

**THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S EXPENDITURES FOR CONFERENCES**  
**WITH EXPENSES IN EXCESS OF \$100,000 IN FISCAL YEAR 2012**

**(Implementation of the Office of Management and Budget's Memorandum 12-12)**

**INTRODUCTION**

This report summarizes the actions that the U.S. Department of Education (Department, ED) took to implement the conference-related provisions of Memorandum 12-12, "Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations," which the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued on May 11, 2012. The report describes the Department's efforts to reduce conference spending and the processes and controls the Department has in place to ensure that conferences are reviewed and approved at the appropriate level. Our goal is to continuously evaluate and improve our work and processes to ensure that we remain responsible stewards of public funds. We welcome the opportunity to share this information and receive suggestions on additional ways to reduce conference spending without compromising our obligation to carry out the Department's mission. Comments and questions regarding this report can be sent to [conferenceexpenses@ed.gov](mailto:conferenceexpenses@ed.gov).

**OVERVIEW**

The Department sponsored 28 conferences with expenses in excess of \$100,000 during fiscal year (FY) 2012. The total cost to the Department for these 28 conferences was just over \$10 million (\$10,029,980), which represents 0.015 percent of the Department's \$68.1 billion in discretionary appropriations (including discretionary Pell Grant funding).<sup>1</sup> The average cost of these conferences was \$358,214; with a median cost of \$284,433.

These conferences had a number of purposes and supported the Department's work in three content areas: elementary and secondary education, college and careers, and research and evaluation (see Figure 1). The purpose of the majority of these conferences was to update non-federal staff on key education issues, for example, updating state and local education staff who are responsible for collecting and reporting education data to the Department about changes in Department procedures for submitting data; providing information on changes in federal policies and procedures to student financial aid professionals who provide financial assistance for students in postsecondary and higher education; and training teachers, administrators, and others on effective approaches to improve literacy skills. Just less than a third of these conferences provided training to non-federal project managers who received competitive grants from the Department. This training focused on effective grants management, including required reporting on annual progress, implementing rigorous project evaluations, and adhering to federal cost principles. Such training was frequently combined with training from experts on topics aimed at supporting grantees to effectively and efficiently meet their project goals and maximize the impact of their projects. The purpose of two conferences was to

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<sup>1</sup> The Department's elementary and secondary programs annually serve nearly 16,000 school districts and approximately 49 million students attending more than 98,000 public schools and 28,000 private schools. Department programs also provide grant, loan, and work-study assistance to more than 15 million postsecondary students.

conduct awards or recognition ceremonies for outstanding schools, teachers, and students that the Department is authorized by statute or executive order to hold. The purpose of another two conferences was to gather input from experts on ED's investments and initiatives. Detailed information about each of these conferences is provided in the Appendix.

