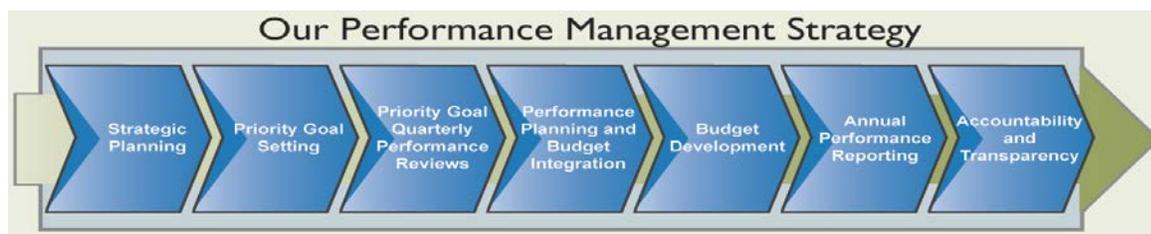

Performance Results Details



In accordance with the [GPR Modernization Act of 2010](#), the Department's framework for performance management starts with the *Strategic Plan*, including its priority goals, which serve as the foundation for establishing overall long-term priorities and developing performance goals, objectives, and measures by which the Department can gauge achievement of its stated outcomes. Progress towards the Department's strategic and priority goals is measured using data-driven review and analysis. This focus promotes active management engagement across the Department, which ensures alignment to the [Department's Annual Performance Plans and Annual Performance Reports](#).

The Department is currently developing its annual strategic review approach to collectively review and evaluate the Department's progress, concentrating on the agency's mission and associated strategic objectives, priority goals, and milestones. The annual strategic review along with quarterly performance reviews will be used to inform long-term strategic planning, budgeting practices and fiscal management, staff capacity and effectiveness, and transparency around successes and challenges.

FY 2011–14 Strategic Plan Goals

The *U.S. Department of Education Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2014–2018* offers a framework for the key policy and operational priorities for the agency, in line with the administration's vision for education.

The Department's *Strategic Plan* serves as the basis from which to align the Department's statutory requirements with the Department's operational imperatives, and is the foundation for establishing overall long-term priorities and developing performance goals and measures by which the Department can gauge achievement of its stated outcomes. The Department solicited input from Congress, state and local partners, other education stakeholders, and the public in the development of the plan. Public comments were solicited through the Department's website.

Because FY 2014 represents an overlap between two strategic plans, the Department is taking a forward-looking approach to reporting that emphasizes the continuity between the strategic plan that is being closed out this year and the plan that will be used to report in FY 2014 through FY 2018. As the Department closes out its *FY 2011–14 Strategic Plan* and migrates to the updated *FY 2014–18 Strategic Plan*, the Department's results are mixed—presenting both accomplishments and challenges moving forward.

Of the 35 metrics in the *FY 2011–14 Strategic Plan*, the Department has shown significant progress toward established goals on 13 of the metrics, including in such important areas as increased state commitments to high-quality outcome metrics for preschools and better use of data to evaluate teachers and colleges.

For more information on the FY 2011–14 goals, measures, and targets, please see the [FY 2012 Annual Performance Report](#) (published together with the *FY 2014 Annual Performance Plan*). A complete list of the discontinued measures from the *FY 2011–14 Strategic Plan*, along with the latest data available, is provided in appendix B.

FY 2012–13 Agency Priority Goals

The Department identified six Agency Priority Goals (APGs) for FY 2012–13 that served as a particular focus for its activities. The APGs reflect the Department’s cradle-to-career education strategy and concentrate efforts on the importance of teaching and learning at all levels of the education system. Below is an overview of progress for each APG during the reporting period. For additional information on the Department’s FY 2012–13 APGs, please go to <http://goals.performance.gov/agency/ed>.

Priority Goal: Improve students’ ability to afford and complete college

Goal for FY 2012–13: By September 30, 2013, the Department will develop a college scorecard designed to improve consumer decision-making and transparency about affordability for students and borrowers by streamlining information on all degree-granting institutions into a single, comparable, and simplified format, while also helping all states and institutions develop college completion goals.

Supports Strategic Goal 1.

Metric: Number of states with college completion goals in place; **Target:** 50

Results (End of FY 2013): 40 states; Not Met

Note: In addition to increasing the number of states with college completion goals, this priority goal sought to develop and implement a College Scorecard. For that portion of the goal, results (end of FY 2013) were “Fully Implemented; Met.”

