

Excerpts from a Blueprint for Reform

The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

PRIORITIES IN A BLUEPRINT FOR REFORM

This blueprint builds on the significant reforms already made in response to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 around four areas: (1) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness to ensure that every classroom has a great teacher and every school has a great leader; (2) Providing information to families to help them evaluate and improve their children's schools, and to educators to help them improve their students' learning; (3) Implementing college- and career-ready standards and developing improved assessments aligned with those standards; and (4) Improving student learning and achievement in America's lowest-performing schools by providing intensive support and effective interventions.

Incorporating and extending this framework, this blueprint for a re-envisioned federal role builds on these key priorities:

1. College- and Career-Ready Students

Raising standards for all students. We will set a clear goal: **Every student should graduate from high school ready for college and a career**, regardless of their income, race, ethnic or language background, or disability status. Following the lead of the nation's governors, we're calling on all states to develop and adopt standards in English language arts and mathematics that build toward college- and career-readiness by the time students graduate from high school. States may choose to upgrade their existing standards or work together with other states to develop and adopt common, state developed standards.

Better assessments. We will support the development and use of a new generation of assessments that are **aligned with college- and career-ready standards**, to better determine whether students have acquired the skills they need for success. New assessment systems will better capture higher-order skills, provide more accurate measures of **student growth**, and better inform classroom instruction to respond to academic needs.

A complete education. Students need a well-rounded education to contribute as citizens in our democracy and to thrive in a global economy—from literacy to mathematics, science, and technology to history, civics, foreign languages, the arts, financial literacy, and other subjects. We will support states, districts, school leaders, and teachers in implementing a more complete education through improved professional development and evidence-based instructional models and supports.

2. Great Teachers and Leaders in Every School

Effective teachers and principals. We will elevate the teaching profession to focus on recognizing, encouraging, and rewarding excellence. We are calling on states and districts to develop and implement systems of **teacher and principal evaluation and support**, and to **identify effective and highly effective** teachers and principals on the basis of student growth and other factors. These systems will inform professional development and help teachers and principals improve student learning. In addition, a new program will support ambitious efforts to recruit, place, reward, retain, and promote effective teachers and principals and enhance the profession of teaching.

Our best teachers and leaders where they are needed most. Our proposal will provide funds to states and districts to develop and support effective teachers and leaders, with a focus on improving the effectiveness of teachers and leaders in high-need schools. We will call on states and districts to **track**

equitable access to effective teachers and principals, and where needed, take steps to improve access to effective educators for students in high-poverty, high-minority schools.

Strengthening teacher and leader preparation and recruitment. We need more effective pathways and practices for preparing, placing, and supporting beginning teachers and principals in high-need schools. States will monitor the effectiveness of their traditional and alternative preparation programs, and we will invest in programs whose graduates are succeeding in the classroom, based on student growth and other factors.

3. Equity and Opportunity for All Students

Rigorous and fair accountability for all levels. All students will be included in an accountability system that builds on college- and career-ready standards, rewards progress and success, and requires rigorous interventions in the lowest-performing schools. We will celebrate the Reward states, districts, and schools that do the most to improve outcomes for their students and to close achievement gaps, as well as those who are on the path to have all students graduating or on track to graduate ready for college and a career by 2020. All schools will be aiming to do their part to help us reach that ambitious goal, and for most schools, leaders at the state, district, and school level will enjoy broad flexibility to determine how to get there.

But in the lowest-performing schools that have not made progress over time, we will ask for dramatic change. To ensure that responsibility for improving student outcomes no longer falls solely at the door of schools, we will also promote accountability for states and districts that are not providing their schools, principals, and teachers with the support they need to succeed.

Meeting the needs of diverse learners. Schools must support all students, including by providing appropriate instruction and access to a challenging curriculum along with additional supports and attention where needed. From English Learners and students with disabilities to Native American students, homeless students, migrant students, rural students, and neglected or delinquent students, our proposal will continue to support and strengthen programs for these students and ensure that schools are helping them meet college- and career-ready standards.

Greater equity. To give every student a fair chance to succeed, and give principals and teachers the resources to support student success, we will call on school districts and states to take steps to ensure equity, by such means as moving toward comparability in resources between high- and low-poverty schools.

4. Raise the Bar and Reward Excellence

Fostering a Race to the Top. Race to the Top has provided incentives for excellence by encouraging state and local leaders to work together on ambitious reforms, make tough choices, and develop comprehensive plans that change policies and practices to improve outcomes for students. We will continue Race to the Top's incentives for systemic reforms at the state level and expand the program to school districts that are willing to take on bold, comprehensive reforms.

Supporting effective public school choice. We will support the expansion of high-performing public charter schools and other autonomous public schools, and support local communities as they expand public school choice options for students within and across school districts.

Promoting a culture of college readiness and success. Access to a challenging high school curriculum has a greater impact on whether a student will earn a 4-year college degree than his or her high school test scores, class rank, or grades. We will increase access to college-level, dual credit, and other accelerated

courses in high-need schools and support college-going strategies and models that will help students succeed.

5. Promote Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Fostering innovation and accelerating success. The Investing in Innovation Fund will support local and nonprofit leaders as they develop and scale up programs that have demonstrated success, and discover the next generation of innovative solutions.

Supporting, recognizing, and rewarding local innovations. Our proposal will encourage and support local innovation by creating fewer, larger, more flexible funding streams around areas integral to student success, giving states and districts flexibility to focus on local needs. New competitive funding streams will provide greater flexibility, reward results, and ensure that federal funds are used wisely. At the same time, districts will have fewer restrictions on blending funds from different categories with less red tape.

Supporting student success. Tackling persistent achievement gaps requires public agencies, community organizations, and families to share responsibility for improving outcomes for students. We will prioritize programs that include a comprehensive redesign of the school day, week, or year, that promote schools as the center of their communities, or that partner with community organizations. Our proposal will invest in new models that keep students safe, supported, and healthy both in and out of school, and that support strategies to better engage families and community members in their children's education.

1. COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STUDENTS

The goal for America's educational system is clear: Every student should graduate from high school ready for college and a career. Every student should have meaningful opportunities to choose from upon graduation from high school. But while all states have developed and implemented standards as required under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), in many cases these standards do not reflect the knowledge and skills needed for success after high school, either in further education or in a job. Four of every 10 new college students, including half of those at 2-year institutions, take remedial courses, and many employers comment on the inadequate preparation of high school graduates. And while states have developed assessments aligned with their standards, in many cases these assessments do not adequately measure student growth or the knowledge and skills that students need, nor do they provide timely, useful information to teachers. We must follow the lead of the nation's governors and challenge students with state-developed, college- and career-ready standards, and more accurately measure what they are learning with better assessments. We must reward the success of schools that are making significant progress, ask for dramatic change in the lowest-performing schools, and address persistent gaps in student academic achievement and graduation rates.

Our proposal will maintain formula grants to high-poverty school districts, while making significant changes to better support states, districts, and schools, including middle and high schools, in improving achievement for all groups of students, including low-income and minority students, English Learners, and students with disabilities.

Rigorous College- and Career-Ready Standards. Following the lead of the nation's governors and state education leaders, we're calling on all states to adopt state-developed standards in English language arts and mathematics that build toward college- and career-readiness by the time students graduate from high school, and high-quality statewide assessments aligned with these standards. States may either choose to upgrade their existing standards, working with their 4-year public university system to certify that mastery of the standards ensures that a student will not need to take remedial coursework upon admission to a postsecondary institution in the system; or work with other states to create state-developed common

standards that build toward college- and career-readiness. To ensure that all students are learning what they need to succeed, standards must be based on evidence regarding what students must know and be able to do at each grade level to be on track to graduate from high school college- and career-ready. Such standards will also give families and communities the information they need to determine whether their students are on track to college- and career-readiness and to evaluate their schools' effectiveness. States will continue to implement statewide science standards and aligned assessments in specific grade spans, and may include such assessments—as well as statewide assessments in other subjects, such as history—in their accountability system. Finally, states will develop and adopt statewide English language proficiency standards for English Learners, aligned so that they reflect the academic language necessary to master the state's content standards.

Rigorous and Fair Accountability and Support at Every Level. Building on these statewide standards and aligned assessments, every state will ensure that its statewide system of accountability rewards schools and districts for progress and success, requires rigorous interventions in the lowest-performing schools and districts, and allows local flexibility to determine the appropriate improvement and support strategies for most schools.

To foster public accountability for results and help focus improvement and support efforts, states must have data systems in place to gather information that is critical to determining how schools and districts are progressing in preparing students to graduate from high school college- and career-ready. States and districts will collect and make public data relating to student academic achievement and growth in English language arts and mathematics, student academic achievement in science, and if states choose, student academic achievement and growth in other subjects, such as history. At the high school level, this data will also include graduation rates, college enrollment rates, and rates of college enrollment without need for remediation. All of these data must be disaggregated by race, gender, ethnicity, disability status, English Learner status, and family income. States and districts also will collect other key information about teaching and learning conditions, including information on school climate such as student, teacher and school leader attendance; disciplinary incidents; or student, parent, or school staff surveys about their school experience.

Measuring and Supporting Schools, Districts, and States. State accountability systems will be asked to recognize progress and growth and reward success, rather than only identify failure. To ensure that accountability no longer falls solely at the doors of schools, districts and states will be held accountable for providing their schools, principals and teachers with the support they need to succeed. We will ask States to recognize and reward schools and districts making the most progress, provide flexibility for local improvement efforts, and focus the most rigorous support and interventions on the very lowest-performing schools and districts.

We will call on states, districts and schools to aim for the ambitious goal of all students graduating or on track to graduate from high school ready for college and a career by 2020. Performance targets, based on whole-school and subgroup achievement and growth, and graduation rates, will guide improvement toward that ambitious goal, and those that are meeting all of their performance targets will be recognized and rewarded.

States, districts and schools will look not just at absolute performance and proficiency, but at individual student growth and school progress over time, and the additional data described above, to guide local improvement and support strategies for schools.

The schools, districts, and states that are successful in reaching performance targets, significantly increasing student performance for all students, closing achievement gaps, or turning around the lowest-performing schools (at the district and state level) will be recognized as Reward schools, districts and states. States will receive funds to design innovative programs to reward high-poverty Reward schools and Reward districts. Rewards may include financial rewards for the staff and students and development of and participation in "communities of practice" to share best practices and replicate successful strategies

to assist lower-performing schools and districts. Rewards may also include flexibility in the use of ESEA funds and, as appropriate, competitive preference for Reward states, high-need Reward districts, and high-need Reward schools in some federal grant competitions. Reward districts will also be given flexibility in implementing interventions in their lowest-performing schools, described further below.

At the other end of the spectrum will be **Challenge states, districts, and schools**. States will identify Challenge schools that are in need of specific assistance. The first category of Challenge schools will be the lowest-performing five percent of schools in each state, based on student academic achievement, student growth, and graduation rates, that are not making progress to improve. **In these schools, states and districts will be required to implement one of four school turnaround models**, to support better outcomes for students. Reward districts will receive flexibility to implement a different research-based intervention model, beyond the scope of the four school turnaround models. The next five percent of low-performing schools will be identified in a warning category, and States and districts will implement research-based, locally-determined strategies to help them improve.

Schools that are not closing significant, persistent achievement gaps will constitute another category of Challenge schools. In these schools, districts will be required to implement data-driven interventions to support those students who are farthest behind and close the achievement gap. For all Challenge schools, districts may implement strategies such as expanded learning time, supplemental educational services, public school choice, or other strategies to help students succeed.

Challenge districts whose schools, principals and teachers are not receiving the support they need to succeed may also face significant governance or staffing changes, including replacement of the superintendent. Both Challenge districts and states will face additional restrictions on the use of ESEA funds and may be required to work with an outside organization to improve student academic achievement.

