

# THE DEPARTMENT'S APPROACH TO PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

## PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The ***Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA)*** requires agencies to establish a strategic plan that presents the long-term goals that the agency intends to accomplish. GPRAMA requires agencies to establish a **four-year strategic plan** at the beginning of each Administration. The Strategic Plan describes the key policy and operational priorities for the agency, detailing the Department's strategic performance goals that will guide human capital and budget planning.

Throughout Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, the Department conducted a series of strategic planning meetings to develop the *FY 2018–22 Strategic Plan*. These meetings included a focus on capturing lessons learned and developing a framework for the new Strategic Plan. The Department also consulted with Congress and the **Office of Management and Budget (OMB)**. The Department plans to publish the *FY 2018–22 Strategic Plan* with the President's FY 2019 Budget in February 2018. 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. The *Agency Financial Report* for FY 2017 provides a high-level description of performance measures and goals based on the *FY 2014–18 Strategic Plan*. A detailed discussion of performance information for FY 2017 will be provided in the Department's *Annual Performance Report* to be released at the same time as the President's FY 2019 Budget. The Department's annual performance reports for prior years are available **online**. 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 about the most serious management

challenges the Department faces from the perspective of the Department's Office of Inspector General are provided in the Other Information section of the report.

## AGENCY ACHIEVEMENTS AND LOOKING AHEAD

The U.S. Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. This mission is manifested in the Department's efforts to continually improve the educational environment for all students, and address their education needs. The Department's **National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)** estimates that 50.7 million students are attending public elementary and secondary schools in the fall of 2017, with a projected 35.6 million in prekindergarten through grade 8 and a projected 15.1 million in grades 9 through 12. An additional 5.2 million students are expected to attend private elementary and secondary schools. In fact, NCES predicts that the total P–12 enrollment will continue to grow to an all-time high of 56.8 million by 2026, indicating the increasing need for the highest quality agency performance.

Looking to the future, the Department plans to focus in the key areas of: (1) supporting state and local efforts to improve learning outcomes for all P–12 students in every community; (2) expanding postsecondary education options and improving outcomes to foster economic opportunity and informed, thoughtful, and productive citizens; (3) strengthening the quality, accessibility, and use of education data through better management, increased privacy protections, and transparency; and (4) reforming the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of the Department.

## SUPPORTING STATE AND LOCAL EFFORTS TO IMPROVE LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR P–12 STUDENTS

In March, the Department released a revised **consolidated state plan template** to support states in meeting the requirements of the ***Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)***, as

amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). The Department worked with state educational agencies (SEAs), and other state and local stakeholders, to develop a revised template that is structured to reduce burden and promote innovation, flexibility, transparency, and accountability, while maintaining essential protections for all students. The revised template asks states only to provide detail on their plans in areas (a) explicitly required by law and (b) deemed absolutely necessary for consideration of such a plan, consistent with ESEA section 8302(b)(3), leveraging input of states, local educators, and parents. State plans have been submitted to the Department, peer-reviewed, and approved.

**Looking Ahead:** Every student—regardless of background or circumstance—deserves an opportunity to fulfill his or her potential. High-quality educational opportunities are critical when it comes to achieving that goal, especially for the most vulnerable students and communities. The **President's FY 2018 Budget** is an indication of the commitment to support the most vulnerable. Level funding of the **Title I Grants program** totaling \$14.9 billion would be allocated to local educational agencies' programs to support state and local efforts to ensure that more than 25 million students in high-poverty schools have access to rigorous coursework and teaching. Additionally, the federal investment in the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** formula grant programs at \$12.7 billion would support services to 6.8 million children with disabilities and to states to design and implement special education program improvement efforts under the Department's **Results Driven Accountability** framework. The **English Language Acquisition program** would receive \$736 million to implement effective language instruction programs designed to help English learners attain English language proficiency.

The Administration's education priority is to help ensure every student in America has an equal opportunity for a great education by giving parents more control and greater options. The proposed FY 2018 budget includes a \$167 million increase for the **Charter Schools Grants program** to strengthen state efforts to start new charter schools or expand and replicate existing high-performing charter schools while providing up to \$100 million to meet the demand for charter school facilities.

