

## **THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PROGRESS REPORT**

**Overview:** *The Department of Education and Secretary Duncan are set on a “moon-shot” goal to get America on track and to return to being number one in the world in high school and college graduation rates, school readiness, academic achievement, college matriculation and retention, and completion rates. The “Obama Effect” and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act are bookends for this unparalleled opportunity to get significantly better. Over the past 100 days, the Department has worked extraordinarily hard to deliver on this promise and to lay the groundwork for the next four years.*

### **AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT**

Of the \$787 billion *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (ARRA or Recovery Act) signed by President Obama on February 17, approximately \$100 billion is designated for education. This unprecedented funding level creates a historic opportunity to save or create hundreds of thousands of jobs, support states and school districts, and advance reforms and improvements that will create long-lasting results for our students and our nation in the areas of early learning, K-12, and post-secondary education. Funding and timing details by programs are summarized below:

<b>Department of Education ARRA Funding (\$ mil)</b>				
		<u>Phase I:</u>	<u>Phase II:</u>	<u>Phase III:</u>
<u>Program Fund</u>	<u>Total Funding</u>	<u>Apr-09</u>	<u>Summer/Fall 2009</u>	<u>Late Fall 2009/ Summer 2010</u>
State Fiscal Stabilization Fund	48,600	32,560	16,040	
Race to the Top	5,000			4,350
Investing in What Works & Innovation				650
Title I, Part A	10,000	5,000	5,000	
Title I, School Improvement	3,000		3,000	
IDEA, Parts B & C	12,200	6,100	6,100	
Vocational Rehabilitation	540	270	270	
Independent Living	140	52.5	87.5	
Enhancing Ed. through Technology	650		650	
Homeless Youth	70	70		
Impact Aid	100	40	60	
Teacher Incentive Fund	200		200	
Teacher Quality Enhancement	100		100	
Statewide Data Systems	250		250	
Federal Pell Grants	17,114		17,114	
Federal Work-Study	200		200	
	\$98,164	\$44,093	\$49,072	\$5,000
<b><u>Non-Program ARRA Funding:</u></b>				
Student Aid Administration	60	Ongoing administration		
Office of the Inspector General	14	Ongoing administration		
<b>Total Appropriation</b>	<b>\$98,238</b>	<b>\$44,093</b>	<b>\$49,072</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>

### ***Funding Availability/Impact on Jobs***

The Department has developed a multi-phased strategy for making ARRA funds available to states and other grantees. This approach balances the need for rapid investment in the economy with the goals of promoting reform, providing accountability and transparency, and avoiding a “funding cliff” of unsustainable continuing commitments after the funding expires. In accordance with this strategy, \$44 billion in ARRA funding has been made available to states within the first 100 days of the Administration. The Department will release the remaining \$54 billion later this year to allow time to work with grantees to develop thoughtful, reform-oriented spending plans. These remaining funds will be made available beginning in the Summer/Fall of 2009.

The Department believes that there should be immediate job savings from the \$48.6 billion formula portion of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) intended to address shortfalls in current state budgets. States should be able to apply these funds to their payroll budgets immediately; the Department provided preliminary “planning numbers” to the states in March estimating available funding over the duration of the Act, and has made 67% of this funding available pending receipt of an approvable application. The Center on Reinventing Public Education has projected the K-12 job loss from state budget shortfalls to be approximately 575,000. The jobs saved or created from Department of Education ARRA funds will help to offset these projected cuts.

### ***Transparency, Reform, and Accountability***

At the same time as it has facilitated rapid availability of ARRA funds to supplement state education budgets, the Department has taken steps to ensure that Recovery Act funding is being used to drive meaningful reform consistent with the Administration’s long-term goals.