Building Capacity for Support at Every Level. As we ask more of each level of the system, we will also build state and district capacity to support schools, school leaders, teachers, and students. Our proposal **will allow states and districts to reserve funds** to carry out such activities as (i) supporting and complementing the adoption of rigorous standards and high-quality assessments, and supporting teachers in teaching to those standards; (ii) supporting the more effective use of data to identify local needs and improve student outcomes; (iii) improving capacity at the state and district levels to support the effective use of technology to improve instruction; (iv) coordinating with early learning programs to improve school readiness; or (v) carrying out effective family engagement strategies.

Districts will be required to set aside a **portion of funds under this program to improve student performance in high-need schools**, by implementing effective school improvement strategies and carrying out strategies to ensure the equitable distribution of effective teachers and school leaders. Reward districts will be allowed flexibility around this reservation.

Fostering Comparability and Equity. To give every student a fair chance to succeed and give principals and teachers the resources to support student success, we will encourage **increased resource equity** at every level of the system. Over time, districts will be required to ensure that their high-poverty schools receive state and local funding levels (for personnel and relevant nonpersonnel expenditures) comparable to those received by their low-poverty schools. In addition, districts that use their resources to provide strong support to disadvantaged students will be given additional flexibility to provide such support. States will be asked to measure and report on resource disparities and develop a plan to tackle them.

Assessing Achievement. Our proposal will maintain support for state efforts to improve the quality of their assessment systems, and to develop and implement the upgraded standards and assessments required by the College- and Career-Ready Students program. Improved assessments can be used to accurately measure student growth; to better measure how states, districts, schools, principals, and teachers are educating students; to help teachers adjust and focus their teaching; and to provide better information to students and their families.

States will receive formula grants to develop and implement high-quality assessments aligned with college- and career-ready standards in English language arts and mathematics that accurately measure student academic achievement and growth, provide feedback to support and improve teaching, and measure school success and progress. States may also use funds to develop or implement high-quality, rigorous statewide assessments in other academic or career and technical subjects, high school course assessments, English language proficiency assessments, and interim or formative assessments. Beginning in 2015, formula funds will be available only to states that are implementing assessments based on college- and career-ready standards that are common to a significant number of states. The program also will support competitive grants to consortia of states, and to other entities working in partnership with states, for research on, or development and improvement of, additional high-quality assessments to be used by multiple states in such areas as science, history, or foreign languages; high school course assessments in academic and career and technical subjects; universally designed assessments; and assessments for English Learners and students with disabilities.

School Turnaround Grants. Our proposal will make available significant grants to help states, districts, and schools implement the rigorous interventions required in each state's lowest-performing Challenge schools under the College- and Career-Ready Students program.

States will receive funds by formula and may reserve funds to build their capacity to improve low-performing schools, including developing and implementing effective school quality review teams to assist schools in identifying school needs and supporting school improvement. States will award the remainder of funds competitively to districts or partnerships of districts and nonprofit organizations to implement one of the following intervention models, to be selected locally, to ensure significant changes in the operation, governance, staffing, or instructional program of a school:

- Transformation model: Replace the principal, strengthen staffing, implement a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement new governance and flexibility.
- Turnaround model: Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the school staff, implement a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement new governance structure.
- Restart model: Convert or close and reopen the school under the management of an effective charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization.
- School closure model: Close the school and enroll students who attended it in other, higher-performing schools in the district.

Districts and their partners will receive 3-year awards to fully and effectively implement one of these intervention models, and will be eligible for two additional years of funding to support a school's ongoing improvement if the school is showing progress.

In addition, the Secretary will reserve a portion of School Turnaround Grants for additional activities designed to enhance state, district, and nonprofit capacity to improve schools, such as investing in model school quality review teams to identify school needs and support school improvement.

2. GREAT TEACHERS AND GREAT LEADERS

Of all the work that occurs at every level of our education system, the interaction between teacher and student is the primary determinant of student success.

A great teacher can make the difference between a student who achieves at high levels and a student who slips through the cracks, and a great principal can help teachers succeed as part of a strong, well-supported instructional team. Research shows that top-performing teachers can make a dramatic difference in the achievement of their students, and suggests that the impact of being assigned to top-performing teachers year after year is enough to significantly narrow achievement gaps. We have to do more to ensure that every student has an effective teacher, every school has effective leaders, and every teacher and leader has access to the preparation, on-going support, recognition, and collaboration opportunities he or she need to succeed. Our proposals will ask states and districts to put in place the conditions that allow for teachers, principals, and leaders at all levels of the school system to get meaningful information about their practice, and support them in using this information to ensure that all students are getting the effective teaching they deserve.

Effective Teachers and Leaders. Our proposal will continue and improve formula grants to states and school districts to improve the effectiveness of teachers and leaders, and ensure that students in high-need schools are being taught by effective teachers in schools led by effective principals. To help meet these goals, states and districts may choose how to spend funds to meet local needs, as long as they are improving teacher and principal effectiveness and ensuring the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals. To measure, develop, and improve the effectiveness of their teachers, leaders, and preparation programs, states and districts will be required to put in place a few specific policies and systems, including:

- Statewide definitions of "effective teacher," "effective principal," "highly effective teacher," and "highly effective principal," developed in collaboration with teachers, principals, and other stakeholders, that are based in significant part on student growth and also include other measures, such as classroom observations of practice. As states transition to using these measures of effectiveness, we will maintain the provisions of current law relating to "Highly Qualified Teachers," but with additional flexibility.
- State-level data systems that link information on teacher and principal preparation programs to the job placement, student growth, and retention outcomes of their graduates.
- District-level evaluation systems that (i) meaningfully differentiate teachers and principals by effectiveness across at least three performance levels; (ii) are consistent with their state's definitions of "effective" and "highly effective" teacher and principal; (iii) provide meaningful feedback to teachers and principals to improve their practice and inform professional development; and (iv) are developed in collaboration with teachers, principals, and other education stakeholders.

