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Shooting for the Moon: A Joint Venture

“We are on the cusp of a new era of innovation and entrepreneurship in education that was almost unimaginable a decade ago. I am convinced that every problem in education has been solved before, somewhere – and often with philanthropic support.”

With these words, U.S. Department of Education [Secretary Arne Duncan](#) both praised philanthropy and ushered in a challenge to a room of more than 500 foundation leaders at the [Grantmakers for Education Conference](#) earlier this month.

The Secretary was pushing the foundation community to highlight its solutions and help take them to scale, and to continue to invest in the innovations outside of the status quo that have now become such a key part of the Administration’s education reform agenda.

The Obama Administration has created the environment for education reform’s moon shot – a chance to dramatically change the playing field for children and parents in this country. And this means that it is truly a moment for an “all hands on deck” approach. Past administrations have surely said that government can’t do it alone. This Administration, perhaps louder and clearer than ever before, has made it a priority to work strategically with the private sector to jointly leverage each other’s resources. In the field of American education, the unprecedented funding through ARRA demands no less.

“All Hands” Includes Philanthropies

The Department wants to work with philanthropic actors across the country and at every level, to catalyze engagement in a whole new way. Community, family, corporate, and institutional foundations each have a unique role to play in the ecosystem. In order to do the truly transformative – and not merely incremental –

work that the Department is setting out to do in a very short period of time, everyone needs to be at the table. Foundations of course bring essential financial resources in this time of contraction across all sectors. Perhaps more importantly, education funders can offer informed out-of-the-box thinking, along with the capacity to convene, advocate, and share intellectual capital.

If the Department is successful in meeting the President’s goal of becoming once again the world leader on an economic scale, the country must follow his plan to “educate our way to economic recovery.” The President’s goal means we must graduate 60 percent of our college students by 2020. In order to get there, the Department has taken bold steps to change the way educators do business by changing the incentives for transformation and achievement in school systems at the local and state level. This is difficult work. It requires a herculean effort of collaboration, strategic planning, resource allocation, and tough choices about priorities. Foundations need to be a part of this strategy because they are uniquely positioned in many instances to provide flexible funding and access to new tools for decision-making and strategy-building, often bringing nontraditional partners to the table.



Secretary Duncan addresses members of the Grantmakers for Education at their Chicago conference. The gathering's theme, "Make No Small Plans," was in keeping with the Secretary's message.

At the Department, philanthropic engagement means providing an open door to foundations to become a part of the educational reform conversation at the highest level. Just as teachers, students, administrators, community organizations, and others are considered key stakeholders in this transformative work, foundations are now at the table, too. Because of this, the Department is challenging funders to act differently along with the rest of the education sector. All stakeholders must be innovative in order to rise above the status quo of reform. Secretary Duncan is asking everyone to think and act differently. Not only teachers and students, but universities, parents, unions, school boards, government...and now philanthropists, too.

The Benefits of Alignment—Past and Present

The Foundation Center estimates that U.S. foundations provided more than \$8 billion for education in 2008. With ARRA funding as a one-time investment for recovery, government can't afford to act alone. If both sectors seize the opportunity to align their multibillion dollar investments, they can help avoid a funding cliff after the ARRA funds are allocated. The Department can co-invest with philanthropy in transformative strategies that will help make education more cost-effective and equitable.

The Department has truly embraced the foundation community by creating a position within the Office of the Secretary for the Director of Philanthropic Engagement. This dedicated role within the Secretary's Office signals to the philanthropic world that the Department is "open for business."

While the Department recognizes that government has no business controlling private sector resources, nor telling private foundations how they should invest their philanthropic dollars, the Department does believe that there is a leadership opportunity at hand. At a minimum, the Department can provide transparency around its own decisions and investments, to assist others in making the most informed choices about how to invest their limited resources. Even better, the Department can provide leadership to the field, and offer guidance as to where gaps in funding, research, and knowledge exist along the spectrum of an overall strategy for comprehensive change.

There is a long history within the social and civic sectors of partnerships to achieve shared goals. And this is not the first time that the Department has worked with foundations. In 1997, the Administration was interested in expanding afterschool and community learning programs, especially in low-income schools and communities. At the time, there was an existing federal \$1 million [21st Century Community Learning Center](#) demonstration project, but competing interests within Congress made expansion difficult. Mott Foundation President Bill White seized the opportunity and offered to become the Department's partner by using its philanthropic support to fund the roll out and implementation of an expansion, based on the success of the demonstration project.