**Figure 1. Conferences with Expenses >\$100K  
Cost, Percent of Total Expenses, and Number of Conferences**

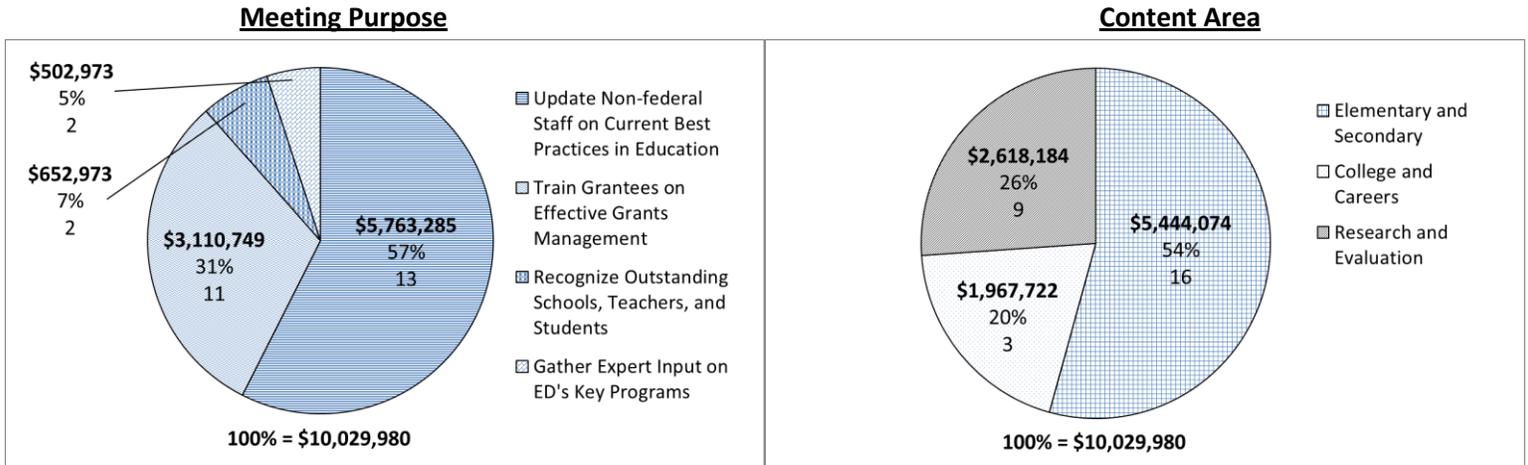
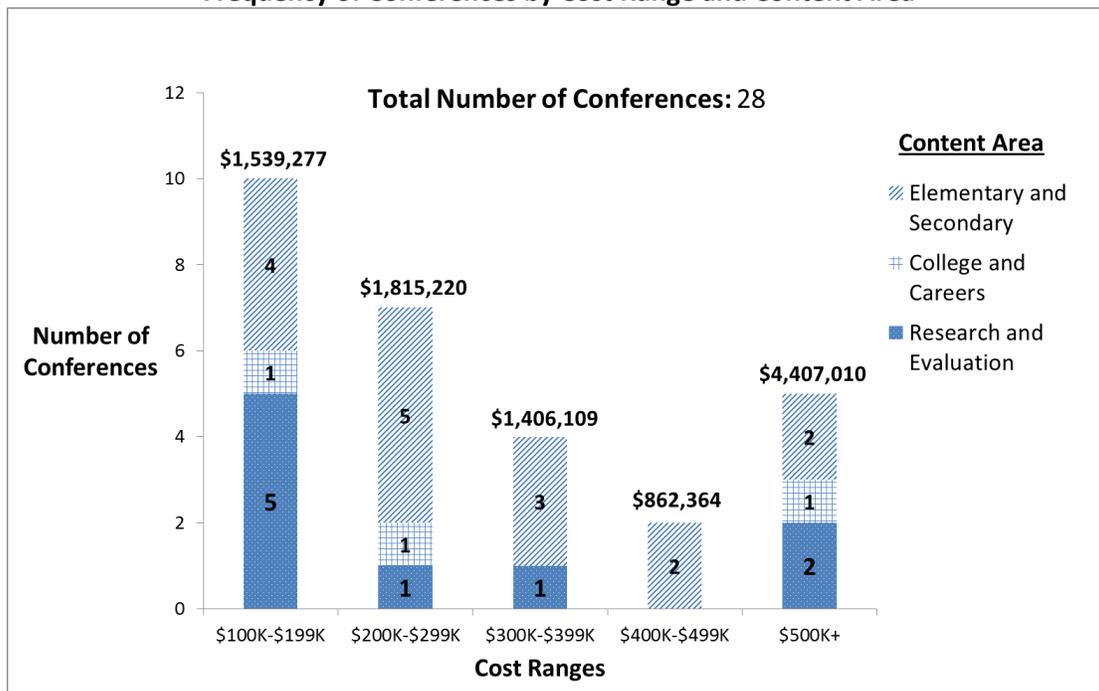


Figure 2 shows the number of conferences in each content area in each of five cost ranges beginning with \$100,000 - \$199,999. The figure shows that 60 percent of these conferences had expenses that were between \$100,000 and \$300,000.

**Figure 2. Conferences with Expenses >\$100K  
Frequency of Conferences by Cost Range and Content Area**



## **EFFORTS TO REDUCE CONFERENCE SPENDING**

Both before and after the issuance of OMB Memorandum 12-12, the Department took a number of steps to reduce spending for all conferences, including conferences with expenses that are less than \$100,000. These actions are outlined below.

