

The Department's Approach to Performance Management

Performance Management Framework

In accordance with the [Government Performance and Results Act \(GPRA\) Modernization Act of 2010](#), the *FY 2014–18 Strategic Plan* is the basis for the Department's performance management framework. The Department uses quarterly performance reviews, targeted strategic initiatives, and outreach to leaders and stakeholders to assess progress and garner engagement toward achieving strategic goals and outcomes. An outline of the Department's *Strategic Plan* is shown below.

FY 2014–18 Strategic Plan

AGENCY MISSION		
<p>Mission: To promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access</p>		
FY 2014–18 STRATEGIC PLAN		
Strategic Goals	Strategic Objectives	FY 2016–17 Agency Priority Goals
<p>Goal 1: Postsecondary Education, Career and Technical Education, and Adult Education. Increase college access, affordability, quality, and completion by improving postsecondary education and lifelong learning opportunities for youths and adults.</p>	<p>Objective 1.1: Access and Affordability. Close the opportunity gap by improving the affordability of and access to college and/or workforce training, especially for underrepresented and/or underprepared populations (e.g., low-income and first-generation students, English learners, individuals with disabilities, adults without high school diplomas, etc.).</p> <p>Objective 1.2: Quality. Foster institutional value to ensure that postsecondary education credentials represent effective preparation for students to succeed in the workforce and participate in civic life.</p> <p>Objective 1.3: Completion. Increase degree and certificate completion and job placement in high-need and high-skill areas, particularly among underrepresented and/or underprepared populations.</p> <p>Objective 1.4: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Pathways. Increase STEM pathway opportunities that enable access to and completion of postsecondary programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase college degree attainment in America • Federal Student Aid Transparency
<p>Goal 2: Elementary and Secondary Education. Improve the elementary and secondary education system's ability to consistently deliver excellent instruction aligned with rigorous academic standards while providing effective support services to close achievement and opportunity gaps, and ensure all students graduate high school college- and career-ready.</p>	<p>Objective 2.1: Standards and Assessments. Support implementation of internationally benchmarked college- and career-ready standards, with aligned, valid, and reliable assessments.</p> <p>Objective 2.2: Effective Teachers and Strong Leaders. Improve the preparation, recruitment, retention, development, support, evaluation, recognition, and equitable distribution of effective teachers and leaders.</p> <p>Objective 2.3: School Climate and Community. Increase the success, safety, and health of students, particularly in high-need schools, and deepen family and community engagement.</p> <p>Objective 2.4: Turn Around Schools and Close Achievement Gaps. Accelerate achievement by supporting states and districts in turning around low-performing schools and closing achievement gaps, and developing models of next-generation high schools.</p> <p>Objective 2.5: STEM Teaching and Learning. Increase the number and quality of STEM teachers and increase opportunities for students to access rich STEM learning experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support implementation of college- and career-ready standards and assessments

