

# ED REVIEW

January 13, 2012 (Happy New Year!)

...a bi-weekly update on U.S. Department of Education activities relevant to the Intergovernmental and Corporate community and other stakeholders

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## NCLB ANNIVERSARY

Following are excerpts from Secretary Duncan's op-ed on the 10th anniversary of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act.

"NCLB, for the first time, exposed achievement gaps and created a conversation about how to close them. The law has held schools accountable for the performance of all students -- no matter their race, income level, English proficiency, or disability. Schools can no longer point to average scores while hiding an achievement gap that is morally unacceptable and economically unsustainable. But, NCLB has significant flaws. It created an artificial goal of proficiency that encourages states to set low standards to make it easier for students to meet the goal. The law's emphasis on test scores as a primary measure of school performance has narrowed the curriculum, and the one-size-fits-all accountability system has mislabeled schools as failures even if their students are demonstrating real academic growth. The law is overly prescriptive and doesn't allow [school] districts to create improvement plans based on their unique needs. It also has not supported states as they create teacher evaluation systems that use multiple measures to identify highly effective teachers and support the instructional improvement of all teachers."

"President Obama is offering states flexibility from NCLB in exchange for comprehensive plans to raise standards; to create fair, flexible, and focused accountability systems; and to improve systems for teacher and principal evaluation and support. This flexibility will not give states a pass on accountability. It will demand real reform. So far, 39 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have expressed interest in this flexibility. The Education Department is working with the first group of applicants."

"Even as we work with states to offer flexibility from existing law, the Obama Administration will support a bipartisan effort by Congress to create a law that supports a well-rounded education while holding schools, districts, and states accountable for results. We all need to work together so that -- 10 years from now -- America's children will have the sort of federal education law they so richly deserve, one that challenges them to achieve to high standards and provides them with the highly effective teachers and principals who can prepare them for success in college and the workforce."

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2012/01/after-10-years-it%E2%80%99s-time-for-a-new-nclb/>.

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## **APPROPRIATIONS BILL**

On December 23, 2011, the President signed into law an omnibus appropriations bill (H.R. 2055) providing funding for the U.S. Department of Education. Overall, after a 0.189% across-the-board rescission, the bill appropriates \$68.1 billion in discretionary spending for the agency's programs, a decrease of \$233 million from Fiscal Year 2011. Specifically, the bill includes:

- \$14.5 billion for Title I grants to local education agencies, a \$74 million increase;
- \$11.6 billion for special education state grants, a \$112 million increase;
- \$2.47 billion to help states improve the quality of their teachers and leaders;
- \$160 million for the Striving Readers (PK-12) literacy program; and
- \$22.8 billion in discretionary funding for Pell Grants for low- and middle-income college undergraduates, which will support maintaining the maximum grant at \$5,550.

Among other key programs, the bill includes \$549 million for a new round of Race to the Top (see below); \$149 million for the Investing in Innovation Fund; \$60 million for the Promise Neighborhood initiative, which is double its FY 2011 funding level; and \$534 million for the School Improvement Grant program. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/news.html#12action>.

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## **RACE TO THE TOP**

Also on December 23, the Department announced that seven states -- Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania -- will each receive a proportional share of \$200 million in Race to the Top phase three funding to advance targeted K-12 reforms aimed at improving student achievement. As high-scoring finalists in the 2010 Race to the Top competition, these states were eligible for new grant awards to invest in a portion of their phase two plans. This third round of competition focused on supporting efforts to leverage comprehensive statewide reform while also improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. With these seven, 21 states and the District of Columbia have been awarded grants through the Race to the Top program, which includes the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Fund. Winners also include California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Washington, and the District of Columbia. These states serve 65% of the country's children and 59% of the low-income students across the nation. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/phase3-resources.html>.

In addition to appropriating \$549 million for Race to the Top, the omnibus bill includes language that will allow the Department to create a district-level competition and continue the investment in early learning.

Meanwhile, this week, the Department issued state-specific reports profiling first-year progress on the reforms underway in Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and the District of Columbia -- the 12 states that secured Race to the Top funding in 2010 through the competition's initial two phases. These reports supply summaries of accomplishments made and setbacks experienced by

states in pursuing reforms around Race to the Top's four assurance areas: raising academic standards, building robust data systems to improve instruction, supporting great teachers and leaders, and turning around lowest-achieving schools. Each report and progress achieved is unique to a state's plan, with some states using year one to engage stakeholders, secure contracts, or establish key partnerships that will help implement large-scale reforms in years two through four while other states have put into place new systems or policies that have reached districts or schools within their state. Throughout year one, the Department's Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) partnered with states' teams to track progress and offer feedback, guidance, and overall support for their reform work. As state plans encountered delays and obstacles, the Department worked with grantees to thoroughly and thoughtfully review, deliberate, and approve changes to budgets and timelines that help states move forward with their Race to the Top plan. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/performance.html#state-reports>. (Note: Today, the Department is convening with grantees to provide support and encourage reform work across state lines. Teams will be comprised of state and district representatives. A focus will be on supporting great teachers and leaders and transitioning to college- and career-ready standards.)