### **Communication with ED Staff**

- Issued Department Directive on food, meeting, and travel expenses. On October 27, 2011, the Department issued a directive on the “Use of Appropriated Funds for Subsistence, Attendance at Meetings, and Invitational Travel.” The directive establishes the Department’s policies regarding the use of appropriated funds for meals, refreshments, and expenses of attendance at meetings for both government and non-government employees, as well as the policies and procedures for review, and when applicable, authorization and approval of official government travel by non-federal employees, often referred to as “invitational travel.”
- Issued Department Directive on using Department facilities for conferences. On March 20, 2012, the Department issued a directive on “Scheduling and Use of Headquarters Auditoriums for ED-Sponsored Conferences and Meetings.” The directive requires offices to use the Department’s two auditoriums for Department-sponsored conferences occurring in Washington, DC with an expected attendance of 250 or less, unless a waiver is obtained from the Department’s Office of Management.
- Held meetings with senior Department officials. Shortly after OMB Memorandum 12-12 was issued, senior officials met on May 30, 2012 to review the memorandum and discuss the steps the Department would take to implement the memorandum. Senior staff were regularly updated on the conference review process and the actions they should take to reduce conference spending.
- Provided training for ED staff. Comprehensive training sessions on prudent conference planning were held for employees involved in planning and implementing conferences. Contracting officers, program managers, program attorneys, and budget analysts attended these training sessions. The training sessions were held for each office to encourage questions and discussion, as well as to elicit feedback on how to effectively streamline the conference review process.

### **Communication with Grantees**

- Issued memo on conference spending to all grantees. A new “Memorandum to ED Grantees Regarding the Use of Grant Funds for Conferences and Meetings” was developed and is included in all new and continuation grant awards (beginning June 26, 2012). The memo reminds grantees of the cost principles for federal grants and encourages them to consider, among other things, whether there are more effective or efficient alternatives to a face-to-face meeting (e.g., webinars, video conferencing) that can achieve the desired results at a lower cost.

- Met with grantees. Senior staff spoke at meetings of the Department's grantees to review ED's policies regarding the use of grant funds for conferences and to answer questions about the practical application of federal cost principles to grantee conferences.

### **Communication with Contractors**

- Clarified contract language on food and travel expenses. The Department modified its contract language to require contractors to receive written consent from the applicable contracting officer prior to incurring any costs for food or travel.
- Revised contract language clarifying allowable conference expenses and prior approval of hotel contracts. The Department added language to all new contracts clarifying allowable contractor compensation costs (e.g., no room upgrades for Department or contract staff, no dual compensation from the Department and another source) and requiring that a subject-matter expert on the Department's Event Services team review all hotel/venue contracts prior to the final agreement between the hotel and the contractor.
- Conducted a meeting and webinar for Department contractors. The Department held a meeting and webinar for contractors who are currently providing contract support for Department conferences to ensure that they understood the Department's policies regarding allowable conference expenses. Department staff reviewed the new contract language regarding food and travel expenses and ED's process for approving hotel/venue contracts (see above).

### **PROCESS TO REVIEW CONFERENCES**

The Department has established a consistent and thorough process to review and, if appropriate, approve conferences. Following the release of OMB Memorandum 12-12, Department officials closely reviewed this process and identified areas where it could be supplemented with additional checks and balances for conferences with expenses in excess of \$100,000 (see description below).

The Assistant Secretary (or equivalent) of each office in the Department determines whether a conference is necessary and the most cost effective means to meet the Department's objectives. If there is a decision to hold the conference, the Executive Officer of the office sponsoring the conference reviews and, if appropriate, approves conferences with expenses less than \$25,000. Conferences with expenses greater than \$25,000 must be reviewed and approved by a contracting officer in the Contracts and Acquisitions Management office. These approving officials review costs to determine, among other things, if they comply with Department policies regarding the use of appropriated funds for food and travel, and to ensure that the costs support a fair and reasonable price. In order to determine whether prices are fair and reasonable, one or more comparisons of the prices proposed by offerors is compared with historical prices, published market prices, the Government Cost Estimate, and analysis of any other relevant information in an offeror's proposal. If there are questions regarding the appropriation(s) supporting the expense, advice is sought from the Office of the General Counsel. Finally, for Department-sponsored conferences occurring in Washington, DC with an expected attendance of 250 or less, the conference must be held in Department facilities unless a waiver is obtained from the

Department's Office of Management.<sup>2</sup> For larger conferences in Washington, DC, offices are encouraged to consider other government-owned or government-provided facilities before considering non-governmental options.