FY 2014–18 STRATEGIC PLAN		
Strategic Goals	Strategic Objectives	FY 2016–17 Agency Priority Goals
<p>Goal 3: Early Learning. Improve the health, social-emotional, and cognitive outcomes for all children from birth through 3rd grade, so that all children, particularly those with high needs, are on track for graduating from high school college- and career-ready.</p>	<p>Objective 3.1: Access to High-Quality Programs and Services. Increase access to high-quality early learning programs and comprehensive services, especially for children with high needs.</p> <p>Objective 3.2: Effective Workforce. Improve the quality and effectiveness of the early learning workforce so that early childhood educators have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to improve young children's health, social-emotional, and cognitive outcomes.</p> <p>Objective 3.3: Measuring Progress, Outcomes, and Readiness. Improve the capacity of states and early learning programs to develop and implement comprehensive early learning assessment systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase enrollment in high-quality state preschool programs
<p>Goal 4: Equity. Increase educational opportunities for underserved students and reduce discrimination so that all students are well-positioned to succeed.</p>	<p>Objective 4.1: Equitable Educational Opportunities. Increase all students' access to educational opportunities with a focus on closing achievement gaps and remove barriers that students face based on their race, ethnicity, or national origin; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; disability; English language ability; religion; socioeconomic status; or geographical location.</p> <p>Objective 4.2: Civil Rights Compliance. Ensure educational institutions' awareness of and compliance with federal civil rights obligations and enhance the public's knowledge of their civil rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure equitable educational opportunities
<p>Goal 5: Continuous Improvement of the U.S. Education System. Enhance the education system's ability to continuously improve through better and more widespread use of data, research and evaluation, evidence, transparency, innovation, and technology.</p>	<p>Objective 5.1: Data Systems and Transparency. Facilitate the development of interoperable longitudinal data systems for early learning through employment to enable data-driven, transparent decision-making by increasing access to timely, reliable, and high-value data.</p> <p>Objective 5.2: Privacy. Provide all education stakeholders, from early childhood to adult learning, with technical assistance and guidance to help them protect student privacy while effectively managing and using student information.</p> <p>Objective 5.3: Research, Evaluation, and Use of Evidence. Invest in research and evaluation that builds evidence for education improvement; communicate findings effectively; and drive the use of evidence in decision-making by internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>Objective 5.4: Technology and Innovation. Accelerate the development and broad adoption of new, effective programs, processes, and strategies, including education technology.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable evidence-based decision making
<p>Goal 6: U.S. Department of Education Capacity. Improve the organizational capacities of the Department to implement the Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>Objective 6.1: Effective Workforce. Continue to build a high-performing, skilled, diverse, and engaged workforce within the Department.</p> <p>Objective 6.2: Risk Management. Improve the Department's program efficacy through comprehensive risk management, and grant and contract monitoring.</p> <p>Objective 6.3: Implementation and Support. Build Department capacity and systems to support states' and other grantees' implementation of reforms that result in improved outcomes, and keep the public informed of promising practices and new reform initiatives.</p> <p>Objective 6.4: Productivity and Performance Management. Improve workforce productivity through information technology enhancements, telework expansion efforts, more effective process performance management systems, and state-of-the-art leadership and knowledge management practices.</p>	

The *FY 2014–18 Strategic Plan* is comprised of six strategic goals, which serve as the foundation for establishing long-term priorities. The strategic objectives are actions that the Department will undertake to realize the goals. For each objective, the Department has established measures to gauge its progress. In collaboration with OMB and alongside the release of the President's FY 2017 budget request, the Department announced its FY 2016–17 [Agency Priority Goals \(APGs\)](#) and is reporting quarterly updates on [performance.gov](#). The Department monitors progress toward its strategic goals and its APGs using data-driven review and analysis. This focus promotes active management engagement across the Department. Additional information on performance management is available in the [Annual Performance Plans and Annual Performance Reports](#).

The Department welcomes input from Congress, state and local partners, and other education stakeholders on its *Strategic Plan* and APGs. Questions or comments about the Department's performance management framework and reporting should be e-mailed to PIO@ed.gov.

Information in the Agency Financial Report

The Department has elected to produce separate financial and performance reports. Because the Department does not produce a Performance and Accountability Report, specific performance reporting related to the Department's *Strategic Plan* may be found in the *Annual Performance Report*, published with the *Budget of the United States Government* (President's Budget), and available on both [ed.gov](#) and the government website [performance.gov](#). Performance information in the Department's AFR is limited to high-level, cross-cutting themes with links to help the reader find further details on metrics and trends regarding specific objectives. We also urge readers to seek programmatic data as it is reported in the [Congressional Budget Justification](#), as well as on the web pages of [individual programs](#).

The high-level discussion of performance information in this year's AFR includes performance matters that inform decisions of the Department and its partners. Discussions on challenges concerning operations and finance are provided in a section of the AFR that follows the Department's [Financial Highlights](#).

