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Date: Wed, 7/13/2011 7:04:16 PM

Subject: RttT Article

Chiefs - just an FYI on a RttT article posted to one of EdWeek's blogs today.
John

[More Race to Top Winners Push Back Promises](#)

via [Politics K-12](#) by Michele McNeil on 7/13/11

The list of delays states are encountering in implementing their Race to the Top plans keeps getting longer.

Every state but Georgia has now amended its Race to the Top plan in some way, usually to push back a timeline or scale back an initiative. In all, the dozen winners from the \$4 billion competition have changed their plans, so far, 25 times, according to the [list of amendments](#) approved by the U.S. Department of Education. Remember, the winners were chosen based, at least in part, on their promises in those plans.

The changes includes a [32-page amendment](#) with dozens of changes to New York's plan, including one of the first amendments I've seen that doesn't just push back a timeline, but eliminates a small piece of the state's plan. That particular amendment eliminates a \$10 million program to provide competitive grants for charter school facilities in New York, and

redistributes the money across a few other programs, including a general "school innovation fund." This may-or may not-be a big deal, but it's at least worth noting.

An [amendment to Maryland's plan](#) is postponing for a year full implementation of its new teacher evaluation system to allow districts more time to pilot it. The state also is delaying a couple of teacher incentive-pay programs and scaling back some of its professional development initiatives, including [summer academies](#) that were proposed to be five days covering four content areas, but ended up being three days worth of training covering two content areas.

We've told you about these implementation delays [before](#), and the Government Accountability Office also [flagged problems](#) states were encountering in a [recent status update](#) on Race to the Top.

This is only the beginning of implementation woes that are bound to plague such a high-profile, ambitious, and unique program. In fact, Hawaii could be headed toward a [major roadblock](#) as it struggles to adopt a new teacher evaluation system as it promised to do in its Race to the Top application.

For those out there who wonder if these states overpromised-and that's a very legitimate and important question-it's worth pointing out that these states have four years to implement their plans. They won based on their previous student achievement track records, their education-reform landscape, and their plans for pushing reforms forward with millions of extra federal dollars. They did not get points, per se, for how quickly they would turn their plans into reality-so as long as they get the job done when the grant is up in four years, that seems to be what matters. Or is it?

States could, however, put themselves in a real bind by pushing everything back until the last minute. (Think of rising proficiency targets under No Child Left Behind, when many states backloaded their targets so they will have to make giant leaps in student achievement in these final years before the 2014 deadline for 100 percent proficiency.) But perhaps the folks with the most on the line are top officials at the U.S. Department of Education, and namely Secretary Arne Duncan. After all, Race to the Top is the signature education initiative of President Obama. So the pressure's on.