The [Mott Foundation's initial commitment](#) of \$10 million quickly grew to \$50 million and then increased to \$100 million. Congress was watching; by 2002, the Congressional appropriation for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grew to almost \$1 billion per year. Without a doubt, the initial funding for scalability, along with the convening of stakeholders, advocacy, and sustained investments by the Mott Foundation were critical in building consensus within the Administration for this expansion of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

The Department hopes to foster similar long-term, highly leveraged opportunities for scaling what works by working in close collaboration with foundations.

Building a "Better Rocket"

With respect to broad philanthropic engagement, the Department has two overarching goals that hopefully will not only help change the way that government works with philanthropy, but also help to change the way that the philanthropic sector does business.

If the Department of Education can catalyze a portfolio of investor collaboration tools to allow philanthropy and government to operate from shared platforms to make decisions and investments around shared goals, it will create a much more efficient and effective education sector, which will lead to greater opportunities for children, and easier access to funding for schools and districts.

"Secretary Duncan understands that the results we need to see are compromised, diminished, and frustrated by the affection we have for familiar silos... The Secretary is using the bully pulpit to help us figure out how to build fewer fences and more bridges between early childhood, K-12, and higher education, between agencies and departments, and between the public, private and social sectors."

-- Ralph Smith, Executive Vice President of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Chair of the Council on Foundations

sources commit to the most scalable and proven innovations.

In addition, there is a multitude of opportunities for foundations to support i3 beyond the match requirement. As Secretary Duncan announced at the Grantmakers for Education Conference, there are multiple ways that private funders can support innovation in education. The following are just some of his examples:

There are two foundational/fundamental tools for this work. The first is a roadmap that outlines the Department's strategies and goals, and delineates how government funding supports and invests in those particular goals. This will be complemented by an assessment of how current philanthropic investments align with the Department's strategies and funding gaps. This map will provide a comprehensive picture of how public and private dollars are flowing toward education systems and outcomes and will help identify opportunities for new investment.

The goal is to demonstrate where foundations are currently investing, where alignment already exists, and what gaps would best merit the consideration of joint or parallel investment. This concept is comparable to a wedding registry for philanthropists interested in investing in the public education system in America. This would not only help direct dollars in a systemic and strategic manner, but also allow individual grantmakers to view their investments as part of a larger and greater whole. If everyone is working from the same set of blueprints, the rocket ships needed to accomplish the moon shot challenge are far more likely to be within reach.

The second interactive tool that the Department would like to catalyze is a network platform to pool information and expertise, research, data, and evaluation results within the education sector. If someone preparing to make a grant in Ohio to improve third-grade reading knows that she can access the best and latest proven thinking and action on achieving these results in similar communities, she will have wasted fewer resources on the effort to make the grant and have made a more thoughtful and wise investment. This tool would be valuable throughout the Department of Education and the halls of foundation offices around the country, and potentially the globe.

Investing in Innovation and More

With the announcement of the [Investing in Innovation \(i3\) Fund](#) and the proposed priorities for grant awards, there is an unprecedented opportunity for organizations to inform government about true innovations in education. The draft priorities (see "What's New") for i3 suggest that government awards will have to be supported by a 20-percent investment of private dollars or in-kind services. This demands that philanthropic

sources commit to the most scalable and proven innovations.

- Coinvest in intermediaries to complement the i3 awards, providing support for promising, high-risk innovations not funded through the federal program;
- Collaborate in the development of college and career-ready standards;
- Collaborate across states on curriculum, learning tools, technology innovation, and teacher preparation;
- Enable states and districts to make the best use of new federal funds from ARRA by helping states put together great applications for the Race to the Top competition;
- Assist local districts with the complex planning process for school turnarounds; and
- Support rigorous evaluations of education reform. Without compelling research studies, promising innovations rarely get to scale.

Achieving the Dream

The moment has come for government to work with the philanthropic sector to identify what is working and take it to scale – and for philanthropy to help nurture the next generation of solutions and innovations. The Department’s ultimate goal is to create a pipeline of innovation in the education sector that mirrors the best of innovation pipelines in the private sphere, while creating a clarion call to the world that aligning investments in strategic ways is the best and perhaps only way to achieve the dream.

By working together, a high-quality education for every child in this country is within reach.

What’s New ?