U.S. Department of Education FY 2016 Priorities

The mission of the Department is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. With this mission and challenging, far-reaching strategic goals, the Department has chosen to focus FY 2016 efforts in three areas. These areas, as noted in the Secretary's message, are: (1) advancing equity and excellence; (2) expanding support for teachers and school leaders; and (3) promoting access, affordability, and completion in higher education. In addition, the Department has continued to encourage grantees and practitioners to use data and evidence to improve student outcomes. The following sections highlight a portion of the Department's innovative work in these areas.

Advancing Equity and Excellence

The Department continues to be true to its mission to promote and support equal access to a quality education, from preschool through high school graduation and beyond. That vision includes efforts to improve student achievement and raise graduation rates; make education more equitable; ensure all students achieve at high standards that prepare them for college and careers; enhance the quality of assessments; and increase access to high-quality early learning.

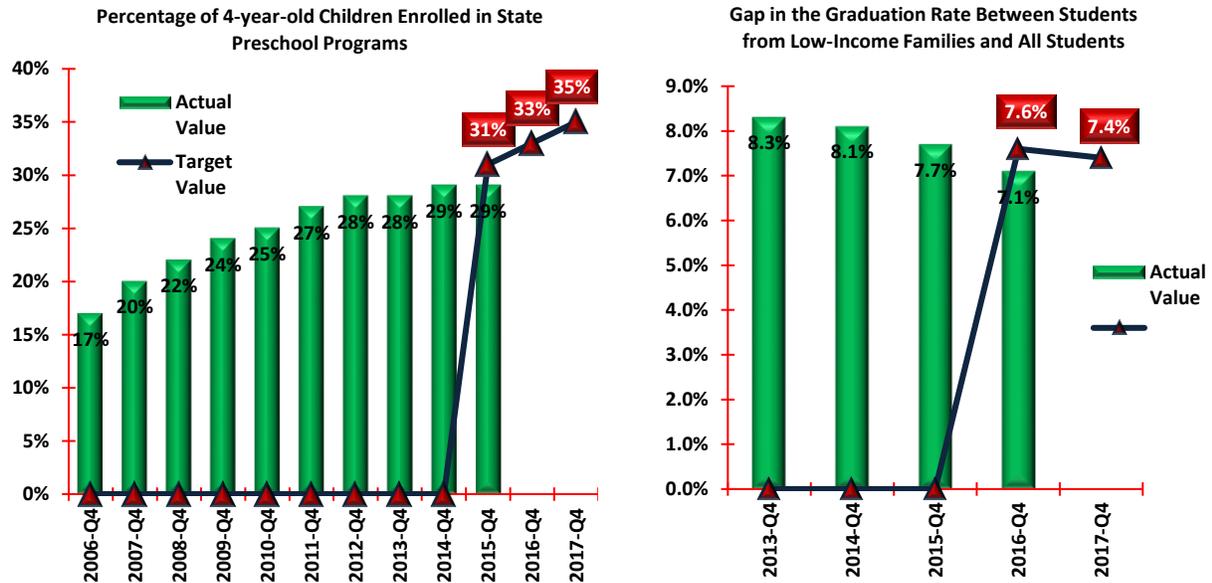
Early in FY 2016, the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA), which replaced the *No Child Left Behind Act* as the latest authorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), passed by substantial bipartisan majorities and was signed by President Obama. ESSA embraces many of the priorities and initiatives created or championed by the Obama administration, such as state-determined, college- and career-ready standards for every student and aligned statewide assessments that provide educators, parents, and communities with critical information each year on student progress; state-driven accountability systems that meaningfully differentiate between schools based on multiple measures; a commitment to ensuring more of our youngest learners have access to high-quality early learning opportunities; locally tailored systems for school improvement that include evidence-based interventions; and education innovation through a successor to this administration's Investing in Innovation (i3) program. The Department is focused on supporting states in the implementation of the ESSA to ensure that it provides equal educational opportunities for all students and preserves the ESEA's legacy as a civil rights law.

