

Surveying the Field

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has been using the \$4.35 billion Race to the Top Fund as leverage to get states to adopt certain policy measures. So far, the landscape is mixed.

CALIFORNIA

State law bars the use of data that connect individual teachers to students in decisions about teacher evaluations. Secretary Duncan has chastised California lawmakers for this “firewall” in light of Race to the Top.

COLORADO

Many policy experts say Colorado, with its education-reform-oriented governor and pro-charter-school legislation, is among the best-positioned to win some of the money. Gov. Bill Ritter has put his lieutenant governor in charge of that effort, and dedicated \$10 million in stimulus funds for programs to help put the state in an even better position.

ILLINOIS

Mr. Duncan visited his home state in April to urge legislators to lift their cap on charter schools; two months later, the Illinois legislature expanded the cap by doubling the number of allowed charter schools to 120.

INDIANA

Secretary Duncan singled out Indiana as taking a step backwards in the Race to the Top as lawmakers there debated whether to place a new cap on the expansion of charter schools. But lawmakers reversed course and voted down a new cap.

RHODE ISLAND

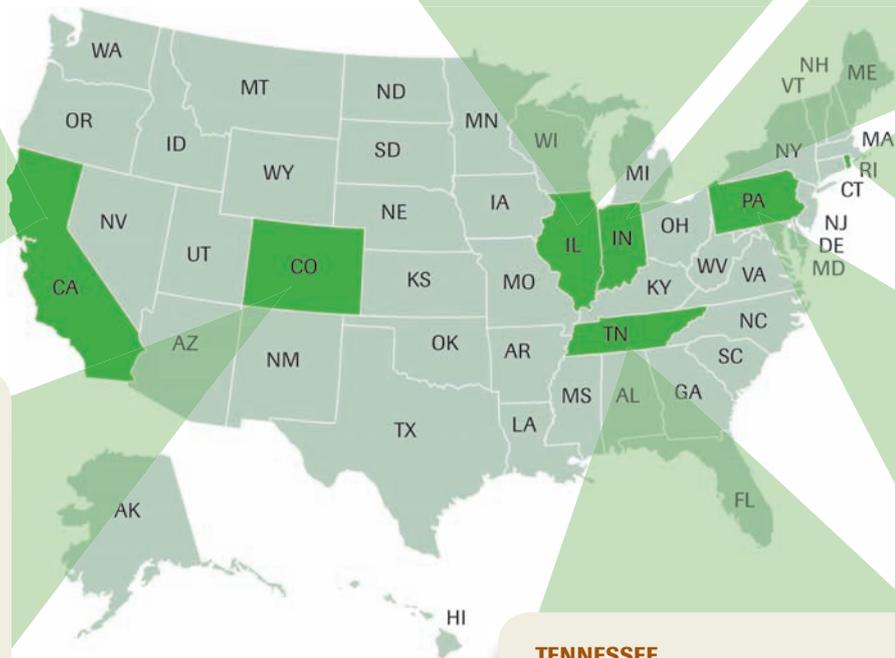
The legislature voted to restore \$1.5 million in funding to two charter schools after a heated battle between Democrats and Republicans that sparked comments from Mr. Duncan, who said the state needed to restore the funding to remain competitive for the grants.

PENNSYLVANIA

Lawmakers were debating whether to cut K-12 education funding while leaving much of the state’s rainy-day fund intact, a move that sparked a letter from the secretary to policymakers urging them to reconsider.

TENNESSEE

The state legislature last month passed a new law expanding the pool of students who can attend charter schools, a move that Mr. Duncan had urged.



SOURCE: *Education Week*