

2010 Race to the Top Legislation

SB 1 X5 (Steinberg) would make statutory changes in the following core education reform areas necessary for the state to apply for federal Race to the Top (RTTT) program funds: (1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace; (2) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals; (3) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction and (4) turning around the lowest-achieving schools.

SB 1 X5 also requires the enactment of **SB 4 X5 (Romero)**, which creates the Open Enrollment Act and the Parent Empowerment program, in order for the provisions of this measure to take effect.

SB 4 X5 (Romero) establishes an Open Enrollment Program, which authorizes a pupil enrolled in a “low achieving school” to submit an application for the pupil to transfer out of the low achieving school to attend any higher achieving school in the state. In addition, the bill also establishes a Parent Empowerment Program that authorizes parents of specified schools to sign a petition requiring a local education agency (LEA) to implement a school intervention model.

The newly established Open Enrollment Act would allow any pupil enrolled in one of 1000 low performing schools identified by the Superintendent of Public Instruction to enroll in a higher performing school anywhere in the state. The bill requires the SPI to annually rank schools based on academic performance index (API) and identify the lowest achieving 1000 schools. In constructing this list, a number of limitations apply: 1) a local education agency shall not have more than 10% of its schools on the list; 2) court, community, or community day schools shall not be included and 3) charter schools shall not be included on the list.

For pupil transfers to occur, SB 4 X5:

- Requires the district of residence to provide notice of the option to transfer to parents and guardians of students enrolled in these schools no later than the first day of the school year.
- Authorizes either a district of residence or district of enrollment to limit the number of students transferring if it negatively impacts a voluntary desegregation plan.
- Requires districts of enrollment to ensure that communications to parents do not target individual families or neighborhoods.

- Authorizes a school district of enrollment to adopt written standards for acceptance and rejection of applications, including considerations of adverse financial impact pupil transfers may have on the district.

SB 4 X5 also establishes the Parent Empowerment program, which establishes a process whereby parents and legal guardians at a school which is not identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school, has an API score of under 800 but that is in program improvement year 3, can require a governing board to implement any of the RTTT interventions or another intervention authorized by the NCLB if at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school, or a combination of at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of the pupils attending the school and its elementary or middle feeder schools, sign a petition making the request.

The bill authorizes the governing board to choose an alternative RTTT or NCLB intervention only if it makes written findings of the reason it cannot implement the intervention requested by parents and guardians, and notify the SPI and the SBE how the alternative intervention it has selected has substantial promise of enabling the school to meet AYP.

These two programs are not required under the federal Race To The Top (RTTT) program application.

SB 4 X5 also requires the enactment of SB 1 X5 (Steinberg), which establishes the statutory framework necessary for the state to apply for the RTTT program, in order for the provisions of this measure to take effect.