ESSA advances equity by upholding critical protections and maintaining dedicated resources for America's most disadvantaged students. The law requires that action will be taken to improve outcomes for students in schools that are among the lowest performing 5 percent of Title I schools in the state, that fail to graduate over one-third of their students, and where any subgroup of students is consistently underperforming. ESSA also creates opportunities for states to reclaim the goal of a rigorous, well-rounded education for every child—an education that not only includes math and reading, but also provides all students with access to other subjects, such as science, social studies, world languages, the arts, physical education, health, and other key areas of study. As soon as ESSA became law, the Department began developing materials to support its implementation at the state and local level. To date, the Department has published Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRMs) on Title I Accountability, State Plans and Reports Cards, Assessments (Part A and Part B), and Supplement Not Supplant. In addition, six ESSA significant guidance documents have been announced.

The Department continues to build on its commitment to high-quality early childhood education through the [Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge](#) (Early Learning Challenge) program and [Preschool Development Grants](#), which together have invested \$1.5 billion in early learning across the country. The Early Learning Challenge, which the Department jointly administers with the Department of Health and Human Services, currently supports 20 states that are implementing a cohesive system of quality early learning programs and services for young children from birth through age 5. In addition, Preschool Development Grants have served as a down payment on the President's vision for universal, voluntary access to high-quality preschool by providing high-quality learning experiences to children in 230 communities across 18 states.

Progress: As states develop their new plans to implement ESSA and support educational opportunity for all students, P–12, the nation's graduation rate is at its highest point ever—at 83 percent. Especially encouraging is that more historically underserved students, including low-income students, English learners, and students with disabilities, are graduating from high school and going to college. In fact, the progress of black and Hispanic students since 2011 has outpaced the growth of all other racial/ethnic groups. Further, in the fall of 2015, Preschool Development Grant states enrolled 28,000 4-year-olds in high-quality programs supported by the grants; 35,000 more 4-year-olds were enrolled in those programs in the fall of 2016. However, significant challenges remain—today, only 41 percent of all 4-year-olds in the United States are enrolled in publicly funded preschool through state programs, Head Start, or special education. Even fewer are enrolled in the highest-quality programs.

In FY 2016, the Department announced a new set of APGs. Among other efforts, the Department is working to [increase enrollment in high-quality state preschool programs](#) and [ensure equitable educational opportunities](#). Two measures of our efforts to advance equity and excellence are shown below.



Data Source for Percentage of 4-year-old Children Enrolled: National Institute for Early Education Research Yearbook ([The State of Preschool](#)).

Note: Assumptions for the years predating FY 2014 do not align the school year with the fiscal year. Data beginning with FY 2014 align the school year with the actual fiscal year; however, the data are not available to be reported until the following fiscal year.

Data Source for Gap in the Graduation Rate: [EDFacts](#).

Note: Data represent the previous school year's data. For example, School Year 2014–15, which corresponds to FY 2015, is being reported in FY 2016.

Expanding Support for Teachers and School Leaders

[Research](#) shows what many of us know: a great teacher is the most important in-school factor contributing to student achievement.^{1,2} It also shows that the quality of the teacher at the head of the classroom is dramatically impacted by the school leader.³ Effective school leaders ensure the skillful recruitment and placement of quality teachers. Not only that, but teachers themselves report that the quality of school leadership is often one of the biggest factors in both short- and long-term teacher retention, as well as teacher job satisfaction.⁴ Yet, too many young people—especially students of color, low-income students, and other historically underserved children and youths—do not have access to the teachers and school leaders who can best help them

¹ Rivkin, S. G., Hanushek, E. A., & Kain, J. F. (2005). Teachers, schools, and academic achievement. *Econometrica*, 73(2), 417–458.

² Aaronson, D., Barrow, L., & Sander, W. (2007). Teachers and student achievement in the Chicago public high schools. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 25(1), 95–135.

³ See for example Branch, G., Hanushek, E. A., & Rivkin, S. G. (2012). Estimating the effect of leaders on public sector productivity: The case of school principals. Washington, DC: National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research.

⁴ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) “Public School Teacher Data Files,” and “Private School Teacher Data Files,” 2011–12.

succeed.⁵ The Department has worked to help states and school districts support great educators.