Overview: As more and more jobs require postsecondary education and training, college is becoming a vital necessity for most Americans. Yet too many students fail to complete college and are burdened by high student loan debt. Institutions feel pressure to raise tuition and fees as states cut education funding for postsecondary institutions. Even with increased federal Pell grant funding, many Americans remain concerned about whether they can afford college. Many Americans do not know about or are confused by the maze of information that is available about colleges and how to pay for college. To help students and their families make decisions about college, the Department has developed a number of resources, such as [College Navigator](#), the [College Affordability and Transparency Center](#), and the [Net Price Calculator](#). Even with the current resources available, there is still a need to improve and integrate key information about college and make information more user-friendly. Students and families need to be empowered with simplified information to make better choices in selecting a college that is affordable, provides good value, and is the right fit for them. In order to meet the national goal to increase the number of college graduates, the Department is committed to helping states and institutions increase the number and percentage of students who complete their postsecondary educations. On-time and/or accelerated degree completion can also decrease the amount of student debt after graduation, ensuring borrowers are able to manageably repay their federal student loans.

The Department will support college completion by identifying and promoting successful evidence-based practices and by highlighting noteworthy state efforts in key areas such as

transfer, performance-based funding, and college-and-career readiness. By assisting students and families, as well as states and institutions, the Department aims to improve not only access to postsecondary education and training, but also affordability and successful completion.

Progress: The Department has achieved the goal that was set to implement the College Scorecard. The only challenge that remains is that the Department must work with the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to align its Paying for College tool and the Scorecard. Regarding State Completion Goals, the primary obstacle is that the Department has little influence over state's decisions to set goals.

Version 1.0 of the Scorecard was released in tandem with the President's State of the Union address in February 2013. That action effectively means that this goal has been achieved. Nonetheless, the Department plans to make regular improvements, with a version 2.0 anticipated by early 2014. Work is underway to obtain earnings data, working with the developer to incorporate that data into the Scorecard, and make other adjustments in the way information is displayed. The number of states with completion goals has grown from 38 to 40 since November 2012 (completion defined as either attainment, graduation, or degree production), with a variety of target dates and levels of specificity. The Department has little influence over state decisions to establish goals, although it continues to encourage and highlight states with goals by recognizing states that have adopted goals, in speeches and other venues.

Priority Goal: Improve learning by ensuring that more students have an effective teacher

Goal for FY 2012–13: By September 30, 2013, at least 500 school districts will have comprehensive teacher and principal evaluation and support systems and the majority of states will have statewide requirements for comprehensive teacher and principal evaluation and support systems.

Supports Strategic Goal 2.

Metric: States with approval for evaluation system guidelines; **Target:** 26

Results (End of FY 2013): 23 states and District of Columbia; Not Met

Metric: Participating school districts with qualifying evaluation systems for teachers;
Target: 500

Results (End of FY 2013): Data forthcoming pending release of Race to the Top (RTT) state progress reports.

Metric: Participating school districts with qualifying evaluation systems for principals;
Target: 500

Results (End of FY 2013): Data forthcoming pending release of RTT state progress reports.

Overview: The Priority Goal is based on the premise, supported by abundant research, that teachers are the single most critical in-school factor in improving student achievement. Principals are often cited as the second most influential in-school factor. Teacher and principal evaluation systems supported by the Department's contributing programs enable the development and identification of effective educators and provide the needed information to improve the educator workforce. Teachers and principals often lack meaningful evaluation,

feedback, and support for professional growth. Indeed, teachers are often dissatisfied with their preparation programs and their opportunities for professional development and advancement. Too often, effective teachers and leaders are not recognized, rewarded, or asked to share their expertise with colleagues. And most teacher compensation systems do not recognize effectiveness or provide incentives to teach in challenging schools or shortage areas. In light of the importance of teachers and school leadership for student success, the nation has to do more to ensure that every student has an effective teacher, every school has effective leaders, and every teacher and leader has access to the preparation, ongoing support, recognition, and collaboration opportunities he or she needs to succeed.

The Department will support state and district efforts that strengthen the profession by focusing on meaningful feedback, support, and incentives at every stage of a career, based on fair evaluation systems that look at multiple measures, including, in significant part, student growth.

