Obama Administration Celebrates New School Year

Department of Education Releases Progress on Education Report, Announces Race to the Top Workshop

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2010 Education Progress Report (http://www2.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/2010-progress-report.html)

The Department of Education today released progress on key department-wide education initiatives in advance of convening the winners of the Race to the Top Competition for a day of workshops. Additionally, Education Secretary Arne Duncan will also address an international education symposium in Toronto and highlight a successful turnaround school in North Carolina and then join President Obama for his Back to School speech to students encouraging them to study hard and stay in school.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan said, "All across America, there is a growing understanding that education is everyone's responsibility. This week we salute the courage and commitment of students, teachers and stakeholders at every level who are supporting public education."

The attached summary highlights progress on education, including distributing nearly $100 billion in Recovery Act funds to help save an estimated 400,000 jobs, support historic reforms at the state and local level, and boost college enrollment with billions of dollars in additional grants and loans.

On Tuesday, Secretary Duncan will join President Barack Obama for his second annual Back-to-School Speech at 1 p.m. EDT at Julia R. Masterman Laboratory and Demonstration School in Philadelphia, Pa., a 2010 National Blue Ribbon School. The president's Back-to-School Speech will be live streamed on WhiteHouse.gov. For more information about watching the speech, visit www.whitehouse.gov/back-to-school (http://www.whitehouse.gov/back-to-school). Schools can also view the speech on CNN which has said it plans to take the event live.

On Wednesday, Secretary Duncan will join Governor Perdue and State Board Chairman Bill Harrison at Sterling Elementary School, a turnaround school in Pineville, N.C. that has dramatically improved student achievement. At Sterling, the Secretary will visit classrooms and host a turnaround roundtable discussion with teachers, parents and community leaders. North Carolina recently won a Race to the Top grant.

On Thursday, Duncan will host a session of the first Race to the Top grantee meeting in Washington, D.C. Secretary Duncan will offer his perspective of the work ahead, answer key questions about Race to the Top, and briefly meet with participants from each state. Invitees also include members of Congress, as well as representatives of key education associations and the press. This session is part of a day-long grantee meeting focused on finalizing each state's Race to the Top budget, hearing directly from grantees about how the Department can best support their reform efforts, and providing an opportunity for Race to the Top grantees to collaborate as they begin their work to dramatically improve student outcomes through this unprecedented federal investment in reform.

On Friday, Secretary Duncan will visit Dorothy Height Community Academy Public Charter School with civil rights leader Roger Wilkins and former Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman. The visit is one of many nationwide events taking place through the Back-to-School With The HistoryMakers initiative to raise awareness about the achievements of accomplished African Americans.

And today, Secretary Duncan is in Toronto visiting Weston Collegiate Institute and participating in an international education symposium: "The Building Blocks for Education: Whole System Reform". The two-day symposium will bring together experts and education policy makers from six countries. Participants will share ideas and look at new ways to help solve the challenges facing students in Canada and around the world. In his remarks in Toronto, Duncan will emphasize the link between the economy and the President's goal of producing the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020. "In the era of the global economy, America has no choice but to educate its way to a better economy. The President's 2020 goal is ambitious--it can only be attained by a systemic transformation of the U.S. education system," Duncan will say. The full text of the speech will be available at www.ed.gov ().

Before the month ends, the administration will also announce the winners of two other grant programs, Promise Neighborhoods and the Teacher Incentive Fund.

"As the fiscal year winds down, there is so much energy and activity around education reform at the state and local level. We want to build on this momentum and do all we can to support our teachers, our parents and our students. America's future is directly linked to the quality of education we provide our children today," Duncan said.

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