For example, the Department launched the [Excellent Educators for All](#) initiative and called on states to develop plans that would give low-income students the same access to high-quality educators as their more affluent peers. In addition, the Department recently published regulations to increase transparency and establish feedback loops to help teacher preparation programs and states ensure that educators are ready to succeed in the classroom. While giving states the flexibility to determine how program performance is measured, such as how graduates are having an impact on student learning in the classroom, the regulations build on reforms and innovations already happening at the state and local levels across the country.

The Department continued to support [Teach to Lead](#), a project that leverages the experience and expertise of teachers to lead transformation of the teaching profession and bring about better outcomes for students. Today, Teach to Lead continues its efforts to support teacher leadership by hosting regional leadership summits that spotlight and advance the groundbreaking, teacher-led work in states, districts, and schools across the country.

With the passage of the ESSA, states and districts have a great opportunity to reimagine systems and strategies to better support educators in accelerating students' performance. For example, the Department published Title II, Part A Guidance addressing three areas of opportunity: Support for Educators, Educator Equity, and Strengthening Title II, Part A Investments. It is essential that we build upon the progress made with the passing of ESSA if we are to provide every student with a rich, rigorous education.

Progress: Under the Excellent Educators for All initiative, the Department supported a \$4.2 million technical support network to help states plan their efforts to increase equitable access. The Department then published a report that highlighted which states and districts fared well or poorly on teacher equity. In addition, more than 40 states have committed to developing teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that reflect the goal of ensuring that these systems provide meaningful, actionable feedback to educators to improve their practice and increase student outcomes.

Promoting Access, Affordability, and Completion in Higher Education

Skills and education promote success, and that makes a college education one of the best investments people can make in their futures. Americans with college degrees are more likely to live healthier lives, be more civically engaged in their communities, have good-paying jobs, and experience greater job security. America's students, families, and the economic strength they provide depend on a higher education system that helps everyone succeed. Achieving this goal requires making college more accessible, affordable, and accountable—especially for historically underserved students—and ensuring that students graduate in a timely way and with a meaningful degree as the basis to thrive in careers and life. That is why President Obama has worked throughout the eight years of his administration to increase college affordability, access, and completion. Since 2009, the Department has taken strong actions to offset the rising costs of higher education, including by making historic investments in federal student aid, such as expanding Pell Grants—federal financial aid offered to undergraduate students—and making student debt more manageable. The President raised the maximum Pell Grant by more

⁵ Glazerman, Steven and Jeffrey Max. "Do Low-Income Students Have Equal Access to the Highest-Performing Teachers?" NCEE Evaluation Brief. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Document No. PP11-23a, 2011.

than \$1,000 over the course of his administration, and, for the first time, tied the grant amount to inflation. In 2010, the Obama administration made a landmark investment in the Pell program through the *Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act*, which ended student loan subsidies for private banks and shifted more than \$60 billion in savings back to students and taxpayers.

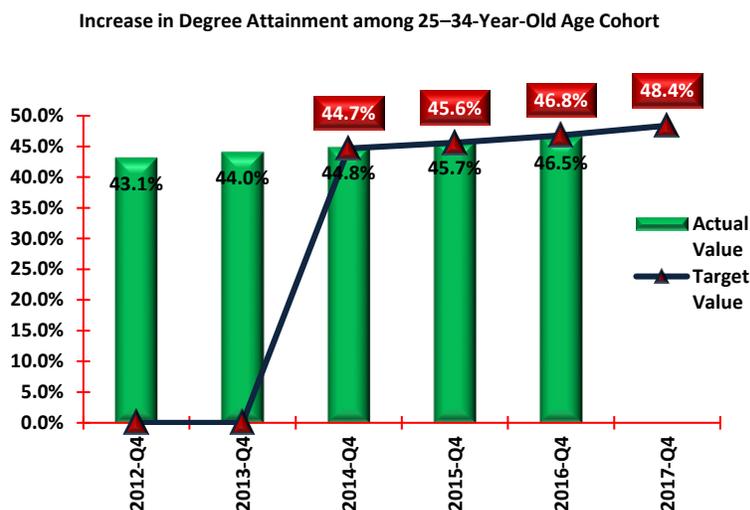
Among the ways to boost college completion is by ensuring that students and families have information to help them apply to and enroll in a school that will help them achieve their educational goals. The Department built a new [College Scorecard](#), which helps students, families, and those who advise them to make better decisions about one of the most significant financial decisions students will make in their lifetimes—where to go to college. The College Scorecard includes comprehensive, reliable data published on students' employment outcomes and success in repaying student loans. Both the Department and other third-party developers are incorporating the data and the tool into their outreach directly to students, ensuring students and families have the information they need to find the schools that are right for them.