From the U.S. Department of Education

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan [announced](#) the Department’s priorities for grants under the \$650 million Investing in Innovation Fund (i3). The fund, which is part of the historic \$5 billion investment in school reform in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), will support local efforts to start or expand research-based innovative programs that help close the achievement gap and improve outcomes for students. “We’re making an unprecedented investment in cutting-edge ideas that will produce the next generation of school reforms,” Secretary Duncan said. “The i3 competition will provide seed money for fresh ideas, help grow promising programs with a good track record, and scale up programs with proven results to a national level.” Individual school districts or groups of districts can apply for the i3 grants, and entrepreneurial nonprofits can join with school districts to submit applications. Colleges and universities, companies, and other stakeholders can be supporters of the projects. The Department of Education will collect public comment on the [proposed priorities](#) for the i3 Fund for 30 days, and then plans to publish a final notice inviting applications in early 2010 with a projected closing date in the spring. All grants funded under the program will be obligated by September 30, 2010. (October 2009)



Secretary Arne Duncan congratulates a student at Highland Elementary School, where he announced the 2009 National Blue Ribbon Schools.

Secretary Duncan [announced](#) 314 schools as [2009 National Blue Ribbon Schools](#). He made the announcement at Highland Elementary School, a 2009 Blue Ribbon School in Silver Spring, Maryland. The schools—264 public and 50 private—will be honored at an awards ceremony on November 3 in Washington, DC. “These Blue Ribbon Schools have shown that all children can learn with appropriate supports,” Duncan said. “They are producing outstanding results for their students. Some have shown dramatic improvements in places where students are overcoming the challenges of poverty, and others serve as examples of consistent excellence that can be a resource for other schools.” (September 2009)

“Today’s teachers and aspiring teachers in our colleges of education can help transform the lives of their students by boosting student learning and helping them access higher education and new economic opportunities,” [Secretary Duncan](#) told an audience of students from the University of Virginia’s Curry School of Education. He assured

them that they are answering a call that is as important as any career available to them now and in the future. (October 2009)

Secretary Duncan [called on](#) more than 200 leaders of major education groups to join him and the Department of Education to “build a transformative education law that guarantees every child the education they want and need—a law that recognizes and reinforces the proper role of the federal government to support and drive reform at the state and local level.” In his first major [speech](#) concerning the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Secretary said that the NCLB law has significant flaws but that he looks forward to working with Congress to address the law’s problems. The session was the first of a series of forums where education stakeholders will offer input about the law. Upcoming meetings at the Department’s headquarters on the reauthorization are scheduled for November 4 and 20, and December 2. The forums are part of the Department’s “Listening and Learning” tour seeking public input about changes to the ESEA. (September 2009)

On October’s special edition of “Education News Parents Can Use,” Secretary Arne Duncan engaged teachers across the country in a town hall forum about what’s working and what’s not working in our nation’s schools. The Secretary took comments and questions from teachers in the studio audience and via telephone. This special event is one stop on Secretary Duncan’s national “Listening and Learning” tour. To watch the archived broadcast, go to <http://www.connectlive.com/events/ednews>. (October 2009)



From the Office of Innovation and Improvement

Assistant Deputy Secretary for Innovation and Improvement Jim Shelton hosted a [webinar](#) to discuss the notice of proposed priorities for the i3 Fund. More than 600 people across the country in school districts, foundations, postsecondary institutions, and the private sector participated in the webinar. A round of questions and answers followed on a wide range of issues. A [recording of the webinar](#) and the [presentation](#) is available. (October 2009)

Secretary Duncan [announced](#) the award of \$43 million for 28 new Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grants to improve instruction in struggling schools. These grants will be used to reform traditional university teacher preparation and teacher residency programs. The partnerships include high-need school districts, their high-need schools, and institutions of higher education and their colleges or departments of education, arts, and sciences. It is a unique collaboration of the key stakeholders to improve the quality of teaching in public elementary and secondary schools where children are in greatest need of support to accelerate their learning. The TQP grants are managed by the OII Teacher Quality Programs office. (September 2009)

From the Institute for Education Sciences

[ERIC](#), the world’s largest and most frequently used digital library of education operated by the Department of Education is getting a set of enhancements over the next five years. The improvements include collaboration with the Library of Education to digitize and process archival materials related to the history of the Department, an enhanced online submission format, and Optical Character Recognition of 486,000 digitized microfiche documents to ensure universal access. (September 2009)

The latest [report](#) in a series on high school dropout and completion rates by the National Center for Education Statistics presents estimates of national and regional dropout rates for 2007, calculates the average percentage of freshmen who graduated in four years with the class of 2006, and provides data about national trends in dropout and completion rates over the last three and a half decades, from 1972 to 2007. The report also examines characteristics of dropouts and completers in these years by race, income, gender, and region. (October 2009)

