schools were not among the most in need of policies that would improve education. Their B- scores in the chance for success, transitions and alignments, and school finance were all attributed the percentage of taxable resources spent on education. At 4.3%, it was the highest among the RTTT winners. The state did struggle in the area of K-12 achievement, most notably because of their low reading and math proficiencies with the highest percentage coming in 4th grade math at 45.9%. All other indicators were in the mid 30's. Given the relative success in most education areas with an overall score above 80%, Ohio did not meet the criteria in my model for need.

Ohio has historically been the state where presidents are made. Eric Ostermeier, a research associate at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs' Center for the Study of Politics and Governance explained that in 29 presidential elections since 1900, there is no state in the nation that comes closer to the national vote in presidential elections than Ohio (Wilkerson, 2015). The 2008, Obama edged out John McCain earning the support of 51.5% of the voters in Ohio. In political circles, Pennsylvania, Florida and Ohio are the three quintessential swing states in the nation (Lee, 2012). According to my model, I also classify Ohio as a swing state. As a swing state, President Obama could receive electoral benefit from awarding the state \$400 million.

Based on my analysis, presidential entrepreneurialism was not a factor in awarding Ohio the RTTT grant because it was not a state in need based on my model. However, as a swing state, it is possible that the Obama Administration awarded the grant to Ohio with the hope of receiving electoral benefit in 2012.

Florida

In 2002, voters approved a constitutional amendment to limit class size in public schools, allowing only 18 students in lower grades and 23 students in high school classrooms. Florida had also been implementing data and test driven reforms decades prior to RTTT. To help in their efforts to win RTTT dollars, the Florida Statehouse passed legislation to improve teacher quality by raising entry-level certification standards and developing pay systems that rewarded teachers based primarily on student performance rather than tenure (Solocheck and Matus, 2010).

Florida ranked just outside of the top ten at number 11 in the 2009 EPE Quality Counts Report. Their 79.6% fell within my condition rule for a state in need of educational policy reform. Florida's lowest grade came in school finance at a 71.2%. with the lowest percentage of students with a per pupil expenditure at or above the national average at 6.6% and their total taxable resources spent on education was near the bottom at 3.1%. Their strength came in standards, assessments, and accountability. Florida had well established accountability measures for teachers and measured student performance at all grade levels. The areas of strength pushed Florida just above average, but they were still in need of additional policy reforms, therefore falling within my criteria for need.

Florida has 29 electoral votes and has voted three times for a Democrat and twice for a Republican in the last 20 years. The most controversial was the race decided by the courts in 2000, in favor of George W. Bush. Bill Clinton lost there in 1992 but won in 1996 (McManus, 2016). In 2008, Florida met the criteria, adopted from Hudak, for a swing state with a margin of victory of less than 10%. Based on my condition rule, granting Florida a RTTT grant could benefit President Obama in the 2012 election.

The Obama Administration's decision to grant Florida \$700 million could have been justified by either presidential entrepreneurialism and presidential particularism. The state was in need of education reform policies to improve certain areas, especially in school finance, and Obama narrowly won the 2008 presidential race. In my analysis, I am unable to draw a definitive conclusion based on my decision rules for entrepreneurialism and particularism as both theories could apply.

New York

Teacher accountability had been a contentious issue in New York for decades. In 1917, a bill was passed granting tenure to teachers after three years on the job. Short of being charged with a crime, teachers in New York were guaranteed a job if they had been employed for 3 years. Finally, in 2002, there was legislation to repeal the long-standing tenure policy but, the United Federation of Teachers lobbied to block that effort, keeping even the worst teachers in the classroom because of a law over 100 years old (Brill, 2009).

Despite the battle over teacher tenure, New York ranked 3rd overall in the EPE report with an 84.1%. The state excelled in standards, assessments, and accountability, scoring the highest of any winning state with a score of 94%. The lowest score came in the teaching profession. New York did not have a pay for performance program that awarded teachers for student achievement and the state did not place a cap on the number of out-of-field teachers in a subject area. However, by 2007, teachers were formally evaluated based on their performance, but still could not be fired based on that performance if they had tenure. According to my criteria for need, New York did not fit in my model with a score of over 80%.

Ronald Reagan was the last Republican to win a presidential election in New York, and Republicans have only won 3 times since 1960 (Galka, 2015). Given the margin of victory in the 2008 election (26.85%), New York is categorized as a core state in my model. Therefore, awarding New York an RTTT grant would not affect the 2012 election outcome.

Based on my analysis, New York does not meet the criteria for either presidential particularism or entrepreneurialism. The state ranked number three in the nation according to the EPE report and was a core state for Barack Obama, therefore I cannot make a conclusive determination about whether awarding New York the RTTT grant was based on the entrepreneurialism theory or the particularism theory because the state does not fit my model for either theory.