Another key is helping students and their families obtain financial aid by making it easier and faster for them to fill out the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA). With this understanding, the Obama administration took major steps to streamline the FAFSA. Today, more than 99 percent of the FAFSA applications are submitted online. Moreover, among 2014–15 applicants who had filed their taxes, 58 percent of independent students and 46 percent of parents of dependent students, or over 6 million students and parents, had used the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Data Retrieval Tool, which allows students and parents to access and automatically transfer their IRS tax return information into the FAFSA. Finally, starting October 1, 2016, for 2017–18 applicants, students and families now can apply for financial aid earlier—as the college application process gets underway—rather than in January, and most families can now electronically retrieve their tax information filed for an earlier year from the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to use on the FAFSA, rather than waiting until tax season to complete their applications.

In addition, the Department has taken comprehensive actions to protect students and taxpayers from the subset of institutions that engage in fraudulent, deceptive, and other predatory practices. That includes implementing the gainful employment rules to hold career colleges accountable for their students' outcomes; publishing the borrower defense regulations to create a streamlined process that is fair to students who may have been victims of fraud and to hold colleges accountable for risky behavior; regulations to ensure the integrity of the federal student aid programs; and increased rigor in reviewing and holding accountable colleges and accrediting agencies.

Progress: The Department's efforts to increase financial aid helped cover the cost of college by about \$3,700 for more than 8 million students last year, and approximately 2 million additional Pell Grants have been awarded to students every year since the President took office. In addition to keeping student loan interest rates low, a reform that could save a typical student \$1,000 over the life of his or her loan, the Obama administration improved and expanded income-driven loan repayment options to ensure loan payments remain affordable. With these plans, borrowers set their monthly student loan payment at an amount based on income and family size. As of September 2016, income-driven repayment plans have enabled more than 5 million borrowers to take advantage of affordable repayment plans based on students' incomes, up from 700,000 borrowers in 2011. Additionally, borrowers who have committed to careers in public service can have their loans forgiven after 10 years through the Department's [Public Service Loan Forgiveness program](#).

The Department has established an APG to [increase college degree attainment](#) and continues its efforts to improve affordability, access, and student outcomes in higher education.



Data Source: [NCES Digest of Education Statistics, Table 104.30](#), Number of persons age 18 and over, by highest level of educational attainment, sex, race/ethnicity, and age: 2015. Tabulated from Current Population Survey data, U.S. Census.

Developing and Using Data and Other Evidence

The Obama administration's robust support of evidence-based innovation gives states and school districts tools to direct their education improvement efforts toward the most effective practices. With a focus on new and promising efforts backed by research, the administration helped schools and communities create supports, partnerships, and programs to help educators tackle persistent challenges, accelerate achievement for all children and youth, and target interventions for students who were historically underserved and most vulnerable.