Developing Effective Teachers and Leaders. Both states and school districts will carry out strategies to develop effective teachers and leaders that meet their local needs.

States may use funds to recruit and develop effective teachers and principals, support the creation of effective educator career ladders, and improve teacher and principal certification and retention policies to better reflect a candidate's ability to improve outcomes for students. Recognizing the importance of principal leadership in supporting teachers, states will work to improve the effectiveness of principals, through activities such as strengthening principal preparation programs and providing training and support to principals of high-need schools. States will also be required to develop meaningful plans to

ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals that receive at least an "effective" rating. If states are unsuccessful in improving the equitable distribution of these teachers and principals, they will be required to develop and implement more rigorous plans and additional strategies more likely to improve equity.

School districts may use funds to develop and implement fair and meaningful teacher and principal evaluation systems, working in collaboration with teachers, principals, and other stakeholders; to foster and provide collaboration and development opportunities in schools and build instructional teams of teachers, leaders, and other school staff, including paraprofessionals; to support educators in improving their instructional practice through effective, ongoing, job-embedded, professional development that is targeted to student and school needs; and to carry out other activities to improve the effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school staff, and ensure the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals. Funds spent on strategies such as professional development and class size reduction must be aligned with evidence of improvements in student learning.

Districts that have put in place the required evaluation systems may generally spend funds flexibly, except that a district that is not improving equity in the distribution of effective teachers and principals will be required to submit a new plan to the state under which funds will be spent solely on ensuring its evaluation system meets the requirements described above and on specific activities aimed at improving the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals.

Measuring Success. We will require transparency around the key indicators of whether students and schools have effective teachers and principals and whether teachers have the professional supports they need. Both states and districts must publish report cards at least every two years that provide information on key indicators, such as teacher qualifications and teacher and principal designations of effectiveness; teachers and principals hired from high-performing pathways; teacher survey data on levels of support and working conditions in schools; the novice status of teachers and principals; teacher and principal attendance; and retention rates of teachers by performance level. States will also be required to report on the performance of teacher and principal preparation programs by their graduates' impact on student growth and other measures, job placement, and retention.

Teacher and Leader Innovation Fund. Our proposal will continue competitive grants for states and school districts that are willing to implement ambitious reforms to better identify, recruit, prepare, develop, retain, reward, and advance effective teachers, principals, and school leadership teams in high-need schools. Grantees must be able to differentiate among teachers and principals on the basis of their students' growth and other measures, and must use this information to differentiate, as applicable, credentialing, professional development, and retention and advancement decisions, and to reward highly effective teachers and principals in high-need schools. School districts must also put in place policies to help ensure that principals are able to select and build a strong team of teachers with a shared vision and that teachers are choosing to be part of a school team.

Grantees may use funds to reform compensation systems to provide differentiated compensation and career advancement opportunities to educators who are effective in increasing student academic achievement, who take on additional roles and responsibilities in their schools, and who teach in high-need schools, subjects, areas, and fields. Grantees may also use funds to staff high-need schools more effectively, such as through the implementation or use of earlier hiring timelines. States and districts will be encouraged to use these funds to take on additional innovative reforms, such as improving teacher salary schedules so as to eliminate incentives for teachers to obtain credentials that have been shown not to be linked with student performance. Additionally, states must describe the extent to which high-performing pathways are in place. In all cases, applicants will be required to provide evidence of stakeholder involvement in the development of their proposal.

Teacher and Leader Pathways. Our proposal will continue competitive grants to improve and strengthen the recruitment and preparation of effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders by nonprofit organizations, colleges and universities, and school districts, through high quality preparation programs that prepare educators for high-need districts, schools, subjects, areas, and fields.

Teacher Pathways. To strengthen traditional and alternative pathways into teaching, our proposal includes competitive grants for the recruitment, preparation, placement, and induction of promising teacher candidates for high-need schools, subjects, areas, and fields. Programs must be designed to meet the specific teacher needs of a district or districts, and must either have a record of preparing effective teachers or commit to tracking and measuring the effectiveness of their graduates in the classroom.

In making grants, the Secretary will take into account whether programs will prepare teachers to teach to college- and career-ready standards; the extent to which programs are designed to meet the needs of high-need areas, including rural areas, or high-need fields, such as teaching English Learners, students with disabilities, or other students with diverse learning needs; and the extent to which programs provide streamlined opportunities for applicants who can demonstrate competency in specific knowledge or skills. Priority may be given to programs that work to recruit and prepare high performing college graduates or non-traditional candidates, such as military veterans or midcareer professionals. The Secretary also will carry out a teacher recruitment campaign, working with states, districts, and outside organizations to recruit talented candidates into the teaching profession.

Transformational Leaders. To strengthen traditional and alternative pathways into school leadership, our proposal includes competitive grants for the recruitment, preparation, and support of effective principals and leadership teams to turn around persistently low-performing schools.

Grantees must either have a record of preparing effective leaders or commit to tracking and measuring the effectiveness of their graduates, as well as provide a substantial residency or field-based component and induction support for new principals and other leaders to succeed. Priority will be given to programs that commit to put in place conditions that increase the likelihood that their graduates and other principals will succeed in improving low-performing schools, such as providing autonomy over staffing, budget, instructional program, and schedule; and those with a record of preparing principals who improve student academic achievement and other outcomes at low-performing schools. Finally, the Secretary will make grants to recruit, prepare, place, and support the retention of effective state and district leaders, such as superintendents, chief academic officers, and human resource directors, who are able to lead transformational change in their states and districts.

3. MEETING THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH LEARNERS AND OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS

America's schools are responsible for meeting the educational needs of an increasingly diverse student population, and ESEA programs must provide a wide range of resources and support to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed in college and in a career. ESEA includes programs that help schools meet the special educational needs of children working to learn the English language, students with disabilities, Native American students, homeless students, the children of migrant workers, and neglected or delinquent students. In addition, the federal government has a responsibility to provide assistance to certain high-need regions and areas, including rural districts and districts that are affected by federal property and activities.