Table 3: Results

State	Entrepreneurialism	Particularism	Both	Neither
Delaware	✓			
Tennessee	✓			
District of Columbia	✓			
Hawaii	✓			
Rhode Island	✓			
Maryland				✓
Massachusetts				✓
Georgia		✓		
North Carolina			✓	
Ohio		✓		
Florida			✓	
New York				✓

Results for each state, indicating which, if either theory applied to the state based on the criteria in my methodology

CONCLUSION

The ARRA provided the Obama Administration with the opportunity to creatively use the distribution of federal grant money to administer their education policy agenda without legislative action. The success or failure of those policies was not the focus of this study, but rather why President Obama would use this type of unilateral action. I introduced two contending theories about why presidents engage in this type of politics.

Presidential particularism introduced by John Hudak as well as Douglas Kriner and Andrew Reeves, and presidential entrepreneurialism by William Howell explain why presidents seek unilateral action and make legislative decisions outside of Congress.

Looking at each of them in terms of Race to the Top allowed me to evaluate the winners in each state to learn which of these theories apply to this unique unilateral action, based on the criteria I put forth in my methodology. In my research, I was able to determine, based on my criteria, that five of the twelve states could have been selected based on presidential entrepreneurialism. Delaware, Tennessee, D.C., Hawaii, and Rhode Island were all in need of policy reform to improve education in their state and President Obama was not likely to benefit electorally from awarding the grant to the states. Georgia and Ohio both had education systems that scored above an 80% in the EPE Quality Counts Report 2009, therefore not needing education policy reform based on my criteria.

However, both states had hotly contested presidential races in 2008, Obama taking Ohio by less than 5% of the vote and McCain winning in Georgia by just over 5%. According to my decision rules, both of these states were considered swing states. I, therefore,

determined that it was possible that the Obama Administration chose these two states based on the particularist theory. In the other five states, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Florida and New York, I was unable to make a definitive decision about the motivation of President Obama in this unilateral action. Maryland, Massachusetts, and New York ranked one, two and three in the 2009 report, and therefore, were not classified as states in need of education policy reform. Each of those three states were also Democratic strongholds. Obama carried all three by more than 25 percentage points. Given my decision rules, neither theory applies. North Carolina and Florida, on the other hand, met the criteria for both entrepreneurialism and particularism. Florida's overall EPE score was just below 80% at 79.6%, therefore, based on my criteria, needed education policy reform. North Carolina scored a 75.5%, also making it a state in need. In addition to both states being in need of policy reform, they were also classified as swing states. Obama won in North Carolina by a mere 0.32% and in Florida by just over 2%.

Presidential entrepreneurialism and presidential particularism are both valid theories about why a president would use their unilateral authority. The RTTT was a unique process in many ways. It was created by a budgetary act approved by Congress with an executive earmark for education funding based on a competition open to all states. It also required that states create policies that aligned with the Obama education agenda. The Obama Administration did not mandate specific policies, points, and therefore the overall scores, were based on the ability of the state-created policies to align with the scoring guidelines.

Not all states participated in the competition, some citing that the program allowed too much federal government policy into state-run education. Texas Governor

Rick Perry asserted that it was too much government intrusion and would place the future of children in the hands of special interest groups and unelected bureaucrats (Dillon, 2010). Alaska also did not apply for either phase of the program. Alaskan Education Commissioner Larry LeDoux said that it would mean Alaska would have to give up some sovereignty to an inflexible program calling for too much change, too fast (Hsieh, 2010).

There were 34 states that participated in one or both phases that did not win, but that still created policies that were in-line the Obama agenda. I have added the points breakdown for all states that participated in phase one and phase two in Appendix A and B, showing what improvements were made based on the scoring in each state, and what policy areas still lacked based on those scores. It is evident in the scoring that some policy innovation was made that aligned with the Obama Administration's education agenda.

Based solely on the outcomes of the winners in my model, I could lean toward the theory of presidential entrepreneurialism as the theory behind the RTTT competition but it would not be definitive. However, since Texas and Alaska did not want to participate because of the policy implications and the 46 states that participated adopted Obama Administration inspired education policies, I believe that the Obama Administration was most interested in advancing their policies with RTTT. Given the polarization at the federal level, I think that we will see more innovative unilateral actions taken to advance policies than in decades past. While I think there is always the potential for presidents to use their unilateral powers for political gain, it is no longer the only reason.