The Department will support state and district efforts that provide time for teacher collaboration, on-the-job learning opportunities, and professional advancement. As states transition to new college- and career-ready standards, the Department will support opportunities for teachers to enhance their instructional expertise related to the new standards.

The Department continues to ensure adherence to timelines regarding development and adoption of state requirements for comprehensive teacher evaluation systems and for district development and implementation of comprehensive educator evaluation systems.

Current challenges center on maintaining momentum for reform, given districts' and states' current fiscal situation, potential changes in leadership, ongoing development of student growth measures in non-tested grades and subjects, and the scaling up of systems in a relatively short time frame. Another challenge relates to the coordination required of the Department's programs to ensure policy and communications consistency. With multiple programs interacting with the same grantees (e.g., states and districts), to a varying degree, it will take a significant shift in the Department's culture to break down silos to improve coordination.

Progress: The Department has made significant progress in leveraging its programs to support state- and district-led efforts to ensure that more students have effective teachers by better training, recruiting, identifying, and retaining effective teachers, especially in areas with high needs. In particular, the Department's efforts are focused on:

- Encouraging teachers to play active roles in the development of these policies through the [Recognizing Educational Success, Professional Excellence, and Collaborative Teaching \(RESPECT\)](#) project and the [Teacher Incentive Fund \(TIF\)](#);
- Encouraging school districts to leverage best practices to recruit and retain effective teachers (through TIF grants);
- Encouraging the development and adoption of innovative strategies to transform the teaching profession that will ultimately impact student outcomes through TIF, Investing in Innovation (i3), and other grants; and
- Creating a critical mass of states that have created the conditions for education innovation and reform through [Race to the Top \(RTT\)](#), *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility*, [School Improvement Grants \(SIG\)](#), and other initiatives.

As a result of these efforts:

- ESEA Flexibility states plan to have all LEAs with qualifying teacher and principal evaluation systems ready to implement in the 2014–15 school year.

- 213 LEAs are implementing evaluation systems under the School Improvement Grants Transformation Model.
- 162 LEAs are implementing reformed educator evaluation systems as part of a TIF 3 (2010) grant. 159 LEAs plan to have reformed educator evaluation systems ready to implement in the 2013–14 school year as part of a TIF 4 (2012) grant.

Priority Goal: Demonstrate progress in turning around the nation’s lowest-performing schools

Goal for FY 2012–13: By September 30, 2013, 500 of the nation’s persistently lowest-achieving schools will have demonstrated significant improvement and serve as potential models for future turnaround efforts.

Supports Strategic Goal 2.

Metric: Number of schools demonstrating significant improvement; **Target:** 500

Results (End of FY 2013): 489 (231 in reading, 258 in math); Not Met

Overview: The goal seeks to prepare all K–12 students for college and career by improving the education system’s ability to consistently deliver excellent classroom instruction with rigorous academic standards while providing effective support services.

Through Race to the Top (RTT), the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility, and other federal programs, the Department is providing significant resources to dramatically improve the nation’s lowest-achieving schools by using intensive turnaround models and identifying the low-achieving schools that are showing strong evidence of successfully turning around.

The Department is focused on supporting innovation, not just compliance monitoring, and is focused on spurring growth in achievement, not just absolute achievement measures as done in the past. Central to these efforts has been the creation of the [Office of School Turnaround](#) (OST). Through OST’s monthly check-in calls with all 50 states, the School Turnaround Learning Community, and the many OST-facilitated peer-to-peer learning opportunities, states, districts, and schools are learning from each other and scaling up promising practices. In order to better provide technical assistance and support for what is working, OST has created a National Activities Plan to effectively use up to 5 percent of the more than \$500 million annual SIG program.

Progress: The President and Congress have made significant investments in turning around the nation’s persistently lowest-achieving schools, in large part through School Improvement Grants (SIG), Race to the Top (RTT), and through the Department’s work to grant states flexibility regarding specific requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB).

- With more than 1,500 schools now implementing one of the four SIG intervention models, schools around the country have hired new leadership, recruited effective teachers, increased learning time, changed school climate, and offered teachers data-driven professional development aimed at increasing student achievement.
- Forty-two states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico are carrying out plans to implement turnaround principals in their priority schools under their Department-approved ESEA Flexibility plan.