In each of these areas, the Administration's ESEA reauthorization proposal will continue and strengthen the federal commitment to serving all students, and improve each program to ensure that funds are used more effectively to meet the needs of the students they serve.

Students with Disabilities. While the primary funding for programs specifically focused on supporting students with disabilities is through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, our ESEA reauthorization proposal will increase support for the inclusion and improved outcomes of students with disabilities. Our proposal will help ensure that teachers and leaders are better prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners, that assessments more accurately and appropriately measure the performance of students with disabilities, and that more districts and schools implement high-quality, state- and locally-determined curricula and instructional supports that incorporate the principles of universal design for learning to meet all students' needs.

English Learner Education. Our proposal will continue to provide significant formula grants to help states and school districts implement high-quality language instruction educational programs to improve the education of English Learners. Grantees may provide **dual-language programs, transitional bilingual education, sheltered English immersion, newcomer programs for late-entrant English Learners, or other language instruction educational programs.** Grantees may also provide effective professional development for all teachers of English Learners, including teachers of academic content areas, that is responsive to demonstrated needs identified by evaluations. To ensure that formula grant assistance in these areas supports the conditions needed to foster English Learners' success, we will require states to:

- **Establish new criteria to ensure consistent statewide identification of students as English Learners, and to determine eligibility, placement, and duration of programs and services, based on the state's valid and reliable English language proficiency assessment.**
- **Implement a system to evaluate the effectiveness of language instruction educational programs, and to provide information on the achievement of subgroups of English Learners, to drive better decisions by school districts for program improvement, and to support districts in selecting effective programs.**

Districts that are not improving the performance of English Learners will lose flexibility around the use of funds under this program, and must work with the state to implement more effective strategies.

Our proposal will also provide new competitive grants to states, districts, and nonprofit partners to support the development of innovative programs, build the knowledge base about promising practices, and scale up effective practices to improve instruction for English Learners, including funding for graduate fellowships to support research and leadership in developing effective practices to improve English Learner outcomes, as well as state or district partnerships with colleges and universities for developing effective teachers.

In addition, under the College- and Career-Ready Students program, states will be required to adopt and implement statewide grade-by-grade English language proficiency standards that are linked to the state's college- and career-ready academic content standards.

Migrant Education. Our proposal will continue and strengthen formula grants to states, districts, and other providers to meet the educational needs of migrant students. To ensure that funds are most effectively targeted to the areas in which migrant students live, we will update the current funding formula to incorporate more accurate and timely data. We will also strengthen and facilitate interstate efforts to support the educational transition of migrant students into local schools and communities.

Homeless Children and Youths Education. Our proposal will continue and strengthen formula grants to help states and districts put in place systems and services to meet the educational needs of homeless students. First, we will better target funds to serve homeless students by allocating funds on the basis of counts of homeless students rather than by shares of Title I allocations. Second, we will remove barriers to effective services for homeless children. And third, we will clarify provisions of the current statute

where ambiguity resulted in delays in services for homeless children and youths. Our proposal will also increase transparency by requiring grantees to report on the academic outcomes for students served by the program.

Neglected and Delinquent Children and Youths Education. Our proposal will continue and strengthen formula grants to states to improve educational services for students in state-operated institutions and community day programs for neglected or delinquent children and youths. To better direct funds to support students in locally-operated institutions, our proposal will ask districts to reserve funds received under the College- and Career-Ready Students program to support programs conducted by locally-operated institutions.

Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education. Our proposal will continue strong support—through formula and competitive grants to states; districts; Indian tribes; Indian institutions of higher education; Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native educational and community-based organizations; and nonprofit organizations, agencies, and institutions—to help meet the unique needs of Indian students, Native Hawaiian students, and Alaska Native students.

Grantees under the Indian education program will have greater flexibility to use funds to carry out programs that meet the needs of Indian students, including Native language immersion and Native language restoration programs, and develop tribal specific standards and assessments. Our proposal will improve access to funds for Indian tribes under other ESEA programs, and recognize and strengthen the role of tribal education departments in coordinating and implementing services and programs for Indian students within their jurisdiction. To ensure that programs reflect the academic, language, and cultural needs of Indian students, we will continue to require the participation of the parents of Indian children in the design of programs. To support effective programs, we will expand eligibility to school districts and public charter schools under the Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native programs.

Rural Education. Our proposal will continue formula grants to rural districts to address the specific needs of students in rural areas, through the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs. In order to improve targeting of funds, we will update the method used to identify districts as rural. To allow additional districts needed flexibility, our proposal will also expand the current "REAP Flex" authority, which allows eligible small districts to use other federal education funds flexibly, to districts that are eligible to receive funds under RLIS. In addition, we will better align the accountability requirements of the College- and Career-Ready Students program with the rural education program, so that the rural education program supports school improvement efforts in persistently low-performing districts.

To help rural districts apply for competitive grants and determine effective strategies for improving student academic achievement, the Secretary may reserve funds for national activities such as technical assistance and research on innovative programs that are designed to help rural districts overcome common capacity constraints.

Impact Aid. Our reauthorization proposal will continue significant formula grant support designed to compensate districts for the expense of educating federally-connected children and for the presence in their districts of tax-exempt federal property or other property removed from the tax rolls by the federal government. Because these funds are compensatory, districts enjoy broad flexibility in the use of these funds.

4. A COMPLETE EDUCATION

As we ask states to raise their standards to prepare their students for college and the workplace, we will also be asking more from students, families, teachers, principals, and every level of the educational system. To make higher standards meaningful, we must ensure that states, districts, schools, and teachers have the resources and assistance they need to help students reach these standards, such as instructional supports, high-quality professional development, and teaching and learning materials aligned with those standards. This means a new investment in improving teaching and learning in all content areas—from literacy to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to history, civics, foreign languages, the arts, financial literacy, environmental education, and other subjects—and in providing accelerated learning opportunities to more students to make postsecondary success more attainable.