*Assurance Metrics:* The Recovery Act stipulates that SFSF monies must be spent against four “assurances” that evidence shows make a critical contribution to student results. The Department has proposed a set of State reporting metrics to assess progress against these goals, and these are being published in the *Federal Register* for public comment. States must submit a plan for reporting these metrics as part of the application to receive the second round of SFSF funds. By focusing attention on state progress against these assurances, the Department expects to guide state ARRA spending decisions toward reform. The four assurances are:

- Making progress toward rigorous college- and career-ready standards and high quality assessments that are valid and reliable for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities;
- Establishing pre-K to college and career data systems that track progress and foster continuous improvement;
- Making improvements in teacher effectiveness and in the equitable distribution of qualified teachers for all students, particularly students who are most in need; and
- Providing intensive support and effective interventions for the lowest-performing schools.

*Discretionary Grants:* The “Race to the Top” and “Invest in What Works and Innovation” funds will be distributed at the discretion of the Secretary to states in response to specific proposals that address meaningful reform. Adherence to reform principles across ARRA programs will be considered in awarding these funds.

*Outreach and Guidance on Effective Use of Funds:* Detailed guidance, including examples of effective uses of funds, regarding disbursement and expenditure of ARRA monies has been developed by the Department and distributed broadly. Outreach to state and local governments and to education and community organizations has been conducted since the passage of ARRA.

In its implementation of the Recovery Act, the Department has supported the Administration's goal of increasing transparency and accountability of government activities. In addition to providing Recovery.gov with timely and thorough reporting, the Department has partnered with OMB in the development of new agency and recipient reporting tools to meet both government-wide and Education-specific transparency objectives.

The Department has developed its own Recovery web page, **ed.gov/recovery**, as the central portal for all ARRA implementation information. The Department posted the SFSF application and letter to Governors to this site, along with fact sheets, guidance, and state-by-state funding figures for programs at the time funding was made available. The Department has committed to posting all State SFSF applications and funding releases upon approval. The Department has also posted internal ARRA presentations and training tools on ed.gov/recovery, including Office of the Inspector General fraud awareness training presentations and the slide show used in ARRA briefings to government and education leadership.

*Risk Assessment:* Given the magnitude and speed of distribution of ARRA funds, the Department is cognizant of the risk that funds may be misused, and is working to maximize the effectiveness of ARRA monies by identifying potential risks and engaging in mitigation activities up front.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) will be conducting initial audits in seven states and has been coordinating its activities with the Government Accountability Office (GAO). The OIG audit work will focus on the adequacy of internal controls over sub-recipient monitoring, cash management, data reliability, and use of funds. The OIG is also working with state auditors and other fiscal and programmatic groups, such as the Association of Educational Federal Finance Administrators and the National Association of Federal Education Program Administrators, to increase oversight coverage and disseminate guidance. The OIG has prepared several presentations covering the prevention and detection of internal control weaknesses and fraud to be used by regional staff in outreach events, and is developing an audit program that will be used by OIG auditors and shared with GAO and state auditors.

The Department of Education's Risk Management Service (RMS), working closely with OIG, has developed a preliminary Risk Management Framework to synthesize available risk factors for States, Territories, and the 100 largest LEAs (e.g. audit results, % of funds disbursed, cash management findings, program office survey feedback). Based on the specific types of risks identified for each recipient, RMS will recommend a plan for training or other mitigating actions to be included in the technical assistance effort being coordinated with program offices.

### ***Communicating the impact of ARRA***

To drive the stimulus fund message home at the local level, the Secretary held a press conference with Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Chancellor Joel Klein, and AFT President Randi Weingarten at the Explore Charter School in Brooklyn prior to the passage of the bill to discuss the importance of the ARRA in saving jobs and advancing reforms. He also presented state-by-state estimates of new education revenues included in the stimulus bill and set a goal of releasing a third of the more than \$100 billion in funding within 30 days.

After the passage of the ARRA, the Department then worked to communicate the message of jobs and reform with key stakeholders from across the country. The Secretary, the President, and Vice President invited a group of nearly 100 mayors to the White House, which was quickly followed by a similar meeting with nearly every governor in the nation. The Secretary and the Vice President then hosted two more of these meetings—one with nearly 50 chief state school officers and another with nearly 100 superintendents that are a part of the Council of the Great City Schools organization. These meetings were critical in disseminating the message that the Department hopes to be an engine of innovation and take the best ideas from the local level to scale across the country.