- Overall, from 2009–10 to 2011–12, 65 percent of Cohort 1 SIG schools increased their student proficiency rates in reading, and 69 percent increased their student proficiency rates in math. From 2010–11 to 2011–12, 62 percent of Cohort 2 SIG schools increased their student proficiency rates in reading, and 57 percent increased their student proficiency rates in math. The remaining SIG schools showed similar proficiency rates or decreases in proficiency rates over these two years. Because there are so many factors that contribute to student proficiency rates, and because these data are only based on one or two years of SIG implementation, the Department does not know for certain that it is attributable to the SIG program.
- OST is working to profile nearly 100 states, districts, and schools implementing promising school turnaround practices for internal purposes, and is using National Activities funds to profile and eventually share these practices publicly.
- In May 2013, six states convened to focus on developing Turnaround Leadership Pipelines. OST has commissioned white papers to address this topic. The papers will be shared with the public and will highlight promising practices.
- In June 2013, seven states convened to focus on the role of state educational agencies in supporting instruction in turnaround schools. OST has commissioned white papers to address this topic. The papers will be shared with the public and will highlight promising practices.

Priority Goal: Prepare all students for college and career

Goal for FY 2012–13: By September 30, 2013, all states will adopt internationally-benchmarked college- and career-ready standards.

Supports Strategic Goal 2.

Metric: States adopting internationally-benchmarked college- and career-ready standards;
Target: 50

Results (End of FY 2013): 49 states and the District of Columbia; Met

Overview: The adoption of internationally benchmarked college- and career-ready standards is the foundation to improving educational outcomes for all students and a fundamental step toward meeting the President’s goal of once again having the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020. The Department is working to increase the number of states approved for *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) Flexibility by working with states that submitted ESEA Flexibility requests to meet the high bar for approval. The Department is developing and targeting technical assistance activities that will, in part, increase state capacity to leverage limited resources and continue to identify promising practices across multiple states.

The Department is working internally to coordinate the provision of technical assistance across Race to the Top (RTT), ESEA Flexibility, and other related programs. And, in the most recent Comprehensive Centers competition, the Department created a Center on Standards and Assessments Implementation that is helping build the capacity of state educational agencies to implement college- and career-ready standards.

Progress: Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia have adopted college- and career-ready standards that are either common to a significant number of states or certified by the state’s institutions of higher education. The total number of states that submitted and that have been approved to date is significantly more than the Department initially anticipated, as nearly

all states have requested flexibility and states have been generally willing to revise their requests to meet ESEA flexibility principles.

Because of the iterative approach to approval, and the high bar set for states, the Department has worked with states individually to meet the high bar. Some states are unable to meet that bar at this time.

The Department developed a new monitoring process for states with approved ESEA Flexibility requests that is being conducted in phases over the course of the early years of implementation. The monitoring process includes discussions of the state's broader educational goals, highlighted the challenges the state is facing, and areas where additional support is needed to promote candid discussions to ensure successful implementation.

Priority Goal: Improve outcomes for all children from birth through third grade

Goal for FY 2012–13: By September 30, 2013, at least nine states will implement a high-quality plan to collect and report disaggregated data on the status of children at kindergarten entry.

Supports Strategic Goal 3.

Metric: Number of states implementing a high-quality plan to collect and report disaggregated data on the status of children at kindergarten entry; **Target:** 9

Results (End of FY 2013): 24; Exceeded

Overview: To enhance the quality of early learning programs and improve outcomes for children from birth through third grade, including children with disabilities and those who are English learners, the Department will promote initiatives that improve the early learning workforce, build the capacity of states and programs to develop and implement comprehensive early learning assessment systems, and improve systems for ensuring accountability of program effectiveness.

The nine Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) FY 2011 grantees all have high-quality plans as evidenced by their winning an RTT-ELC grant and addressing these criteria in their applications and will collect and report disaggregated data on the status of children at kindergarten entry. With the addition of the RTT-ELC FY 2012, four states with high-quality plans to collect and report disaggregated data on the status of children at kindergarten entry were added. RTT-ELC states are just beginning to develop or enhance these instruments and are limited to using funds other than those provided under the program. Because of sequestration and a slow economic recovery, there are few state resources to support development of appropriate instruments and the implementation of the assessments. Grantees report that they may not meet their proposed implementation date. In addition, the Department would like to have a national picture, but there are currently no organizations that annually collect data on state activities around Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) implementation.

