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**Contact: Valerie Cuevas, (510) 465-6444 x328 or [VCuevas@edtrustwest.org](mailto:VCuevas@edtrustwest.org)**

## **CALIFORNIA CAN STILL CLINCH A SPOT IN THE RACE TO THE TOP**

**(Oakland, CA)** – California still has a shot at \$4.35 billion in federal education stimulus dollars as part of Round Two of the Race to the Top Competition. According to a policy brief released today by The Education Trust-West, *California's Race to the Top: A Road Map for Round Two*, the Golden state can achieve second round success by quickly understanding why it lost, what other states did better, and what it must do differently to win.

“California is not out of the race. But if we’re going to make up the ground between us and the top-scoring states, we have to sprint to the finish with some ground-breaking reforms,” said Arun Ramanathan, executive director of The Education Trust—West.

In order to develop a road map for Round Two, The Education Trust—West analyzed the comments of the peer reviewers of applications from the first round. These reviewers used a 500-point grading scale and scored applications based on the strength and coherence of state-wide education reform plans. California’s Round One proposal was awarded 337 points, equating to 67% or a D+ effort in most grade books.

Peer reviewers docked points from California’s proposal because it lacked buy-in from many districts and unions. The state also lost multiple points because its application lacked specific, substantive reforms with aggressive timelines.

The brief highlights concrete reforms that earned special recognition for first round winners Delaware and Tennessee, as well as top finalists Florida, New York and Illinois — three large diverse states like California. These states were rewarded for committing to innovative but feasible strategies for reform with rapid timelines for improvement. They earned top points for articulating ambitious but attainable goals for improving student outcomes and closing achievement gaps, turning around low performing schools and improving the quality of teachers and school leaders.

By focusing on the areas with the largest Round One point losses and addressing the reviewer’s critiques with equally innovative strategies that earned points for other states, California can garner enough new points to place it among the finalists in Round Two.

“Our road map shows the state how to be a winner in Round Two. We expect A+ results from our students. We should expect similar results from California’s leaders,” stated Ramanathan.

The full brief is available online at: [www.Edtrustwest.org](http://www.Edtrustwest.org)

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### **About The Education Trust—West**

*The Education Trust—West works for the high academic achievement of all students at all levels, kindergarten through college, and to forever close the achievement gaps separating low-income students and students of color from other youth. Our basic tenet is this— All children will learn at high levels when they are taught to high levels.*