A new [practice guide](#) from the What Works Clearinghouse titled “Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision-Making,” offers five recommendations to help educators effectively use data to monitor students’ academic progress and evaluate instructional practices. The guide suggests schools set a clear vision for school-wide data use, develop a data-driven culture, and make data part of an ongoing

cycle of instructional improvement. The guide also suggests teaching students how to use their own data to set learning goals. (September 2009)

The [Evaluation of Enhanced Academic Instruction in After-School Programs: Final Report](#) includes two parallel impact studies, a math program study ("Mathletics" developed by Harcourt School Publishers) and a reading program study ("Adventure Island" developed by the Success for All Foundation) in which students attending an afterschool program are assigned by lottery to either receive the structured academic programming or the afterschool programming regularly offered. For each academic program, the evaluation design allows for information about the one-year impact in the first and second years of operation as well as the two-year impact in which the program was offered to students for two consecutive years. The study was conducted by MDRC, a nonprofit organization known for its large-scale evaluations of social programs. (September 2009)

American History

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History launched [History Now](#), a quarterly online journal for history teachers and students. The journal attempts to grapple with the ambiguities that define the historical circumstances surrounding the birth of the United States, offering thoughtful suggestions about how to teach the struggle for independence. The inaugural issue includes an [interactive feature](#) revolving around three original documentaries about the American Revolution. (October 2009)

Charter Schools/Choice

The recent closing of a number of Catholic schools that reopened as charter schools in the District of Columbia is the subject of a new [case study](#). The study chronicles the Archdiocese of Washington as it used the chartering mechanism to save a set of its schools from permanent closure. The collective experiences of the schools provide lessons for other cities and religious communities contemplating the future of their financially struggling, inner-city, faith-based schools. (September 2009)

Closing the Achievement Gap

The Center on Education Policy (CEP) issued the latest in a series of [reports](#) analyzing the achievement gaps between low-income students and their peers, and between white and minority students. In this, the third year of a multi-year study of student achievement, testing data was reviewed from all 50 states. Among the general findings, the report showed that "achievement for minority and low-income children has gone up and achievement gaps have narrowed in most states, although gaps are still large." The narrowing was attributed to increases in achievement by low-performing subgroups, but the data also indicated that gaps are "still widening in 23 percent of cases." The good news, according to CEP, is that "states have made progress in closing achievement gaps," but the Center cautioned that "now is not the time to let up." (October 2009)

The National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) released the draft [college and career-readiness standards](#) for public input. National organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Council of Teachers of English, the National Education Association, and others provided input to NGA and CCSSO. The standards presented were developed by Achieve Inc, the College Board, and the ACT testing program. The next phase of development involves review by a [validation committee](#) to ensure alignment with college and workforce training program expectations, as well as the rigor of the content and skills and the adherence to international benchmarks. (September 2009)

Mathematics and Science

[The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2009](#) details the achievement of fourth- and eighth-grade students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), administered by the Department earlier this year. The report compares national results in 2009 with each prior assessment year back to 1990, and state results back to 1992 at grade 4 and 1990 at grade 8. For the first time since the assessment began, fourth-graders showed no overall increase at the national level, although they scored significantly higher in 2009 than 1990. Among eighth-graders, scores were higher when compared to both 1990 and 2007. These nationwide patterns held for most student subgroups. (October 2009)

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics released ["Focus in High School Mathematics: Reasoning and Sense Making."](#) a follow-up to its 2006 document, "Curriculum Focal Points," which addressed grade-by-grade content standards in math for prekindergarten through 8th grade. The new document "constitutes a substantial rethinking" of the high school math curriculum, according to NCTM. "A high school mathematics curriculum based on reasoning and sense making," said NCTM President Henry Kepner, "will prepare students for higher learning, career success, and productive citizenship." (October 2009)

Involvement in 4-H, according to a new [study](#) conducted by the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University, helps students to perform better in science, technology, and engineering. The multiyear study involved 1,300 tenth graders who participated in 4-H as well as a control group of 800 students. The study was commissioned by the National 4-H Council and funded by corporations supportive of the organization; an independent advisory board helped to ensure the objectivity of the research.