Literacy. Our proposal will provide competitive grants to support the transition to higher standards by assisting states in strengthening their literacy programs and by providing substantial support to high-need districts in implementing high-quality literacy instruction. **States will be required to develop comprehensive, evidence-based, preK-12 literacy plans and to align federal, state, and local funds to provide high-quality literacy instruction.** States may carry out strategies to improve literacy instruction statewide, such as supporting districts in identifying effective instructional materials and improving teachers' knowledge and skills in effective literacy instruction for all students, including English Learners and students with disabilities.

Priority will be given to states that have adopted common, state-developed, college- and career-ready standards. Priority may also be given to states that use technology to address student learning challenges, which may include the principles of universal design for learning.

States will provide competitive subgrants to high-need districts to support comprehensive literacy programs in the grades and schools with the greatest local need. Programs must provide effective professional development for teachers and school leaders; high-quality state- or locally-determined curricula, instructional materials, and assessments; interventions that ensure that all students are served appropriately; and language- and text-rich classroom environments that engage and motivate students. Literacy programs may also include activities related to family literacy, improving library services, and other efforts to improve literacy.

Priority will be given to districts that propose to align other local, state, and federal resources with their plan to improve literacy instruction; propose to implement programs that have the strongest available evidence; propose to implement activities in the schools with the greatest need; or have a plan for sustaining the strategy.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Our proposal will provide competitive grants to support the transition to higher standards by assisting states in strengthening their STEM programs and by providing substantial support to high-need districts in implementing high-quality instruction in at least mathematics or science and may also include technology or engineering. **States will be required to develop comprehensive, evidence-based plans and to align federal, state, and local funds to provide high-quality STEM instruction.** States may carry out strategies to improve STEM instruction statewide, such as partnering with statewide Race to the Top partnerships, supporting districts in identifying effective instructional materials, and improving teachers' knowledge and skills in effective STEM instruction for all students, including English Learners and students with disabilities.

Priority will be given to states that have adopted common, state-developed, college- and career-ready standards. Priority may also be given to states that use technology to address student learning challenges, which may include the principles of universal design for learning; cooperate with outside partners with STEM expertise; or propose to prepare more students, including students from underrepresented groups, for advanced study and careers in STEM.

States will award competitive subgrants to high-need districts to support comprehensive STEM instruction in the grades and schools with the greatest local need. Programs must provide effective professional development for teachers and school leaders; high-quality state- or locally-determined curricula, instructional materials, and assessments; and interventions that ensure that all students are served appropriately. Subgrantees may use program funds to integrate evidence-based, effective mathematics or science programs into the teaching of other core academic subjects and for technology-based strategies to improve STEM education.

Priority will be given to districts that propose to align other local, state, and federal resources with their plan to improve instruction in STEM subjects; propose to implement programs that have the strongest available evidence; propose to implement activities in the schools with the greatest need; or have a plan for sustaining the strategy.

Ensuring a Well-Rounded Education. To help more students in high-need schools receive a well-rounded education, our proposal will provide competitive grants to states, high-need districts, and nonprofit partners to strengthen the teaching and learning of arts, foreign languages, history and civics, financial literacy, environmental education, and **other subjects**.

Grants may support either the development of new, promising instructional practices or the expansion of instructional practices for which there is evidence of improving student performance in one or more of these subjects. Such practices, which should be aimed at improving instruction for all students, including English Learners and students with disabilities, may include high-quality professional development, better assessments, high-quality state- or locally-determined curricula aligned with state standards, or innovative uses of technology.

Priority will be given to applicants proposing to integrate teaching and learning across academic subjects; to use technology to address student learning challenges; and at the high school level, to work with colleges or universities to ensure that coursework is truly aligned with those institutions' expectations.

College Pathways and Accelerated Learning. Our proposal will provide competitive grants to states, districts, and nonprofit partners to increase access to accelerated learning opportunities for students. At the high school level, these opportunities will include college-level work. At the elementary and middle school levels, these opportunities will include access to gifted and talented education programs.

Grantees will carry out activities that help students prepare for, or directly provide, college-level work (including early-college or dual-enrollment programs, Advanced Placement (AP) programs, and International Baccalaureate programs), other accelerated learning programs, and gifted and talented programs in elementary or middle schools. Applicants may propose additional activities, such as allowing credit based on successful demonstration of competency via examination or other valid means, or providing counseling, mentoring, or programs to develop study skills. Priority will be given to applicants that propose to serve high schools with low graduation rates and that partner with state higher education offices and institutions of higher education in a program that allows higher education credits to be portable beyond the individual partner institution or institutions. Our proposal will continue to provide support to states to improve access to AP tests for low-income students.

Activities to Strengthen a Complete Education. Under our proposal, the Secretary will set aside funds to carry out additional activities to improve teaching and learning in academic subjects, such as grants for the creation of high-quality educational digital content; grants to states to develop and improve their capacity to use technology to improve instruction; or grants to nonprofits to develop and implement innovative and effective strategies to improve the teaching and learning of specific subjects.

5. SUCCESSFUL, SAFE, AND HEALTHY STUDENTS

Supporting student success requires deploying every tool at our disposal. The students most at risk for academic failure too often attend schools and live in communities with insufficient capacity to address the full range of their needs. The result is that students cannot always focus on learning and teachers cannot always focus on teaching.

Preparing students for success requires taking innovative, comprehensive approaches to meeting students' needs, such as rethinking the length and structure of the school day and year, so that students have the time they need to succeed and teachers have the time they need to collaborate and improve their practice. It means supporting innovative models that provide the services that students need; time for teachers to collaborate to meet academic challenges; environments that help all students be safe, healthy, and supported in their classrooms, schools, and communities; and greater opportunities to engage families in their children's education and strengthen the role of schools as centers of communities.