The Department is also focused on promoting evidence-based decision making with the intention to support states and districts in using and building evidence effectively. To this end, in FY 2017, the Department

published revised evidence definitions and related selection criteria for competitive grant programs in Education Department General Administrative Regulations that align with ESSA; disseminated nonregulatory guidance on evidence in ESSA, ***Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments***, which contains a five-step decision-making framework that shapes evidence as a mechanism for continuous improvement and recommends criteria for each of the four evidence levels in ESSA; awarded \$16 million to support rigorous evaluations and researcher-practitioner partnerships focused on state and local education priorities; and awarded 60-month contracts for nine Regional Educational Laboratories, which work in partnership with states and districts to bridge research, policy, and practice in education.

## EXPANDING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION OPTIONS AND IMPROVING OUTCOMES

With the passage of the FY 2017 spending bill, year-round Pell grants were restored, and the Department announced that these grants would become available to college students beginning July 1, 2017. The **Department recommended** that unless a student had remaining eligibility from the 2016–17 award year, institutions should award Pell Grant funds for this past summer out of the 2017–18 award year since the additional funding will be available later in the year (e.g., spring or summer of 2018). The change allows an eligible student to receive up to 150 percent of the student's scheduled Pell Grant for an award year beginning with the 2017–18 award year. This change gives hundreds of thousands of college students more resources to finish their coursework in a timeframe meeting their individual needs. Students will be able to graduate more quickly and with less debt.

The Department is transforming how **Federal Student Aid (FSA)** provides customer service to more than 42 million student loan borrowers. FSA customers will transition to a new processing and servicing environment in 2019, providing a customer support system that will give a better experience for students and benefits for taxpayers. The **FSA Next Generation Processing and Servicing Environment** will provide for a single data processing platform to house all student loan information while also allowing for customer account servicing to be performed either by a single contract servicer or by multiple contract servicers. This approach is expected to require separate acquisitions for database housing, system processing, and customer account servicing, allowing

for maximum flexibility. These changes to the servicing and processing environment are expected to provide the opportunity for additional companies to submit proposals for contracting with FSA.

The Department **issued a reset**, or pause, regarding two postsecondary regulations—Borrower Defense to Repayment, concerning forgiveness of student loan debt, and Gainful Employment, concerning educational programs that prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation. Two negotiated rulemaking committees have been established to rethink these two higher education regulations, with the intent to develop fair, effective, and improved regulations to protect individual borrowers from fraud, ensure accountability across institutions of higher education, and protect taxpayer interests. It is the Department's aim to protect students from predatory practices while also providing clear, fair, and balanced rules for colleges and universities to follow.

**Looking Ahead:** Year-round Pell grants were proposed in the 2018 President's Budget, which should safeguard and strengthen the Pell Grant program by level funding the discretionary appropriation and the year-round Pell grants. It is estimated that year-round Pell grants will increase aid available to eligible students by \$16.3 billion over 10 years.

In an effort to address the fact that student loan financing can be confusing for millions of students and families who want to invest in postsecondary education, the 2018 budget proposal lays out changes in repayment and loan forgiveness plans for new borrowers after July 1, 2018. The changes simplify loan repayment for students by replacing five different income-driven repayment plans with a single plan aimed at prioritizing expedited loan repayment for undergraduate borrowers. These changes will save taxpayers an estimated \$143 billion over the next decade while insulating current borrowers from changes to their loan programs. Proposed funding of \$492 million is intended to help close gaps among racial and socioeconomic groups in college enrollment and degree attainment by improving academic programs, institutional capacity and student support services for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Minority-Serving Institutions, and Hispanic-Serving Institutions. The proposed budget also provides \$808.3 million for

students from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are part of the **Federal TRIO Programs** and \$219 million for those in the **Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs**.