School Improvement

The estimated cost to the U.S. economy of the students who did not graduate in 2009 is a staggering \$335 billion over the course of their lifetimes, according to *The High Cost of High School Dropouts: What the Nation Pays for Inadequate High Schools*, an [issue brief](#) from the Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE). "The best economic stimulus is a high school diploma," noted AEE's president, Bob Wise. According to the brief, the average annual income for a high school dropout in 2005 was \$17,299, compared to \$26,933 for a high school graduate. (September 2009)

Another insightful [analysis](#) about the societal costs of high school dropouts states that "nearly 23 percent of all young black men ages 16 to 24 who have dropped out of school are in jail, prison, or a juvenile justice institution." This analysis was released in Chicago by a national coalition that includes the National Urban League, the National Education Association, and the Alternative Schools Network. The Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University analyzed U.S. Census Bureau data in order to "provide a detailed portrait of the employment, earnings and family income, incarceration, and parenting experiences of dropouts, ages 16 to 24, compared to their better-educated peers." (October 2009)

Technology in Education

A new [study](#) shows preschool children who participated in a media-rich literary curriculum integrating public media video content and educational games were better prepared for kindergarten than students who did not use the curriculum. The study evaluated educational video content and associated interactive games from *Super Why!*, *Between the Lions*, and *Sesame Street*, which are produced as part of the Ready To Learn (RTL) initiative. RTL is supported by OII's Technology in Education Program. (October 2009)

Innovations in the News

Charters/Choice

The United Neighborhood Organization (UNO), a Latino advocacy group and charter management organization, received a \$98 million grant from the state of Illinois to double the current number of charter schools it operates in Chicago. UNO opened its first charter in 1998, and currently oversees eight K-8 schools and one high school in Chicago. The student populations of the UNO-run schools are primarily Latino, and the schools' philosophy of assimilation into the American society is pursued by using an English-immersion approach. For the 2007-08 school year, students at each of the UNO schools met or exceeded state standards in reading, mathematics, and science in greater proportions than students in regular Chicago public schools. [More—The [Education Week](#)] (October 2) (*premium article access compliments of EdWeek.org*)

On the first stop of their national tour, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, civil rights activist the Rev. Al Sharpton, and former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich toured Mastery Charter School-Shoemaker campus and McDaniel Elementary. The Mastery approach, pioneered in Philadelphia by former local businessman Scott Gordon, employs a longer school day and year, a demanding curriculum, and an emphasis on personal responsibility to prepare all of its students for college. The trio of high-profile visitors was collectively impressed; the Rev. Sharpton calling it a "breakthrough moment," and Secretary Duncan noted that Philadelphia could take the lead in a national conversation about school improvement. [More—The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) and The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)] (September 30 and October 1)

Raising Student Achievement

Acting on their belief that nontraditional high schools students can succeed in alternative circumstances, school leaders in Henderson, Texas, opened the PRIDE (Producing Responsible Individuals and Developing Excellence) Academy this year for juniors and seniors with a variety of needs for a different approach to the traditional school day and learning paradigm. The academy is structured around two, four-hour sessions each weekday, and students learn independently in large measure, using computers and online resources and working at their own pace. The new program, according to PRIDE Academy principal Debra Brown, is patterned on similar programs in nearby school districts. [More—The [Tyler \(TX\) Morning Telegraph](#)] (October 8)

In the 1990s, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, using a personal monitoring technique, identified a state of "flow" in adults and then distilled the conditions in life that can foster flow-like experiences. Researchers at Northern Illinois University used the same research techniques to study teens in middle and high school. In analyzing the data, teens approached a flow-like state most often during sports and extracurricular activities, and rarely when they were alone, which is not true of adults. Teens are most apt to experience it when they are with both their peers and adults. Not surprisingly, a least half of the teens reported that school classes were boring when only 15 percent of the time was interactive in nature. [More—[Newsweek](#)] (October 7)

Executive function, a set of abilities and skills that includes self-regulation and avoidance of distractions, may be increased with practice, according to some researchers. Tools of the Mind, a program for children as young as age 3, is dedicated to improving self-regulation through a prekindergarten and kindergarten curriculum rich in "dramatic play," which involves "complex, extended make-believe scenarios" that can be employed for hours and even days. The program, which currently reaches 18,000 prekindergarten and kindergarten students in 12 states, teaches children how to master their thoughts and avoid acting on impulses. Studies of Tools of the Mind, while not experimental in nature, suggest effectiveness on measures of literacy ability and executive function. [More—The [New York Times Magazine](#)] (September 27)