Conferences with expenses greater than \$100,000. For conferences with expenses that are expected to be more than \$100,000, the Department established a second level of review that builds on the review described above. This second level of review is conducted by a cross-Department review team that provides recommendations to the Deputy Secretary for his review and, if appropriate, approval of these conferences. The review team includes staff from Contracts and Acquisitions Management to ensure that costs are reasonable and necessary; Event Services to ensure that costs related to hotels/venues are reasonable; the Office of the General Counsel to ensure that the justifications for the expenses are legally sufficient and are allowable based on statutory and regulatory requirements; and the Office of the Deputy Secretary to ensure that policy issues are raised and addressed. This second-level review considers additional information submitted by the office sponsoring the conference, which includes, among other things, a statement of how the conference will advance the Department's mission and an assurance from the Assistant Secretary (or equivalent) that the conference is necessary, that alternatives to a face-to-face meeting (e.g., webinars, teleconferences) were considered, and that steps were taken to reduce or minimize costs.

The Deputy Secretary considers the recommendations of the review team and may request additional information or suggest changes to the conference to reduce costs before deciding to approve or disapprove the conference. The Deputy Secretary also reviews conferences with expenses that are expected to be more than \$400,000 to ensure that there is a compelling reason to support spending these funds on a single conference. For conferences that are expected to exceed \$500,000, a waiver request is prepared for the Secretary to review and consider, and if appropriate, approve. The waiver request outlines the exceptional circumstances that exist to support that a conference is the most cost-effective option to achieve a compelling purpose.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Department's policy is to maximize the use of government-owned or government-provided facilities for Department-sponsored conferences and meetings.

<sup>3</sup> OMB Memorandum 12-12 states that an agency shall not incur net expenses greater than \$500,000 from its own funds on a single conference unless the agency head determines that "exceptional circumstances exist whereby spending in excess of \$500,000 on a single conference is the most cost-effective option to achieve a compelling purpose."

## APPENDIX

### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S EXPENDITURES FOR CONFERENCES IN FY 2012 INFORMATION ON EACH CONFERENCE WITH EXPENSES IN EXCESS OF \$100,000

At the time OMB issued Memorandum 12-12, the Department did not have in place a central system to track the requested conference information across the Department. Nevertheless, to provide as much information as is available related to the Department's conference activities, we asked offices to compile and provide information on conferences with expenses exceeding \$100,000 that were held prior to the issuance of the OMB Memorandum.<sup>4</sup>

We used the definition of "conferences" in OMB's Memorandum 12-12 to identify the events to include in this report. We excluded on-site peer reviews<sup>5</sup> in which expert reviewers meet in person to discuss and make recommendations to the Department on competitive grant applications. We also excluded meetings that are necessary to ensure that the National Assessment of Educational Performance (NAEP) is conducted in a valid and reliable manner.<sup>6</sup> Rather than being training or educational events, these activities are necessary to conduct standard Department functions and, in the case of NAEP, are necessary for the Department to meet a statutory obligation it is directly responsible for carrying out. Therefore, we reviewed these events to ensure that costs were reasonable and necessary but are not reporting them here.

Given that the OMB Memorandum 12-12 was issued in the middle of FY 2012, contracts had been awarded and funds obligated for the majority of FY 2012 Department-sponsored conferences. Therefore, there were limitations on the changes that could be made to contracts at this late stage in the procurement process without adverse monetary consequences. Furthermore, as funds were already obligated, we did not seek spending waivers from the Secretary for conferences exceeding \$500,000. Nevertheless, we reviewed the conference costs, made contract modifications where possible, and learned important lessons for the process moving forward.

What follows is detailed information on the 28 Department-sponsored conferences with expenses exceeding \$100,000 that were held in FY 2012.

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<sup>4</sup> Because prior to May 2012 the Department had no central system to gather and store information related to conferences exceeding OMB Memorandum 12-12 cost thresholds, offices had to search existing records and gather available information about their conference spending retrospectively, from the beginning of the fiscal year to May 2012. It is possible that despite offices' best efforts, we may not have captured all responsive conferences held prior to the issuance of OMB Memorandum 12-12.