Progress: The nine FY 2011 grantees' Annual Performance Reports (APRs), Summaries, and Response Letters have been posted on the [RTT-ELC program page](#). These nine states, in their second year of RTT-ELC project implementation, have had a wide range of progress on their proposed Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) plans. Rhode Island has indicated their KEA development will not begin until 2014. Washington State, on the other hand, assessed 21,911 incoming kindergartners this school year with their KEA (WaKIDS).

The Annual Performance Reports from grantees show their progress in developing KEAs that are 1) aligned with standards, 2) valid for the target population and purpose, 3) administered by the 2014–15 school year, 4) reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and 5) significantly funded outside of the RTT-ELC grant. All of the states are including a wide range of developmental domains as the areas to be assessed on their KEAs, including language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches towards learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social emotional development.

Priority Goal: Make informed decisions and improve instruction through the use of data

Goal for FY 2012–13: By September 30, 2013, all states will implement comprehensive statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS).

Supports Strategic Goal 5.

Metric: Number of states implementing K–12 Data Systems; **Target:** 50, District of Columbia

Results (End of FY 2013): 50 states, District of Columbia; Met

Metric: Number of states linking K–12 with early childhood data;¹ **Target:** 12

Results (End of FY 2013): 19 states;² Exceeded

Metric: Number of states linking K–12 with postsecondary data;³ **Target:** 21

Results (End of FY 2013): 25 states;^{4,5} Exceeded

Metric: Number of states linking K–12 and postsecondary data with workforce data;⁶ **Target:** 10

Results (End of FY 2013): 12 states;^{7,8} Exceeded

Overview: This priority goal seeks to enhance the education system’s ability to continuously improve through better and more widespread use of data, research and evaluation, transparency, innovation, and technology.

¹ Defined as the ability to track all public pre-K students into public K via the SLDS and by the inclusion of at least one additional source of early childhood data (e.g., Head Start, private pre-K) in the system.

² Three (ME, MI, and NY) of the six states that have newly established K–12 to early childhood linkages are Recovery Act grantees. Recovery Act grants are focused on P20 development, and are expected to conclude in June 2014.

³ Defined as the ability to link state K–12 student data to state data from public 2- and 4-year IHEs.

⁴ Six (KS, MA, ME, MN, OH, and UT) of the 11 states that have newly established K–12 to postsecondary linkages are Recovery Act grantees. Recovery Act grants are focused on P20 development and are expected to conclude in June 2014.

⁵ Based on a review of IN’s project plans and recent reports, their K–12 to postsecondary linkage was available only for one year of data (2010), so they have been removed from the list of states with active K–12 to postsecondary linkages.

⁶ Defined as the ability to track all public 2- and 4-year postsecondary students to, at minimum, within-state employment records (e.g., state unemployment insurance systems).

⁷ Three (ME, MN, and UT) of the four states that have newly established K–12 to postsecondary to workforce linkages are Recovery Act grantees. Recovery Act grants are focused on P20 development and are expected to conclude in June 2014.

⁸ Based on a review of IN’s project plans and recent reports, their K–12 to postsecondary linkage was available only for one year of data (2010), so they have been removed from the list of states with active K–12 to postsecondary to labor linkages.

The Department engages a variety of external stakeholders around the creation and use of data systems to improve education. During annual SLDS site visits, the Department meets with state leadership, including leaders in K–12, early childhood, and postsecondary education, and labor, in addition to representatives from local education agencies. The Department also regularly coordinates with its colleagues at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Labor (DOL) to ensure interagency coordination and sharing of resources between SLDS, Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC), and DOL's Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI).⁹ The Department also provides information to Congressional staff, nonprofit organizations such as DQC (Data Quality Campaign) and CCSSO (Council of Chief State School Officers), and members of the public.

Progress: SLDS grants were awarded to 14 states in November 2005 (FY 2006 Grantees), 12 additional states and the District of Columbia in June 2007 (FY 2007 Grantees), 27 states—including 15 new states—in March 2009 (FY 2009 Grantees), 20 states in May 2010 (FY 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Grantees), and 24 states and territories—including 6 new states and 2 new territories—in June 2012 (FY 2012 Grantees). Based on the five rounds of funding, 47 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands have received at least one SLDS grant. At the end of FY 2013, the Department can report that all states and DC have a functioning K–12 SLDS, 19 states link with early childhood systems, 25 link with postsecondary data from state institutions, and 12 link with labor. Labor linkages have presented the largest challenges for states due to the lack of an accessible identifier, the need to comply with multiple privacy laws, and challenges of multi-agency coordination. The Department has increased coordination with DOL and their WDQI grant program, including ongoing communication with the WDQI staff, a joint site visit to Pennsylvania, and joint sessions at annual grantee conferences. The Department is creating a series of best practice materials in early childhood and held a privacy workshop for states on sharing early childhood data.