On the first day the ARRA funds were made available, Secretary Duncan made the announcement at Doswell Brooks Elementary School in Capitol Heights, Maryland, with Governor Martin O'Malley, Congresswoman Donna Edwards, Maryland State School Superintendent Nancy Grasmick, and other local leaders. The Prince George's County School District is facing a \$155 million budget gap for next year and school officials estimate the district will receive at least \$142 million from the stimulus package over the next two years. Immediately following the event, Duncan hosted a press conference call with over 150 national and regional reporters.

The outreach arm of the Department also took extensive action to ensure stakeholders received the information on guidance. Department staff held a Hill briefing with Senate committee staff and House leadership in conjunction with the release. Further, senior policy staff hosted a conference call with 200 participants from State superintendents and governors' offices and a second conference call with 225 participants from local superintendents', associations' and mayors' offices.

These efforts were built upon in the following days with a second Hill briefing—this time for all interested Congressional staff, and several webinars where stakeholders could walk through how to fill out an application for state stabilization funds. . In addition, the Department hosted a briefing with representatives from 200 groups across all sectors (k-12, higher education, disability, advocacy, minority) to discuss guidelines for stimulus spending.

The Department then amplified this message by devoting a special edition of its monthly TV show, "Education News Parents Can Use," to examining how the recently enacted stimulus package can help save or create jobs and promote education reform. Leading educators, including California State University Chancellor Charles Reed, Anne Bryant, executive director of the National School Boards Association, and Amy Wilkins, vice president of the Education Trust, were among those on the program explaining how the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will help all Americans. The program was carried live on the Dish Network, dozens of PBS stations, and numerous cable outlets, and will continue to be carried on broadcast, cable, and satellite channels throughout the month.

## **POLICY/REGULATORY INITIATIVES**

### ***"Race to the Top"***

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided funding for the *Race to the Top Fund*, which will lay the groundwork for dramatic, sustained progress in student achievement by supporting a vanguard of states who will adopt "fewer, clearer, higher" standards and aligned assessments and data systems, all targeted to ensure college and career readiness. To qualify for this \$4.35 billion fund, states and participating school systems must adopt bold strategies for raising achievement for all students and closing the achievement gap.

Qualifying states will articulate clear plans and ambitious goals. The fund will encourage states to develop creative approaches to dramatically increase the number of effective teachers and principals, to implement rigorous systems of standards, assessments, and data systems, and to make dramatic changes in restructuring low-performing schools. States must set goals for high school and college graduation rates that align with President Obama's goal of having the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020.

### ***"What Works and Innovation Fund"***

The ARRA provided funding for the *What Works and Innovation Fund*, which will invest in school systems and nonprofit organizations with demonstrated track records of success in raising student achievement. This \$650 million fund is the biggest such investment our nation's government has ever made. The primary objective of the *What Works and Innovation Fund* is to provide schools, districts, and colleges with replicable models for driving dramatic gains in student achievement. It will do so by expanding, enhancing, validating, disseminating, and scaling the effective, innovative approaches of high-potential districts and nonprofits.

The Department has been working out the details of the plan and coordinating with philanthropic contributors. We hope to leverage at least \$350 million in additional philanthropic contributions, providing \$1 billion or more for investment in raising student achievement and closing the achievement gap.

### ***Increasing College Access and Affordability***

*Pell Grants:* Building on increases in the ARRA, the President's budget proposes establishing a Pell Grant maximum of \$5,550 for the 2010-11 academic year and then indexing the maximum grant to grow faster than inflation in future years (at a rate equal to the consumer price index plus 1 percentage point). The budget also proposes to make funding for the Pell Grant program mandatory, rather than discretionary, to eliminate uncertainty and end the practice of "backfilling" billions of dollars in Pell shortfalls. The increase in Pell Grant funding alone would be \$117 billion over the next ten years.