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## FROM THE MIDWEST

Over the last couple of days, Secretary Duncan traveled across the Midwest, participating in several events. First, he delivered a keynote address (<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/time-bring-your-game-academics-and-athletics>) at the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Convention in Indianapolis. His remarks focused on encouraging college sports programs -- especially football and basketball programs -- to strike a healthier balance between academics and athletics. He directly appealed to college and university leaders to work collectively through the NCAA and conference leadership to do more to support the educational interests of student athletes, simplify NCAA rules, and develop faster and better-targeted enforcement. Next, he hosted a town hall on education and the economy with students and educators at Miami Valley Career Technology Center in Clayton, Ohio. On site, he discussed adult education and the role that career and technical training plays in rebuilding the economy. He was joined by the Department's Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education Brenda Dann-Messier. Then, he joined Vice President Biden at Lincoln High School in Gahanna, Ohio, to discuss the importance of college and steps the Administration has taken to keep college affordable across the country.

Also, today, Deputy Secretary Miller will join the Vice President at Central Bucks High School-West in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, to discuss college affordability.

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## CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

On January 10, at an event at the White House, Secretary Duncan and several Administration and education officials launched a national conversation on the importance of educating students for informed, engaged citizenship. This special event focused on the release of two papers: a Department report, "Civic Learning and Engagement in Democracy: A Road Map and Call to Action," and the final report by the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic

Engagement, “A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy’s Future,” which was commissioned by the Department. “Road Map” notes that the need for a national dialogue is clear: although America’s democratic ideals remain a model for the world, U.S. civic knowledge (on the 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress, less than 30% of fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students were proficient in civics) and voter participation (on a 2007 international ranking of 172 democracies, the U.S. ranked 139th in voter participation) are far from exceptional. It highlights nine steps the Department will take to advance civic learning and engagement, such as adding civic indicators to student surveys, promoting public service internships and careers, and leveraging federal programs and public-private partnerships. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/civic-learning>. (Note: As part of the event, over 75 organizations, institutions of higher education, and scholars and philanthropists announced statements of commitment.)

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## ODDS AND ENDS

- This year marks the 40th anniversary of Title IX, the civil rights law ensuring educational institutions that receive federal funding do not discriminate on the basis of sex. To kick-off the celebration, Secretary Duncan and Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Russlynn Ali joined Lisa Maatz of the American Association of University Women for a Tweetup. They received questions on Title IX from Twitter users and then responded via Twitter. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2012/01/talking-title-ix-on-twitter/>.
- The next in a series of blog posts on the Green Ribbon Schools’ pilot year presents examples of schools that are taking advantage of grants, volunteers, education resources, and other help -- from innovative business partnerships to overnight field trips at nearby outdoor education centers -- to go green and save green. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2012/01/schools-go-green-%E2%80%93-and-save-green-with-help-from-private-foundation-and-nonprofit-sectors/>.
- On January 18, Doing What Works will host a webinar on one of the What Works Clearinghouse’s Practice Guides: “Developing Effective Fractions Instruction for K-8.” The practice guide outlines five key recommendations intended to help educators improve students’ understanding of fractions. The webinar will build upon the recommendations by presenting real world examples. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.schoolsmovingup.net/cs/smu/view/e/5167>.
- The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) recently issued a white paper (<http://www.nea.gov/research/taskforce/arts-and-human-development.html>), titled “The Arts and Human Development: Framing a National Research Agenda for the Arts, Lifelong Learning, and Individual Well-Being,” based on a March 2011 research convening that the NEA co-sponsored with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The NEA also announced the creation of an interagency task force to coordinate and promote research and evidence-sharing about the role of the arts in human development (<http://www.nea.gov/news/news11/task-force-announcement.html>). Moreover, the NEA’s Office of Research and Analysis will sponsor a series of webinars to spotlight research about the arts and human development, drawing from projects supported by partner agencies (<http://www.nea.gov/research/taskforce/2012-webinars.html>).

- Under Summer Jobs+, the federal government and private sector are committed to creating nearly 180,000 employment opportunities for low-income youth in the summer of 2012, with the goal of reaching 250,000 employment opportunities by the start of summer, at least 100,000 of which will be placements in paid jobs and internships. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/01/05/we-cant-wait-white-house-announces-federal-and-private-sector-commitment>.

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## QUOTE TO NOTE

“The narrative for 2012 in college sports is all about the deal. It’s all about the brand. It’s all about big-time college programs saying ‘show me the money.’ Too often, large, successful programs seem to exist in a world of their own. Their football and basketball players, sometimes even their coaches, are given license to behave in ways that would be unacceptable elsewhere in education or in society at large. And nothing, I mean nothing, does more to corrode public faith in intercollegiate sports than the appearance of a double standard for athletes or coaches in big-time programs. This narrative is a threat to the core principles of the NCAA, the mission of higher education, and the amateur tradition. Without decisive action by college leaders, that storyline, and the challenges it creates, is likely to become even more embedded in the public’s mind.”

-- Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (1/11/12), addressing an audience of about 500 NCAA delegates

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

President Obama is currently scheduled to deliver his State of the Union address on January 24 and release his FY 2013 budget on February 6.

The Corporation for National and Community Service is asking Americans to appropriately honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s legacy on January 16 by making the holiday a day ON -- versus a day off. King Day became a national day of service in 1994, when Congress passed legislation to give the holiday even greater significance. A dedicated web site enables organizers to register projects nationwide. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.mlkday.gov/>.

January 21-24, the Department will exhibit at the National Title I Association’s Conference in Seattle. If you are attending this event, please stop by the Department's booth.

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**Please feel free to contact the Office of Communications and Outreach with any questions:**

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