Promise Neighborhoods. Our proposal will provide new, competitive grants to support the development and implementation of a continuum of effective community services, strong family supports, and comprehensive education reforms to improve the educational and life outcomes for children and youths in high-need communities, from birth through college and into careers. Programs must be designed to improve academic and developmental outcomes for children and youths through effective public schools, community-based organizations, and other local agencies. Programs will be encouraged to take a comprehensive approach to meeting student needs, drawing on the contributions of community-based organizations, local agencies, and family and community members. Grantees will conduct a needs assessment of all children in the community in order to establish baseline data against which the grantee will aim to improve outcomes, and will promote and coordinate community involvement, support, and buy-in, including securing and leveraging resources from the public and private sectors.

21st Century Community Learning Centers. Our proposal will provide competitive grants for states, school districts, nonprofit organizations, and partnerships to implement in school and out of school strategies that provide students and, where appropriate, teachers and family members, with additional time and supports to succeed.

Competitive grants will be awarded to states, school districts, and community-based organizations to leverage models that comprehensively redesign and expand the school day or year, provide full-service community schools, or provide services before school, after school, or during the summer. All programs will focus on improving student academic achievement in core academic subjects, ranging from English language arts, mathematics, and science, to history, the arts, and financial literacy, as part of a well-rounded education, and providing enrichment activities, which may include activities that improve mental and physical health, opportunities for experiential learning, and greater opportunities for families to actively and meaningfully engage in their children's education.

Priority will be given to applicants that propose to carry out programs to support the improvement of Challenge schools identified under the College- and Career-Ready Students program, and those that propose to implement comprehensive and coordinated programs, including comprehensively redesigning and expanding the school schedule for all students, providing comprehensive supports to students and families through full-service community

school models, or establishing partnerships between school districts and nonprofit organizations for in school or out of school strategies.

Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students. Our proposal will provide competitive grants to support states, school districts, and their partners in providing learning environments that ensure that students are successful, safe, and healthy. **To better measure school climate and identify local needs, grantees will be required to develop and implement a state- or district-wide school climate needs assessment to evaluate school engagement, school safety (addressing drug, alcohol, and violence issues), and school environment, and publicly report this information.** This assessment must include surveys of student, school staff, and family experiences with respect to individual schools, and additional data such as suspensions and disciplinary actions. States will use this data to identify local needs and provide competitive subgrants to school districts and their partners to address the needs of students, schools, and communities.

Grantees will use funds under the Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students program to carry out strategies designed to improve school safety and to promote students' physical and mental health and well-being, nutrition education, healthy eating, and physical fitness. Grantees may support activities to prevent and reduce substance use, school violence (including teen dating violence), harassment, and bullying, as well as to strengthen family and community engagement in order to ensure a healthy and supportive school environment.

Priority will be given to applicants that propose to support partnerships between districts and nonprofit organizations, including community-based organizations. Priority will also be given to grantees willing to direct funds to schools with the greatest need, including Challenge schools, as identified under the College- and Career-Ready Students program, or schools with the greatest needs as identified through the school climate needs assessment.

6. FOSTERING INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE

For all students to thrive in the classroom, in college, and in a career, our educational system must continuously develop and embrace the very best practices, policies, and ideas. Innovative practices are constantly emerging to help more students graduate ready for college and a career. We will ask policymakers and educators at all levels to carefully analyze the impact of their policies, practices, and systems on student outcomes. We will provide students and families with increased high-quality public school educational options, and empower them with improved information about the options available to them. And across programs, we will focus less on compliance and more on enabling effective local strategies to flourish.

Race to the Top. Modeled after the Race to the Top program authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, our proposal will provide competitive grants to states and school districts to take on ambitious and comprehensive reforms, and to encourage the broad identification, dissemination, adoption, and use of effective policies and practices. State and school district grantees will be required to develop and implement comprehensive plans, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to dramatically improve student outcomes, including focusing on rigorous college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments; providing better information to families to help them evaluate and improve their children's schools, and to educators to help them improve their students' learning; supporting effective teachers and school leaders; turning around persistently low-performing schools; and supporting innovative models for reform.

States and school districts that receive grants may spend funds flexibly in a manner aligned with their plans, but states must award at least 50 percent of their grant funds to school districts that participate in the state plan. Grantees will be required to meet specific annual performance targets related to the implementation of their plan and to improving measurable outcomes for students and schools, and will receive continuation funding only if they implement their proposed plans effectively and meet their performance targets. Grantees must invest in rigorous evaluation of their ongoing performance and reform efforts.

Investing in Innovation (i3). This program builds on the i3 program launched through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and will provide additional competitive grants to expand the implementation of, and investment in, innovative and evidence-based practices, programs, and strategies that significantly improve student outcomes. The Secretary will use a rigorous, three-tiered evidence framework that directs the highest levels of funding to programs with the strongest evidence, and also provides significant support for promising programs that are willing to undergo rigorous evaluation. Grantees will use funds to scale up practices, strategies, or programs for which there is strong evidence of success in significantly closing achievement gaps between groups of students and in significantly increasing student academic achievement for all groups of students; validate and expand practices, strategies, or programs for which there is moderate evidence of success; or develop and test promising practices, strategies, or programs for which there is potential and some research-based support. Each grantee will be required to conduct or participate in an independent evaluation of its project. Grantees will be required to form partnerships with the private sector to secure matching funds.

Applicants will be required to propose projects that develop or expand innovations in critical areas of education reform. The Secretary may also give preference to applicants that propose to develop or expand innovations around specific pressing needs, such as improving the teaching and learning of STEM subjects, improving early learning outcomes, addressing the learning needs of English Learners and students with disabilities, and serving schools in rural areas. The Secretary will also reserve funds for inducement prizes to drive breakthrough inventions in education or for dramatic and innovative approaches to improving educational outcomes.

