

March 2, 2012

Dear District Superintendent, School Board President, and Teachers' Union/Association Leader:

In order to prepare our young people for an increasingly competitive global economy, the United States must do more to ensure that teaching is highly respected and supported as a profession; that accomplished, effective teachers are guiding students' learning in every classroom; and that schools are dynamic and innovative workplaces in which all employees are working toward the goal of improving student outcomes and closing achievement gaps. Teachers possess the same intrinsic motivation and enthusiasm for sharing knowledge and facilitating learning as generations past, but should have new, modern advantages to support their success. Despite the tight budgets which we find ourselves working with, we need innovative and reform-oriented districts to lead the way when it comes to transforming the teaching profession.

The U.S. Department of Education is working in collaboration with the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, the National School Boards Association, the American Association of School Administrators, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Council of the Great City Schools, and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to sponsor a conference in **Cincinnati, Ohio, on Collaborating to Transform the Teaching Profession**. We are inviting States and districts to participate in this conference. This event will commence on the afternoon of **May 23, 2012**, and conclude on the afternoon of **May 24, 2012**. National foundations and support organizations will join us to support our efforts in fostering these important relationships. We extend many thanks to the Ford Foundation and the GE Foundation for their support of the conference.

All teams that register are expected to present and participate in the "Transformers' Dialogue," an event designed to showcase the work being done by – and to build networks among – all State and district participants. On Day One, all attendees will showcase and share their accomplishments and plans for transforming the profession in an exhibition-like setting. On Day Two, teams will attend breakout sessions led by highlighted practitioners and experts. Toward the end of the event, teams will have opportunities to reflect on and improve their own plans.

While we are inviting all States and districts to participate, we expect attendees that are earnestly working collaboratively toward reforms that will increase student achievement by transforming the teaching profession. The costs of travel and accommodations will be provided for your three required district team members. If you are a district that attended the conference last year in Denver – or you wanted to attend but were not selected in the lottery – preference will be given to you if you are interested in attending.

If you would like to attend, we ask three things of you. First, the superintendent, the teachers' union or association leader, and the school board president must agree to attend the event together (no substitutions permitted). Second, your team must jointly prepare and present at the conference your district's plan for collaboratively transforming the teaching profession; you will

share this work at the “Transformers’ Dialogue,” a session at the conference that is designed to showcase the work being done by – and to build networks among – State and district participants. And third, you must pledge to work collaboratively to improve student achievement through your collective bargaining agreement or other jointly developed district policies and related labor-management practices.

You may download the RSVP form and the preliminary conference agenda from this Web site: <http://www.ed.gov/labor-management-collaboration>. If you are interested in attending, please complete the RSVP form (including all three required signatures) and return it to us by 5:00 p.m. ET on March 30, 2012. If we are oversubscribed, we will randomly select attendees from among those who RSVP; you will receive final confirmation of your attendance no later than April 6, 2012. If you have any questions, please e-mail us at collaboration2012@ed.gov.

I hope you share my excitement for this convening and are interested in participating.

Sincerely,

/s/

Arne Duncan