The Department will facilitate the development of interoperable state data systems from early learning through the workforce and will provide support to the education community, including teachers and administrators, on how to understand and appropriately use data to inform policies, instructional practices, and leadership decisions.

The Department is implementing new, [targeted technical assistance to increase states' capacity](#) to support statewide longitudinal data systems after federal funding. Additionally, the Department meets with state leadership to affirm their support for and commitment to use SLDS data to make educational improvements, but there is a need for the Department of Education and the Department of Labor to provide guidance and resources to states to encourage secure linking of education and workforce records.

⁹ WDQI supports the development of, or enhancements to, longitudinal administrative databases that will integrate workforce data and create linkages to education data. States will incorporate workforce information into longitudinal data systems to expand the scope and depth of data from programs, such as the Workforce Investment Act programs, Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and Unemployment Insurance. The long-term WDQI and SLDS goal for States is to use their longitudinal data systems to follow individuals through school and into and through their work life. The WDQI also emphasizes promoting improvements and the level of quality of these systems, in addition to increasing the accessibility of performance data, including data reported by employment services and training providers. High quality and consistent data that is available from service providers about services offered, and how well their customers benefited as they enter or re-enter the labor market, are integral to informed consumer choices.

FY 2013 Cross-Agency Priority Goals

In addition to the Agency Priority Goals, the Department contributes to the following list of Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) goals as required by the *GPRA Modernization Act of 2010*.

The government-wide goal leader for each CAP goal, the Performance Improvement Council (PIC), and OMB coordinated quarterly updates reflective of the action plans and included the Department's contributions to the CAP goals where applicable. For additional information on the CAP Goals, please go to http://goals.performance.gov/goals_2013.

Broadband: As part of expanding all [broadband](#) capabilities, ensure 4G wireless broadband coverage for 98 percent of Americans by 2016.

Veteran Career Readiness: Improve career readiness of veterans. By September 30, 2013, increase the percent of eligible service members who will be served by career readiness and preparedness programs from 50 percent to 90 percent in order to improve their competitiveness in the job market.

Job Training: Ensure our country has one of the most skilled workforces in the world by preparing 2 million workers with skills training by 2015 and improving the coordination and delivery of job training services.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Education: In support of the President's goal that the U.S. have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020, the federal government will work with education partners to improve the quality of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education at all levels to help increase the number of well-prepared graduates with STEM degrees by one-third over the next 10 years, resulting in an additional 1 million graduates with degrees in STEM subjects.

The Department's Approach to Data Collection and Analysis

Streamlining Access to Data Already Collected by Existing Laws. In FY 2013, the Department led the government in development of data collection inventories, as recognized by the Government Accountability Office (GAO). GAO found that the Department has followed a reasonable process to populate its inventory and has designed appropriate internal controls to ensure the accuracy of information included, such as reviewing and verifying data entered into the inventory. GAO found that the Department solicited input on its data inventory design from internal stakeholders through a team formed to address data coordination efforts across the various program offices.

The Department's inventory of data collections includes descriptive information, referred to as metadata, about the context of each data collection, as well as the specific data elements reported by respondents for each collection. The inventory is to eventually include all statistical and grant administration collections that meet the Department's definition of a data collection. The GAO report is Status of the Department of Education's Inventory of Its Data Collections, GAO-13-596R, <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-596R>.

Both [Data.gov](#) and the [Department's public data repository](#) were redesigned to have a consistent look and feel and to include a variety of new features to help visitors discover the most useful data sets to meet their needs. [Launches of the new sites occurred early in FY 2014](#).

In FY 2013, the Department continued to support programs to help the education system by facilitating the development of the infrastructure necessary to collect and disseminate high-value education information for the improvement of student outcomes.

Consolidating Data Collection Through ED*Facts*. Complete and accurate data are essential for effective decision-making. [ED*Facts*](#) is the Department's initiative to put performance data at the center of policy, management, and budget decision-making for elementary and secondary educational programs. *ED*Facts** centralizes performance data supplied by state educational agencies and enables the Department to better analyze and use data in policy development, planning, and management. The *ED*Facts** system enables the consolidation of separate data collections and reduces the reporting burden for states by eliminating redundant data requests. Data are available for both state and local educational agencies (SEAs and LEAs), and school data include data on demographics, program participation, implementation, and outcomes.

Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems. The [Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems \(SLDS\) grant program](#), as authorized by the *Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002*, is designed to aid SEAs in developing and implementing longitudinal data systems. Most statewide longitudinal data systems funds are awarded as state grants, but a portion of the funds are used for activities to improve data quality, coordination, and use. Activities include the Education Data Technical Assistance program, the [Privacy Technical Assistance Center](#), and work on common education data standards. These initiatives are intended to enhance the ability of states to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data, including individual student records. The data systems developed with funds from these grants should help states, districts, schools, and teachers make data-driven decisions to improve student learning, as well as facilitate research to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps.

Data Strategy Team. The Department's Data Strategy Team (DST) develops and promotes coordinated and consistent data strategies among the various principal offices within the Department. The mission of the DST is to coordinate the Department's public-facing data initiatives by building cohesiveness in internal processes and data policies and by improving transparency in matters related to the Department's collection of data. The DST supports states' use of education data through data websites and technical assistance to grantees and identifies best practices for the use and promotion of data policy.

Civil Rights Data Collection. The Department collects data on key education and civil rights issues in our nation's public schools for use by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in its enforcement and monitoring efforts, by other Department offices, and by policymakers and researchers outside of the Department. The Department has increased the availability of data related to student access to resources and opportunities to succeed, as well as data that illuminate barriers to equity and success, such as data on harassment, school discipline, and restraint/seclusion. The [Civil Rights Data Collection website](#) displaying these data has been enhanced as well.

Enhancing Education Systems and Supports: The Department strives to leverage its data, evaluation, performance, and financial systems to meet four important aspects of its mission:

- To contribute to the Department's ability to build customer relations by providing timely responses to customer inquiries.
- To empower employees to make informed decisions by increasing their access to data.

- To increase accountability through improved financial management.
- To keep Department employees informed of the project status and ensure that all users receive proper training on the new system.

Finally, as the Department transitions to its new *FY 2014–18 Strategic Plan* during the coming year, as an organization it will have charted a roadmap for future success and will continue to evaluate how best to accomplish its strategic goals and objectives during these fiscally challenging times. The new plan is intended to help the Department refine its course and better focus performance within the framework of the *GPRRA Modernization Act of 2010*.

The six Department *Strategic Plan* goals guide the day-to-day work of the Department's staff. Priorities are not intended to signify their relative importance; success on each will be necessary to ensure that the Department is maximizing its impact on the education system. This plan will help to align the administration's yearly budget requests and the Department's legislative agenda. Continuous improvement rests in large part on an ongoing cycle of assessing performance, examining data, and improving practices. Creating a culture of continuous improvement is at the heart of the Department's efforts to work with and support elementary, secondary, and postsecondary educators and policy makers at the federal, state, and local levels.

Accomplishing all of the new *Strategic Plan's* priorities will require strong coordination and collaboration from Department staff working with Congress, partners at the state and local levels, and all other stakeholders. This includes meeting numerous legislative challenges at the federal level, as well as continuing to work with national labor management partners to support districts and states in building the capacity to pursue reforms through active labor management collaboration. In addition, state and federal fiscal constraints may impact the Department's ability to provide the necessary incentives and resources to increase quality, transparency, and accountability.

The Department's Evaluation Planning Initiatives

To determine the effectiveness of programs, policies, and strategies for improving education outcomes, funding is directed at evaluations that will yield reliable measures of effectiveness. For priority questions related to other issues, such as performance management and implementation support, the funding is directed to evaluations that use rigorous methods appropriate for answering those questions.

The evaluation planning team meets with the Department's policy and program offices and, based on their input, develops recommendations for future evaluation activities in the current fiscal year and beyond. Each office identifies its highest priority research, evaluation, and analysis needs, as well as other program-specific research questions they would like addressed. The evaluation team examines the extent to which these research questions are supported by existing research or are being addressed through ongoing evaluations and then develops recommendations based on current and prospective resources. In FY 2011 and FY 2012, the Department developed and approved a set of priority research questions to inform future investments in knowledge building. Planning for FY 2013 and FY 2014 investments is completed. For a list of evaluations completed in FY 2013 and of those planned through FY 2015, see appendix D.