*Additional Student Loans to Cover Gaps and Emergencies:* The President's budget proposes an expanded, modernized Perkins Loan program with \$6 billion a year in new loan volume—six times the current Perkins volume, reaching up to 2.7 million new students at as many as 2,700 additional postsecondary education institutions. Instead of being serviced by the colleges, the loans would be serviced by the Department of Education along with other federal loans. The loans would have the same low 5 percent interest rate and allowed loan amounts (both undergraduate and graduate) as in the current Perkins program. To make the loans available to more students and help finance the expanded Pell Grant, interest on the loans would accrue while students are in school. Overall, this proposal will save \$3.2 billion over five years.

*A State-Federal Partnership to Improve College Completion:* The President's budget also includes a five-year, mandatory \$2.5 billion fund to build a federal-state-local partnership aimed at improving college success and completion, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. States would have considerable flexibility in the types of programs that can be funded, but new programs must include a rigorous research component. This effort will expand the knowledge base about what works in increasing college enrollment and graduation, and disseminate these best practices. States would be able to use a portion of the funds to continue college outreach and information

activities now supported through subsidies in the guaranteed loan program (Federal Family Education Loan Program).

### ***Department Funding Increases in the President's Budget***

President Obama's Fiscal Year 2010 budget proposed in February 2009 promises to build on the ARRA's \$100 billion investment in education with a strong commitment to early childhood education as well as efforts to strengthen public schools through a new emphasis on college- and career-ready standards, improved assessments, more effective teaching, and greatly improved collection and use of student achievement data.

Specific 2010 proposals focus on the importance of a college education for both individual and national success in the global economy. Today, roughly 40 percent of 25 to 34-year-old Americans hold college degrees, and the President wants to raise that figure to 60 percent and make America number one in the percentage of citizens holding college degrees.

The 2010 budget also would stabilize the postsecondary student loan programs and save taxpayers \$4 billion annually—\$24.3 billion over five years—by originating all new loans in the direct lending program, while at the same time tapping experienced private sector companies to collect and service the loans. To give students with extra college borrowing needs a better alternative to high-cost private loan programs, the 2010 request would expand the number of schools offering Perkins Loans from 1,800 to up to 4,400, and potentially more than quintuple the number of students receiving Perkins Loans, from 500,000 to 2.7 million. In addition, as discussed above, the President's budget increases and stabilizes Pell Grant funding, with the aim of increasing college completion rates.

### ***New Rulemaking***

*Title I Regulations:* Secretary Duncan wrote to the chief state school officers on April 1, 2009, with regard to the Title I regulations that were issued in October 2008 [73 FR 64436 (Oct. 29, 2008)]. The Secretary decided to propose changes in a few of the regulations, while leaving the majority of these regulations in effect because, on the whole, the regulations support the educational goals of greater transparency, particularly for parents; flexibility in return for accountability; improved assessment and data systems to better track the growth of students and improve instruction; and increased focus on high school graduation.

In a few cases, Secretary Duncan will propose changing the regulations, or provide flexibility through waivers. He intends to propose, through notice and comment rulemaking, a repeal of the requirement that a state revise its Accountability Workbook with respect to its definition of adequate yearly progress (AYP) and submit those revisions for peer review. In addition, if a state's current assessment timeline precludes its districts from meeting the 14-day public school choice notice requirement, the Secretary will consider a one-year waiver of this requirement. Finally, the Secretary intends to propose to amend or repeal a Title I regulatory provision that was issued in December of 2002 prohibiting a State from approving districts and schools identified for improvement to be supplemental educational services (SES) providers. The remainder of the October 2008 Title I regulations will remain intact and in effect.

### ***Implementation of Recently Passed Legislation***

*Higher Education Opportunity Act (enacted August 14, 2008):* On February 18, the Department began negotiations to develop notices of proposed rulemaking to implement the Higher Education

Opportunity Act. The effort involves five negotiating committees, composed of more than 85 non-Federal negotiators and alternates, addressing a wide variety of issues that will make Federal aid more accessible to students, further limit potential abuse in the Federal student loan programs, and enhance the information that students and families have to inform institution choice. This collaborative rulemaking effort will ensure that strong rules are written that can be effectively implemented by campus officials.