Finally, future research could look at other impacts on the way that presidents use their unilateral authority. I only looked at one unilateral action by one president to

measure whether presidents are more likely to use their executive authority for policy advancement or electoral benefit. More research could be done over a series of presidents with multiple unilateral actions, which could give a clearer picture. Additional research could also be done on the timing of certain unilateral actions. For example, President Trump signed executive orders in the first few weeks that were based on campaign promises. Could the timing of those unilateral actions create a new theory to explain the causal mechanisms? This line of inquiry may be necessary during the Trump Administration, because his actions already seem to defy the logic of past presidential actions. I believe that, based on the research I conducted, there is a great deal to be learned about how modern presidents use their unilateral authority. Future research may be able to shed more light on how much impact, the office of the president, will have on citizens of the United States as well as people around the world.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1 Phase 1 Finalist Scoring

	POSSIBLE	DE	TN	GA	FL	IL	SC	PA	RI	KY	OH	LA	NC	MA	CO	NY
A. State Success Factors	125	119	112	103	100	93	100	107	99	114	101	102	109	111	95	104
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	65	63	53	49	53	56	60	51	64	55	54	63	55	52	54
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	44	39	36	39	40	44	35	45	39	40	44	36	37	37
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	14	9	9	10	12	11	11	14	11	10	14	14	11	12
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	28	28	23	24	24	22	27	25	28	29	25	25	28	27	25
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	18	18	17	17	15	16	18	17	19	19	16	16	18	18	17
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10	6	7	9	7	9	8	10	10	9	9	9	9	9
(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	27	21	26	27	16	22	20	24	21	18	22	21	29	17	25
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	22	16	22	22	13	17	16	19	17	13	18	16	24	12	20
B. Standards and Assessments	70	69	68	66	69	69	68	65	66	68	69	65	67	54	63	65
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	38	40	40	40	38	38	40	40	38	40	25	40	39
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	18	19	20	20	19	20	20	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	18	20	20	20	20	19	20	20	19	20	5	20	19

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	10	7	9
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	19	19	17	19	19	19	18	18	19	20	18	17	19	16	17
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction	47	47	44	41	41	39	41	36	32	43	39	36	32	38	38	30
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	24	24	21	24	20	20	16	12	22	18	18	16	18	18	10
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	3	5	5	5
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	18	15	16	13	14	16	15	15	16	16	14	13	16	15	16
D. Great Teachers and Leaders	138	119	114	111	109	110	114	106	121	111	103	122	112	101	105	111
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	17	15	15	16	19	16	12	18	20	16	19	17	19	14	20
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	50	53	50	47	47	53	49	54	44	50	52	48	40	48	41
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	5	2	4	4	4	3	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	13	14	12	11	13	13	13	14	12	13	14	12	12	12	12
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	9	10	10	8	7	9	10	10	6	9	9	8	6	9	9
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	24	24	25	24	23	26	23	26	21	23	25	24	17	22	17
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	21	18	22	18	18	18	19	20	18	13	22	20	17	17	21
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	12	10	14	11	11	10	13	14	11	10	13	13	10	11	13

(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	9	8	8	7	7	8	6	6	7	4	9	7	7	7	8
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	11	13	10	11	10	11	9	13	11	9	12	10	9	12	12
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	19	15	15	16	16	16	16	17	18	14	17	17	17	14	17
E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools	50	43	48	47	44	49	44	45	45	45	43	45	45	47	45	43
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	5	10	10	10	10
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	33	38	37	34	39	34	35	35	35	33	40	35	37	36	33
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	28	33	32	29	34	29	31	30	31	29	35	30	32	31	29
F. General	55	42	43	50	54	49	41	45	41	22	49	48	35	44	49	39
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8	9	9	10	9	8	9	4	10	10	10	8	10	5	8
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	31	30	37	39	35	29	31	31	8	34	34	23	29	40	27
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	4
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	0	15	15	15	15
Total	500	455	444	434	431	424	423	420	419	419	419	418	414	411	410	409

Source: U.S. Department of Education

Table A2 Phase 2 Finalist Scoring

	POSS	MA	NY	HI	FL	RI	DC	MD	GA	NC	OH	NJ	AZ	LA	SC	IL	CA	CO	PA	KY
A. State Success Factors	125	115	108	116	112	102	113	111	104	112	111	104	105	106	103	103	100	98	103	108
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	57	55	62	60	50	59	55	55	64	59	51	58	57	64	53	51	52	56	57
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	39	39	43	42	34	41	38	37	45	41	34	40	40	45	35	35	37	41	40
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	13	11	14	13	12	13	12	12	15	13	12	13	12	15	13	12	11	10	12
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	29	29	30	25	27	27	28	25	27	28	27	26	25	26	26	25	24	26	28
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	19	20	18	19	18	20	18	18	18	20	18	17	17	17	18	17	18	18
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	9	10	10	7	8	8	8	7	9	10	7	8	8	9	9	7	7	8	10
(A)(3) Demonstrating significant	30	29	25	24	28	24	27	28	25	21	25	26	22	24	13	24	24	21	22	22

