

SUPPORTING ENGLISH LEARNERS

English Learners (ELs) are the fastest-growing major student population in the United States, and America's long-term prosperity is linked to whether these students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge they need for college and careers. ELs face the dual challenges of learning English and learning academic content at the same time. Results from the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress show that those competing challenges lead to performance levels far below those of their English-proficient peers in mathematics, reading, and science. Moreover, the areas of the country with the greatest increases in the number of ELs are often those that have less experience serving these students, and we must ensure that these States, districts, and schools are able to meet the needs of ELs.

The President's 2012 budget request provides significant investments in education for ELs and would fund the implementation of key reforms to support innovative, effective, and promising programs as outlined in the Administration's *Blueprint for the Reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*.

- **\$750 million for English Learner Education.** The Administration is maintaining its commitment to supporting States and districts in operating high-quality language instruction educational programs by continuing to provide significant formula funding to all States for English Learner Education. This request would also provide grants for the preparation and training of teachers of ELs, and would fund evaluation activities and a clearinghouse for the dissemination of research-based information and data on effective methods, programs, and strategies for ELs.
- **Strengthening English Learner Education through the ESEA reauthorization.** The President's ESEA proposal would strengthen this program by ensuring States' implementation of valid and reliable assessments of English language proficiency, consistent identification of ELs within States, and a system to evaluate the effectiveness of programs for ELs. It would also provide new competitive grants to support innovative, effective, and promising practices, including dual-language programs that promote literacy in both English and the student's home language.
- **Improving assessments for ELs.** Through the Race to the Top Assessment program, the Department provided \$350 million to two consortia of States to develop high-quality assessments aligned with common, college- and career-ready standards in reading or language arts and mathematics. The designers of these assessments will ensure, from the very beginning, that they are reliable and valid for ELs. The Department also recently began taking public comments on a planned competition for the development of English language proficiency assessments that fit coherently with the assessments being developed under Race to the Top.
- **Including ELs in key programs.** The President's 2012 budget requests for high-priority programs will help improve outcomes for all students, including ELs. These requests include the \$14.8 billion for the College- and Career-Ready Students program (formerly Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies), which requires States, districts, and schools to focus on closing achievement gaps between ELs and other students, and \$11.7 billion for the IDEA State grants program, which requires States to report disaggregated data on ELs with disabilities. In addition, the Administration's 2012 budget includes:
 - **\$900 million for a third round of Race to the Top (RTT)**, to provide incentives for both States and districts to implement bold reforms that will improve outcomes for students and

close achievement gaps, including gaps between ELs and their peers. Many second-round winners included particular strategies focused on ELs; New York's plan included the development of specific strategies for ELs in its implementation of college- and career-ready standards, and Rhode Island, Maryland, Georgia, and Ohio will use incentives and targeted teacher preparation programs to address shortages of teachers of ELs.

- **\$300 million for the Investing in Innovation (i3) program**, to promote the development and expansion of innovative practices with evidence of effectiveness in improving outcomes for students. In 2010, the i3 program included a competitive preference for applicants that focused on serving ELs, and several winning applicants addressed this priority. In 2012, the Department would continue to give priority to applicants that will serve students who need special assistance and support.
- **\$150 million for the Promise Neighborhoods program**, to support projects that significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth by providing a cradle-to-career continuum of ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive education reforms, effective community services, and strong systems of family and community support – with high-quality schools at the center. Grantees will plan and implement these projects for all children and youth in the community, including ELs and their families, and many of the current grantees serve communities with high percentages of ELs. Of the 21 current grantees, seven are working with schools where more than 25 percent of students are ELs, and another three are in communities where more than 40 percent of the residents speak a language other than English at home.
- **\$185 million for the Presidential Teaching Fellows program**, to fund formula grants to States to support scholarships for talented teaching candidates to attend top-tier teacher preparation programs and teach in high-need schools and high-need subjects or fields, including teaching ELs. This new program would help ensure that low-income students, minority students, ELs, and students with disabilities have access to effective teaching in academic content areas and in language instruction educational programs.
- **Improving early learning outcomes for ELs.** The Administration has requested \$350 million in fiscal year 2012 for the Early Learning Challenge Fund, a new competitive grant program that would challenge States to establish a model statewide infrastructure of integrated high-quality early learning supports and services for children from birth to kindergarten entry that promote high standards of quality and a focus on outcomes across settings and ensure that more children, including ELs, enter school ready to succeed. Research demonstrates that high-quality early learning programs help children, including ELs, arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life.