The rules will address the requirement that projects supported under GEAR UP continue to serve students from a previous grant, the requirements in the Federal TRIO programs to focus more on outcomes when assessing prior experience in awarding subsequent grants, the eligibility of students with intellectual disabilities to receive Federal student aid including Pell Grants, the provision of additional information about safety issues by college campuses, and the new standards of conduct requirements for campus officials in student loans.

On April 2, the Department issued a Dear Colleague letter that reminded financial aid administrators of their ability to exercise professional judgment under section 479A of the Higher Education Act when determining the eligibility of students for federal student aid. Administrators may make adjustments on the basis of adequate documentation, and on a case-by-case basis, to address circumstances not reflected in a student's original Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which will be particularly important for families who may be struggling during these difficult economic times.

*Federal Work-Study Program:* On April 1, the Department issued allocations for the Federal Work-Study program that reflected an additional \$200 million provided in the ARRA making it possible for institutions to effectively use the funds for the upcoming academic year to create jobs and help low-income students pay for postsecondary education.

*Guidance to Loan Holders on Recent Statutory Changes:* On April 3, the Department issued a Dear Colleague Letter that provides guidance to loan holders concerning the completion of a Loan Verification Certificate (LVC). Specifically, the letter reminds loan holders about recent statutory changes that allow a borrower to consolidate a single FFEL Program consolidation loan into the Direct Loan Program if the FFEL consolidation loan has been submitted for default aversion or is already in default and the borrower wishes to obtain, effective July 1, 2009, an Income-Based Repayment plan on the Direct Consolidation Loan; the borrower wishes to use the Direct Loan Program's Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program under section 455(m) of the HEA (effective July 1, 2008); or the borrower wishes to take advantage of the Direct Loan Program's no interest accrual benefit for active duty service members under section 455(o) of the HEA and the FFEL Program consolidation loan is one that repaid FFEL Program loans that were first disbursed on or after October 1, 2008.

## **COMMUNICATIONS/OUTREACH**

In the first 100 days, Secretary Duncan has made considerable efforts to introduce himself to key education reporters and editorial writers on both a national and regional level. As a result, profiles in the *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Education Week*, *Education Daily*, *Newsweek*, *Business Week*, and *Congressional Quarterly* have appeared. Additionally, the Secretary has participated in personal editorial board meetings with the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *New Orleans Times Picayune*, *Denver Post*, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, and *New York Post*. In sum, Secretary Duncan has participated in over 68 media interviews/events since January 21.

To drive the higher education budget message home at a local level, the Secretary and Dr. Jill Biden held a panel discussion with students at Miami Dade College, the largest and most diverse community college in the nation with eight campuses and more than 167,000 students from around the world. Secretary Duncan and Dr. Biden praised the work of community colleges in providing students with a quality education at an affordable cost. Secretary Duncan also discussed how the increase in Pell Grant aid will benefit low-income students who are disproportionately represented at community colleges and students who participate in the Federal Work-Study program will receive larger awards.

The Department then worked to amplify the President's major education address on March 10, which laid out the broader agenda. On the day following the speech, the Secretary held a press conference call with over 100 reporters from across the country, to praise the President for, as Secretary Duncan put it "fighting two wars and trying to fix the worst economy since the depression and continuing to find the time and money for education." He then highlighted a series of challenges the President set out for us, including challenges to states on standards and charters, to districts and unions on teacher quality and length of school year, to politicians on both sides to drop ideologies, and to parents to take responsibility. Secretary Duncan continued to push the President's message as he went from speaking event to speaking event—calling on states to embrace higher standards, lift charter caps, embrace performance pay, and aim to lead the world in college graduation rates.

Secretary Duncan then took the message on the road, joining the Vice President and other secretaries for a Middle Class Task Force town hall meeting titled, "Road to Recovery: Building a Strong Middle Class through the Recovery Act" in St. Cloud, Minnesota. The town hall discussion focused on ways the Recovery Act implementation will help the middle class. While there, Secretary Duncan attended an editorial board meeting at the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*.