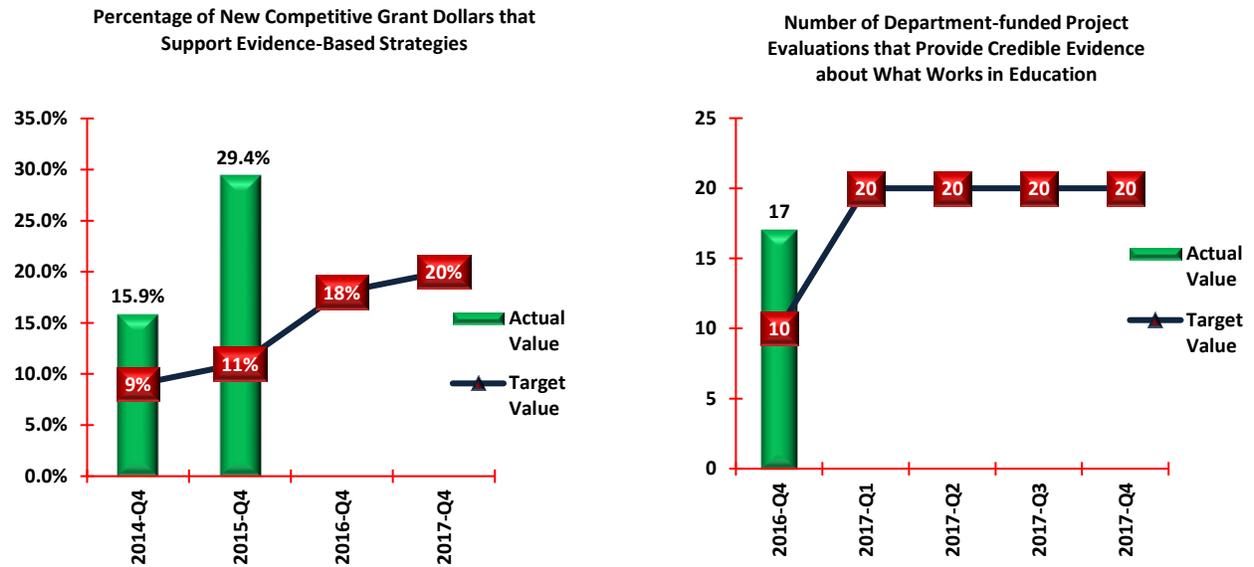
The Department has pioneered efforts that encourage grantees and practitioners to use evidence and data in ways that improve student outcomes. The Department has significantly scaled up the use of evidence-based grant-making. [i3](#), an evidence-based grant program that was also born out of this priority for increased innovation in education, has invested more than \$1.3 billion in nearly 160 projects, reaching over 2 million students in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. As part of i3, projects were required to undergo a rigorous, independent evaluation and to share the results publicly, helping to identify strategies that enable students to excel and that educators can adopt or adapt. This work is expanding the knowledge base that the education field can use to help students make even greater progress in the years ahead.

[InformED](#) is an initiative launched in 2016 to transform how the Department makes information available and actionable for internal users and the public, using open data and data transparency design concepts. The InformED initiative is building on lessons learned from the success of the College Scorecard and applying these lessons across the education spectrum, from early childhood to adult education. With resources and intuitive tools tailored to different audiences (such as researchers, policymakers and journalists), InformED is pulling together the Department's diverse array of data and studies on a particular topic, and allowing open data access to help unlock answers to pressing education questions and needs.

Progress: The Department is on track for 18 percent of new FY 2016 discretionary grant funding to support evidence-based practices. The i3 program has released 17 rigorous

evaluations that can inform the field. Through InformED, the Department has launched numerous new products that have generated significant public interest. For example, data from the [Civil Rights Data Collection](#) have been downloaded over 2,700 times. In addition, more than 1.5 million users have accessed the College Scorecard since September 12, 2015.

The Department has established an APG to [enable evidence-based decision making](#). The graphs below show measures of our efforts to increase use and generation of credible evidence on what works and what does not work in education.



Data Source for Percentage of New Competitive Grant Dollars: Forecast Report issued by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) and final Funding Reports from relevant programs.

Note: Q4 data not yet available but expected in FY 2017.

Data Source for Number of Department-funded Project Evaluations: Discretionary grant slate memoranda, discretionary grant financial forecasts and reports from OCFO, and the What Works Clearinghouse.