Expanding Educational Options. In addition to broad-based comprehensive state and local reforms and the expansion of evidence-based practices and innovations, the Administration's ESEA reauthorization proposal will encourage educational entrepreneurship by expanding competitive grants aimed at increasing the supply of high-quality public educational options available to students.

Supporting Effective Charter Schools. Our proposal will provide competitive grants to states, charter school authorizers, charter management organizations, districts, and nonprofit organizations, to start or expand high-performing public charter schools and other high-performing autonomous public schools, with a priority for applicants proposing to start or expand high-performing public charter schools.

Autonomous schools are public schools that, as much or even more than charter schools, have ongoing autonomy over key operational elements, including staffing, budget, schedule, and program. Both charter schools and other autonomous schools funded under this program must be subject to the same accountability systems as traditional public schools, as well as increased accountability for improving student academic achievement.

To ensure that funds are used to start or expand high-performing schools that improve outcomes for all subgroups of students, applicants will be evaluated based on their record of past success in funding, supporting, authorizing, managing, or operating (as relevant) high-performing public charter schools or other high-performing public autonomous schools; their record of cutting off funding to or closing low-performing charter schools or other low-performing autonomous schools; and their commitment to improving the quality of their schools in the future. Grantees will be required to develop plans to appropriately serve all students in charter or other autonomous schools, including English Learners and students with disabilities, and to provide information to ensure students and families are aware of and able to apply to these schools. The Secretary may reserve a portion of funds to improve charter schools' access to facilities or to facilities financing.

To build greater capacity to support and hold schools accountable under this program, grantees at all levels will be allowed to set aside funds to improve their capacity to oversee and support schools funded under this program. Additionally, charter management organizations that commit to work with districts to support the districts in implementing effective strategies in district schools may be eligible for larger grants.

Promoting Public School Choice. Our proposal will continue to provide competitive grants to districts, consortia of districts, and states in partnership with districts to expand high-quality public school educational options for students, especially students in low-performing schools, and ensure that students and families are aware of these options. Grantees will use funds to implement programs that increase high-quality public school options for students, especially students in low-performing schools, through creating or expanding inter- and intradistrict choice programs, theme-based schools, high-quality online learning programs, or academic pathways. Grantees must also carry out activities to provide students, families, and the community with information about how to identify, evaluate, and access high-quality educational options. Priority will be given to interdistrict choice programs and programs that provide comprehensive choices to every student in a district. Priority will also be given to programs that increase diversity in the schools served by the program.

Magnet Schools Assistance Program. Our proposal will continue to provide competitive grants to districts to support magnet schools under a desegregation plan ordered by a federal court, state court, or other authorized state agency or official, or approved by the Secretary. The reauthorized program will expand and improve options for students and increase diversity by placing a greater emphasis on funding whole-school magnet school programs or models that have a record of success in raising student academic achievement and reducing minority group isolation.

7. ADDITIONAL CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES

Throughout this proposal, we have sought to redefine the federal role in education: shifting from a focus merely on compliance to allowing state and local innovation to flourish, rewarding success, and fostering supportive and collaborative relationships with states, districts, and nonprofit partners. There are several cross-cutting changes we are proposing in order to allow local innovations to lead the way and to support the development, identification, and scaling-up of strategies that are working.

Flexibility for Success. A re-envisioned federal role means giving states and districts additional flexibility in how they spend federal dollars as long as they are continuing to focus on what matters most—improving outcomes for students. States and districts will be allowed to use most federal administrative funds and reservations flexibly to build their own capacity to support reform and improvement. **Most districts will also be allowed to spend more ESEA program funds flexibly, as long as they continue to comply with the conditions associated with those funds and are improving student outcomes.**

Growing Success. Where grantees are successfully improving outcomes for students, we should not only reward them, but replicate their successful practices. For each competitive program in this proposal, grantees that are significantly improving outcomes will be eligible for both continuation funds and additional funds to expand their strategies to additional students, schools, districts, or states. This will ensure that federal funds flow to projects that are successfully serving students.

Evaluation and Building the Knowledge Base. To foster ongoing improvement of ESEA programs and to advance knowledge in the field, investments are needed in data analysis and evaluation at the federal, state, and local levels. Consequently, this proposal encourages federal, state, and local levels to work together to use data for continuous improvement, test innovative ideas, evaluate and replicate promising approaches, and scale up what strong research evidence suggests works across all ESEA programs. In addition, a new evaluation authority will authorize rigorous, objective evaluations of ESEA programs, policies, and practices and support performance measurement of those programs. The Secretary will submit to Congress a biennial plan on ESEA evaluation and performance measurement and will establish an independent panel that advises on the plan.

Cross-Cutting Priorities. There are some priorities that are relevant in numerous areas of education reform. We may apply specific priorities across programs, as appropriate, including priorities for:

1. **Technology.** Technology, effectively and thoughtfully deployed, can improve how schools work, how teachers teach, and how students learn. Priority may be given to programs, projects, or strategies that leverage digital information or communications technology to accomplish the stated goals of the grant.
2. **Evidence.** As evidence develops in new areas, funding should be devoted to the areas with the most evidence of effectiveness in improving outcomes for students. Priority may be given to programs, projects, or strategies on the strength of their evidentiary base.
3. **Efficiency.** Particularly in the current economic situation, it is important to do more with fewer resources. Priority may be given to programs, projects, or strategies that are designed to significantly increase efficiency in the use of resources to improve student outcomes.
4. **Supporting English Learners and Students With Disabilities.** Schools, districts, and states must be held responsible for educating all students, including English Learners and students with disabilities, to high standards, but more work could be done to develop and scale up effective strategies for these students. Priority may be given to programs, projects, or strategies that are designed to specifically improve the performance of English Learners or students with disabilities.
5. **Supporting Rural and Other High-Need Areas.** In new competitive programs, we will be putting in place appropriate strategies to ensure that rural districts and other high-need districts are not disadvantaged and are able to receive the funding they need to help students succeed. Priority may be given to programs or projects designed to serve rural and other high-need areas.