School Improvement

The instructional approach in the Aldine School District that helped it garner the 2009 Broad Prize for Urban Education has been steadily honed for effectiveness over the past decade. The district's system of managed instruction began in response to several strategic factors at work in the Aldine schools – more than eight of every 10 students were eligible for free or reduced-price meals, a third of students did not speak English as their first language, and the district had a very high student-mobility rate. In addition to ensuring that schools are in the same places in the curriculum throughout the year, teachers benefit from professional development that is linked to student achievement data. Moreover, the centralized approach to curriculum hasn't stifled individual schools' ability to innovate, so long as the proposed changes are backed with data. [More—[Education Week](#)] (October 5) (*premium article access compliments of EdWeek.org*)

New Haven schools in Connecticut are at the “forefront of a movement to build schools that are aesthetically pleasing as well as functional,” but the art that enhances the buildings is more than decorative; it is an integral part of lessons in the arts, math and sciences, and the humanities. Nearly half of the public schools built or renovated in New Haven since 1999 have merged art and the buildings' architecture with the curriculum. For example, in the Christopher Columbus Family Academy, sculpture is incorporated throughout the school, and the art is accompanied by a new curriculum guide. [More—The [New York Times](#)] (October 2)

All present and accounted for – that's the hope for districts across Michigan in late September when Count Day occurs. The annual fall roll call largely determines the amount of funding each district receives under the state's per-pupil support system. In Detroit, where enrollment has shrunk by nearly 50 percent in the past decade, school leaders offered a plethora of incentives, from free meals to T-shirts to chances to win iPods and plasma-screen TVs, to students for being in the count. Leading up to Count Day, Detroit schools mounted an “I'm In” campaign that included radio and television ads featuring Bill Cosby. Private donations helped to cover the costs of the Count Day festivities. [More—The [Wall Street Journal](#)] (October 1)

Teacher Quality and Development

Incentive pay does help to attract qualified teachers to high-poverty schools, according to an evaluation of that effort to date in Hillsborough County Schools in Florida. Since 2003, when teachers were offered a five- to 10-percent bonus to teach in the county's low-income Renaissance schools, the number of teachers applying has doubled, and a majority of the applicants indicate that the incentive pay has influenced their decisions to stay. The evaluation also revealed that for a majority of the teachers who left positions despite the extra compensation, poor leadership was cited as a primary reason. [More—The [St. Petersburg Times](#)] (September 27)

Efforts to increase the percentage of black male teachers in Georgia and elsewhere may get help from such programs as Clemson University's Call Me MISTER program, which has placed more than 50 black men in classrooms and has another 165 preparing for teaching careers in colleges across South Carolina as well as in six other states, including Georgia's Albany State University. Principals like Machel Matthews at Martin Luther King Elementary in Clayton County, Ga., who is striving to create an environment where students see male teachers, are looking to Call Me MISTER and advocacy groups like MenTeach to make their goal achievable. [More—The [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#)] (September 25)

In Chesterfield County, Va., teachers and other instructional personnel will be developing professional development growth plans tied to student academic performance, their school improvement plan, and their individual evaluations. The plans are being developed this year and will be implemented with the 2010-11 school year. The new approach was piloted in 16 schools in the district last year and those schools are continuing the initiative. Principals will be expected to show teachers not only where they are coming up short, but what has been done to help them improve, according to Lyle Evans, the district's assistant superintendent of human resources and administrative services. The plan has the support of the Chesterfield Education Association, according to its president, Frank Cardella. [More—The [Richmond \(VA\) Times-Dispatch](#)] (September 24)

Technology in Education

A pair of new resources from the National Association for State Title I Directors (NASTID) and the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) offer information to school districts that want to maximize their education technology funds. The report, *Leveraging Title I and Title IID: Maximizing the Impact of Technology in Education*, and the guide, *A Resource Guide Identifying Technology Tools for Schools*, were released together by the national groups. The report notes that "classroom technology use is not limited to computers," and that "in fact, innovative technology use incorporates cell phones, MP3 players, and other mobile devices, as long as they are used to reinforce learning and not for the sake of the technology itself." The resource guide includes explanations of various school technology structures and computing forms and examples of a wide range of hardware, software, and online tools. [More—[eSchool News](#)] (September 25)

Purpose

The purpose of the U.S. Department of Education's online newsletter *The Education Innovator* is to promote innovative practices in education; to offer features on promising programs and practices; to provide information on innovative research, schools, policies, and trends; and to keep readers informed of key Department priorities and activities. The Department's Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) is responsible for the newsletter's research, writing, and production.

James H. Shelton III, Assistant Deputy Secretary, Office of Innovation and Improvement, sponsors *The Education Innovator*, which is published up to 10 months annually.

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