progress in raising achievement and closing gaps																				
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	4
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	24	20	19	23	19	22	23	20	16	20	21	17	19	9	19	19	17	17	18
B. Standards and Assessments	70	70	70	69	68	70	68	70	70	68	68	69	67	66	67	65	69	66	69	67
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to	20	20	20	20	18	20	18	20	20	18	18	19	17	16	17	15	19	16	19	17

enhanced standards and high-quality assessments																				
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction	47	44	46	44	41	47	35	41	43	40	37	31	36	43	43	42	31	42	45	43
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	24	24	22	24	24	14	20	24	22	18	14	18	24	22	20	10	22	24	22
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	15	17	17	13	18	17	16	14	14	14	13	14	15	16	17	16	15	16	16
(i) Ensuring implementation of instructional improvement systems	6	5	6	6	5	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	5	5	6	5
(ii) Providing effective professional development	6	6	6	5	4	6	6	6	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	5	5	5	5
(iii) Making data accessible	6	5	6	6	5	6	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	6	6	6	5	5	5	6
D. Great Teachers and Leaders	138	127	128	122	116	120	118	126	120	116	120	124	114	111	111	111	110	105	95	113
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	21	19	14	18	17	20	20	17	18	15	17	15	17	14	18	13	17	10	18

(i) Legal, statutory, and regulatory provisions	7	7	7	5	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	6	7	6	4	7	6	6	2	6
(ii) Alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	4	6	5	7	7	5	6	5	6	4	6	5	6	3	6	3	6
(iii) Identifying and filling shortages	7	7	6	5	6	6	7	6	4	6	4	4	4	5	5	6	4	5	5	6
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	53	54	55	48	50	54	53	55	51	54	54	52	48	52	47	49	43	45	48
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	3	4	4	3	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	13	14	12	11	13	15	14	14	15	15	14	12	14	12	14	10	14	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	9	9	10	7	10	9	8	9	10	9	9	9	9	9	7	7	8	8	9
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	24	28	26	25	26	27	25	26	23	27	25	25	23	25	25	22	20	20	24
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	23	22	24	20	23	19	22	19	19	20	22	20	20	24	19	20	17	17	16
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or	15	14	13	14	12	13	12	14	12	12	12	13	12	12	14	12	13	9	10	9

high-minority schools																				
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	9	9	9	8	10	7	9	7	8	8	9	8	8	10	7	8	8	7	6
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	13	14	12	12	12	10	12	11	11	12	14	11	12	10	11	13	12	9	13
(i) Linking student and teacher data to preparation programs	7	7	7	6	6	7	5	6	5	6	5	7	6	6	6	7	6	6	5	6
(ii) Expansion of successful preparation programs	7	6	7	6	6	5	4	6	5	5	6	7	5	6	4	4	7	6	4	6
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	17	18	19	18	18	14	19	19	17	19	18	17	14	12	16	15	17	14	18
(i) Providing effective, data-informed professional development	10	9	9	9	9	9	7	9	10	9	10	9	9	7	6	8	9	8	9	9
(ii) Measuring, evaluating, and continually improving supports	10	8	9	10	9	9	7	10	9	9	9	9	8	7	6	8	6	9	5	9

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools	50	50	48	48	47	46	48	46	48	46	45	49	47	45	46	46	46	43	44	45
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	5	10	10	10	10	10	10
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	38	38	37	36	38	36	38	36	35	39	37	40	36	36	36	33	34	35
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	33	33	32	31	33	31	33	32	30	34	32	35	31	31	31	28	29	30
F. General	55	50	50	48	53	52	53	41	46	43	45	45	50	48	46	45	52	52	46	21
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	10	9	10	10	8	10	9	10	3	9	10	10	10	9	10	9	8
(i) Revenues to support education	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
(ii) State funding policies lead to equitable funding	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	3	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	3
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools	40	35	36	34	39	38	39	28	33	30	31	37	36	36	32	30	39	38	32	8

and other innovative schools																				
(i) Charter school law does not prohibit or inhibit charter schools	8	4	5	8	8	8	8	4	8	2	6	8	8	8	8	5	8	8	8	0
(ii) Laws regarding approval, monitoring, and accountability	8	8	8	8	8	7	8	4	8	8	6	8	8	7	7	7	8	7	5	0
(iii) Equitable funding for charter schools	8	7	7	6	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	7	6	7	8	8	8	0
(iv) Charter funding for facilities	8	8	8	7	8	7	8	6	6	5	3	8	7	7	3	8	8	8	8	0
(v) Innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	5	8	8	8	6	3	7	7	6	6	7	7	4	7	7	3	8
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	3	5	5	5	4	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Total	500	471	465	462	452	451	450	450	446	442	441	438	435	434	431	427	424	420	418	412

Source: U.S. Department of Education