Secretary Duncan then visited New Orleans with Senator Mary Landrieu, where many of the specific reforms promoted by the President and the Secretary, such as accountability standards and incentives for teachers, are already being implemented. Secretary Duncan and Senator Landrieu met with students at local schools and held an education roundtable at Tulane University with more than 50 Louisiana education leaders from diverse backgrounds to discuss school reform proposals. While there, Secretary Duncan participated in an editorial board meeting at the *Times Picayune*.

Most recently, Secretary Duncan joined Senator Michael Bennet in Denver in visiting two schools that highlight the kind of reform the President and the Secretary are working to support and expand. Bruce Randolph High School serves as a model for the country in turning around failing schools and Montclair Elementary is the first school in Colorado to be granted autonomy under a new state law that allows schools to make their own decisions on spending, length of school day and year, and teacher hiring and compensation. Secretary Duncan and Senator Bennet also held a roundtable discussion with local educators on ARRA and jointly attended a *Denver Post* editorial meeting.

The Department also launched a blog on March 30. Modeled after the White House blog, the ED blog features Secretary Duncan's speeches, interviews, and school visits. It includes other ED news—ED Recovery Act announcements, for instance. Entries include his Recovery Act briefing for education associations (webcast), his call for "a new era of science education in America," his "Educating Our Way to a Better Economy" op-ed in the Dallas Morning News, awards and recognition from the Washington Post and Rolling Stone, a video of a community whose schools will be helped considerably by the Recovery Act, and his personal appeal to ED staff and others to



volunteer to tutor children. As of April 8, the blog had been visited nearly 5,000 times by over 3,000 unique visitors (and they viewed pages more than 11,000 times).

## **COST SAVINGS AND INTERNAL REFORM—FIRST 100 DAYS**

In the first 100 Days the Department has undertaken measures to evaluate and implement administrative cost saving opportunities by incorporating and aggregating suggestions, estimates, and budgetary analysis from career staff in the Office of Management, the Budget Division, and the Strategic Sourcing Council. This review has resulted in plans that will realize immediate savings and costs avoided, as well as longer term proposals that will realize those savings in the years to come. Detailed below are the plans that have been implemented in the first 100 days. In sum, these plans will result in **close to \$11,000,000** in savings by April 29, 2009.

*Computer and Printer Consolidation:* The Department has reduced the ratio of computers per employee from 1.4 computers per user to 1.1 computers per user by requiring that most employees use laptop computers (as opposed to keeping a desktop and also receiving a laptop). This will result in annual savings of about \$2 million. Additionally, savings from increasing the printer ratio from about 1 user per printer to about 4 users per printer will result in an avoidance cost of approximately \$6.7 million. Total savings of both the reduced computer ratio and the printer ratio is about \$8.7 million in costs avoided.

*FY 2009 Contract Savings/Travel:* The Department has reviewed proposed contracting activity for the remainder of FY 2009 and determined that proposed contracts can be reduced in cost or eliminated in the Office of the Secretary, the Office of Management, and the Office of Communications and Outreach, resulting in savings of at least \$1.3 million. In some cases the funding will be reallocated to more critical efforts. In addition to this, reductions in travel costs in the Secretary's office are expected to result in savings of \$200,000 at minimum over the previous year's expenditures. Furthermore, efforts have been initiated to undertake a critical review of spending plans for the remainder of FY 2009 and FY2010 to ensure that contract costs as well as travel costs are kept to a minimum and that we employ methods such as webinars or teleconferencing to reach our intended audiences, rather than expending staff time and dollars on travel. Total savings will be up to \$1.5 million.

*International office closed:* The Department decided to eliminate its Paris Office as well as the position assigned to that office. Since August 2003, the Department has maintained a full-time employee acting as an education policy attaché at the U.S. Mission to UNESCO in Paris. By eliminating the position and the location in Paris the Department will save approximately \$635,000.