## STRENGTHENING THE QUALITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND USE OF EDUCATION DATA

The Department's **College Scorecard** supports postsecondary students by providing the public with clear, easily accessible, and critical information on college performance. Feedback from the intended users—students, parents, counselors, and others—helps determine the design of the site and the information it contains. The College Scorecard integrates self-reported data from institutions of higher education collected by NCES with administrative data from FSA and U.S. Department of Treasury's tax data. The Department established a data-sharing agreement with Treasury's Statistics of Income (SOI) for five years to obtain administrative earnings data to inform the College Scorecard. The Department will continue to provide SOI with individual-level data on several cohorts of students from all Title IV institutions and receive back institution-level data on salary after attending the institution. Most recently, the Department developed a user-requested comparison tool feature for the College Scorecard to allow users to compare multiple school profiles and data points at once.

The Department's **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)**, the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of student knowledge in various subject areas, is evolving to address schools' transition to digitally based assessments. Since 1969, NAEP has provided a common measure of student achievement across the country, continuing to explore new testing methods and question types that reflect the growing use of technology in education, and continuing to work to be paperless.

The Department's InformED initiative is intended to transform how the Department makes information available—and actionable—for internal users and for the public. Through a cross-office steering committee, InformED has led in the identification and development of high-priority open data initiatives. In addition, to ensure coordination around the collection, use, and

analysis of agency data, the Department has supported the Data Strategy Team with representatives from the Department's Office of Management, NCES, and Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development.

**Looking Ahead:** The President's Budget includes \$616.8 million for the Department's Institute of Education Sciences to continue to support state and local-based research, evaluations, and statistics that help educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders improve student outcomes. \$42 million is suggested for **Supporting Effective Educator Development** grants to provide evidence-based professional development activities and prepare teachers and principals from nontraditional preparation and certification routes to serve in high-need LEAs.

\$120 million is suggested for **Education Innovation and Research (EIR)** grants to develop and expand the evidence base for effective interventions and innovations responding to other education needs, including those identified by Secretarial priorities and those emerging from the field. This continued investment is particularly necessary in light of new ESEA requirements for states and school districts to support the use of evidence-based interventions in schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement or implementing targeted support and improvement plans. Robust Federal investment in identifying such interventions through the EIR program is essential to ensuring that LEAs have the tools they need to address the persistent challenges in their lowest-performing schools.

## REFORMING THE EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE DEPARTMENT

In response to President Trump's **Executive Order 13777, *Enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda***, the Department established a Regulatory Reform Task Force that has catalogued over 150 regulations and more than 1,700 items of policy guidance at the Department. The task force, comprised of agency political appointees and career staff, provided recommendations on which regulations and guidance documents to repeal, modify, or keep in an effort to ensure those items that remain adequately protect students while giving states,

institutions, teachers, parents, and students the flexibility to improve student achievement. Each principal office has made initial recommendations to the task force whether regulations and guidance under its purview meet the Order's criteria for repeal, replacement, or modification. As previously discussed, candidates for modification that have been identified include the Gainful Employment and Borrower Defense to Repayment, and a reset for these regulations is underway.

Also, in response to **Executive Order 13781, *Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch***, which requires development of a plan to enhance employee performance, the Department submitted an Agency Reform Plan to OMB, describing proposals the Department is considering. For the OMB submission, work groups considered the areas of: (a) reviewing potential reform areas, (b) determining if reform is needed or helpful and whether reform will benefit the agency and the public, and (c) developing proposals for implementing the reform if the work group determines it is needed or helpful. Agency staff continue to assess reform factors that include: new activities or functions the Department should initiate; ways the agency can be more efficient in meeting the needs of students, families, and education partners; activities or functions the Department should consider combining or modifying; agency activities or functions that duplicate what others are doing; and how the Department could best deliver the education services or products to students and educators.

**Looking Ahead:** The Department intends to continue to build on what's working well to create an agency that better serves America's students and educators. Beginning with its FY 2018 Annual Performance Report, the Department will report the appropriate performance data for performance indicators that will relate to deregulatory actions, as outlined in the **Executive Order 13777**. The results of this internal reform will better align and support the new strategic plan, which 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. The *FY 2018–22 Strategic Plan* will be published with the President's FY 2019 Budget.