*Eliminating Excess Video Teleconferencing Equipment:* The Department has eliminated extraneous video teleconferencing equipment at its facilities after discovering various offices were using video teleconference equipment that was not covered under the Department's equipment contract, essentially paying for extra and unnecessary equipment. The Department's current videoconferencing facilities provide adequate coverage for all ED employees and facilities. By eliminating this extra equipment ED will save \$100,000 per year.

### ***Eliminating Ineffective Programs***

The 2010 Budget will include proposals to eliminate or reduce funding for education programs that have not worked to achieve their intended objectives. One example is the ineffective Mentoring Program. A recent evaluation showed that the \$47 million Mentoring Program, as currently constructed, did not have a significant impact on outcomes for participating students

(<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20094047/>). Furthermore, mentoring activities are supported by more than 100 youth programs across 13 Federal agencies.

While the Mentoring Program has laudable goals, it did not deliver in reducing risky behaviors or improving academic performance. The Mentoring Program awards grants to LEAs and nonprofit community-based organizations to establish and support mentoring programs and activities for children who are at risk of educational failure, dropping out of school, or involvement in criminal or delinquent activities, or who lack strong, positive role models. Mentors provide general guidance and emotional support; promote personal and social responsibility; offer academic assistance and encouragement to excel in school and plan for the future; discourage illegal use of drugs and alcohol, violence, and other harmful activity; and encourage participation in community service and community activities. Grant funds must be used for activities that include, but are not limited to, hiring and training mentoring coordinators and support staff; recruiting, screening, and training mentors; and disseminating outreach materials.

The recent 4-year evaluation used a sample of 32 grantees from 2004 and 2005 where 2,600 students in grades four through eight were randomly assigned either to be matched or not matched with an adult mentor. The evaluation assessed whether students enrolled in mentoring programs are less likely to engage in risky and dangerous behaviors and whether their academic performance is higher than that of students not enrolled in mentoring programs. In the case of Mentoring, the outcomes for participating students did not improve, and the 2010 budget will propose elimination of the separate Federal funding for the program.

### ***Internal Reform***

*Culture:* During his first speech to the staff at ED's headquarters office, Secretary Duncan started off by asking that all staff call him "Arne" and not "Secretary Duncan." This is part of the new culture, driven from the top, where all employees are seen as equal stakeholders and contributors involved in an ongoing conversation about how to improve our system of education. The Secretary and his family dined in the Department's cafeteria on his first day in office with a number of career employees. Finally, the Secretary has proceeded to visit every Department building in DC, and has plans to visit every regional office around the country within the first year of his tenure.

*Volunteer Initiative:* Given the President's call to service, on March 19 the Secretary sent out an e-mail announcing the Education Volunteers Initiative. This initiative encourages employees to use their 4 hours of leave per pay period, which the Department will match for employees who volunteer in schools or their community.

### **INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION**

There are a number of interagency initiatives in the works between the Department of Education and the Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Energy, Labor, and Agriculture. The Secretary and his team met with Secretary Donovan to coordinate the 2010 Budget proposal to create *Promise Neighborhoods* throughout the country (an expansion of the Harlem Children Zone model as discussed in the 2008 presidential campaign). The Department and the Department of Energy are in discussion to team up on green initiatives in education—specifically around community colleges and training for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs. Similarly, efforts are underway to team up with the Department of Agriculture to potentially distribute powdered milk to young children and families who could stand to benefit from the free resource. Additionally, interagency meetings between this Department and the Department of Labor are scheduled to team

up on issues related to the improved governance and oversight of schools in provinces and Native American reservations.

### **THE NEXT 100 DAYS**

Secretary Duncan and the Department of Education are encouraged and determined to build on the successes of the past 100 days and have bold plans for the coming months. This spring, the Secretary is planning to launch a “Listening and Learning” tour where he will travel across the country to listen to teachers, parents, students, principals, and others to see firsthand what is working and what needs to be improved with regard to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and specifically to deliver on the promise of truly leaving no child behind. Additionally, the Department has developed an extensive interagency plan to bring in other cabinet-level agencies to deliver on the shared education goals of the Administration.