<sup>5</sup> The majority of the Department's peer review meetings are conducted virtually via teleconference. The on-site peer review meetings that were held in FY 2012 were conducted in accordance with the program office's determination that an on-site, face-to-face review was necessary due to the complexity of the application and the review process.

<sup>6</sup> This includes, for example, meetings that the contractor held to train field workers to administer NAEP, as well as meetings to obtain input from experts on item accuracy, grade-level appropriateness, absence of bias, and other technical requirements.

## FY2012 Department of Education Expenditures for Conferences in Excess of \$100,000

### Elementary and Secondary Education

#### 1. National Blue Ribbon Schools Awards Ceremony

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 11/14/2011 – 11/15/2011
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$343,782
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** The purpose of the National Blue Ribbon Schools Awards Ceremony is to recognize public and private elementary, middle, and high schools in which students perform at very high levels or where significant improvements are being made in students' levels of academic achievement. *Blue Ribbon Schools* are highly regarded by educators and other community leaders. This annual awards ceremony was attended by principals and teachers from across the country.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 4
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 800

#### 2. Office of Migrant Education Annual Conference

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 11/14/2011 – 11/16/2011
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$131,000
- **Location:** Nashville, TN
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This conference brought together state, district, and school officials who manage programs that serve migrant students. Participants focused on effective practices to improve the continuity of educational services for migrant students with a particular focus on interstate and intrastate coordination efforts to help increase graduation rates for migrant students.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 3
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 424

#### 3. Project Directors' Meeting for the High School Graduation Initiative Program

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 12/8/2011 – 12/9/2011
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$297,680
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This meeting brought together the project directors who are currently implementing competitive grants awarded by the Department under the High School Graduation Initiative program. The purpose of the meeting was to provide grantees with information on effective grants management, performance reporting requirements, and strategies to meet the goals of the program.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 8
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 65

#### 4. Project Directors' Meeting for the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Programs

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 3/6/2012 – 3/8/2012
  - **Total Conference Expenses:** \$283,866
  - **Location:** Chicago, IL
  - **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This meeting brought together the project directors who are currently implementing grants awarded by the Department under the Striving Readers formula and discretionary grant programs. The purpose of the meeting was to provide grantees with information on effective grants management and performance reporting requirements, as well as information to further the development of State Literacy Plans.
  - **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 1
  - **Total Conference Attendees:** 141
- 5. Arts in Education Program Directors'/Evaluators' Annual Meeting**
- **Date(s) of Conference:** 3/14/2012 – 3/15/2012
  - **Total Conference Expenses:** \$131,083
  - **Location:** Arlington, VA
  - **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This conference brought together the project directors, project evaluators, and project staff who are currently implementing grants awarded by the Department under the Arts Education program. The meeting focused on effective grants management, evaluation design, and effective strategies for preparing teachers to implement arts education in the classroom.
  - **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 1
  - **Total Conference Attendees:** 175
- 6. Promise Neighborhoods Project Directors' Meeting**
- **Date(s) of Conference:** 3/26/2012 – 3/27/2012
  - **Total Conference Expenses:** \$108,588
  - **Location:** Washington, DC
  - **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This meeting brought together the project directors and their staff who are currently implementing competitive grants awarded by the Department under the Promise Neighborhoods program. Department staff provided information about grant requirements and regulations, and experts provided guidance on building strong systems of supports and services to improve the well-being and long-term success of children, youth, and families served by the grantees.
  - **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 30
  - **Total Conference Attendees:** 250
- 7. EDFacts Coordinators' Spring Meeting**
- **Date(s) of Conference:** 4/12/2012 – 4/13/2012
  - **Total Conference Expenses:** \$226,477
  - **Location:** Washington, DC
  - **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This meeting brought together state personnel who are responsible for providing K-12 data to the Department

(e.g., student achievement data, high school graduation data) to update them on new requirements, policies, and procedures related to their data submissions. The data are used for planning and policy development, as well as to make management and budget decisions that will improve student outcomes.

- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 110
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 125

**8. Labor Management Conference “Collaborating to Transform the Teaching Profession”**

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 5/23/2012 – 5/24/2012
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$700,023
- **Location:** Cincinnati, OH
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED’s Mission:** State and district education leaders from across the country met to focus on productive labor-management collaboration. The conference centered on changing the way that school administrators, board members, and union leaders work together to improve teaching and learning.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 500
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 615

**9. U.S. Presidential Scholars Program National Recognition Weekend**

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 6/16/2012 – 6/19/2012
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$309,191
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED’s Mission:** This event recognizes and honors some of our nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors, including students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative, and performing arts. Each year, up to 141 students are named as Presidential Scholars, one of the nation's highest honors for high school students.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 174
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 650

**10. Building the Capacity of Charter Schools: Effectively Serving Students with Disabilities**

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 6/19/2012
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$231,507
- **Location:** Minneapolis, MN
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED’s Mission:** This conference provided information to public charter schools on effectively serving students with disabilities. The conference was scheduled to coincide with the National Charter Schools Conference.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 9
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 138

**11. Investing in Innovation Annual Project Directors’ Meeting**

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 7/19/2012 – 7/20/2012

- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$195,427
- **Location:** Crystal City, VA
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This meeting brought together project directors, project evaluators, and project staff who are currently implementing grants awarded by the Department under the Investing in Innovation program. The meeting focused on effective grants management, evaluation design, and implementation.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 1
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 330

#### **12. The Office of Special Education Program's 2012 Project Directors' Conference**

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 7/23/2012 – 7/25/2012
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$458,442
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This conference brought together project directors and their staff who are currently implementing competitive grants awarded by the Department to improve services for students with disabilities. Grantees received information and support to meet project goals and ensure that funds are administered in accordance with federal cost principles, as well as information to improve their general knowledge and maximize project impact. The conference focused on key topics that affect students with disabilities including, for example, dropout prevention, early learning, teacher effectiveness, and using technology to improve academic achievement.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 9
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 1,041

#### **13. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Summer Institute**

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 7/30/2012 – 8/1/2012
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$947,964
- **Location:** New Orleans, LA
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This Institute brought together organizations that receive federal funds to provide students, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools, with academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours. The Department provides funds to states for such programs and each state, in turn, conducts a competition to award grants to local educational agencies, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and other educational entities to provide after-school enrichment activities. Participants at this Institute received information on strategies and programs that help students meet state and local academic standards, as well as programs that provide enrichment activities that complement students' regular academic programs.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 80
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 3,200

#### **14. National Comprehensive Literacy Institute**

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 7/30/2012 – 8/2/2012

- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$285,991
- **Location:** Anaheim, CA
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This Institute brought together teachers, administrators, and state education leaders to learn about effective, research-based approaches to improve literacy skills for students from birth through grade 12. A number of the sessions focused on effective reading strategies for English language learners and students with disabilities.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 45
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 866

**15. 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention Summit**

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 8/6/2012 – 8/7/2012
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$389,131
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This Summit included the experts from the previous Bullying Prevention Summits that occurred in 2010 and 2011. The purpose of this third Summit was to obtain feedback on the Department's implementation of its bullying prevention initiative and to suggest next steps the Department should take to prevent bullying. The Summit was scheduled to coincide with the Office of Safe and Healthy Schools National Conference so that a number of the experts participating in the Summit also could participate and speak at the national conference.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 43
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 250

**16. Office of Safe and Healthy Schools National Conference**

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 8/8/2012 – 8/9/2012
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$403,922
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This conference brought together state and local officials to learn about effective strategies and programs to improve the conditions for learning, with a specific focus on school discipline, gender-based violence, behavioral health, bullying prevention, and school safety.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 34
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 678

## College and Career

### 1. FIPSE Project Directors' Meeting

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 11/7/2011
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$164,000
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This meeting brought together project directors who are currently implementing grants awarded by the Department under the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education program. The meeting provided an opportunity for grantees to meet one-on-one with their assigned Department program officer to discuss the progress of project activities, objectives and goals, budgets and expenditures, evaluations, and reporting.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 0
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 162

### 2. Federal Student Aid (FSA) 2011 Fall Conference

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 11/29/2011 – 12/2/2011
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$1,599,023
- **Location:** Las Vegas, NV
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This conference brought together professionals who provide federal financial assistance for students in postsecondary and higher education. The conference provided up-to-date information on student financial aid programs and changes in federal policies and procedures. The school financial aid professionals trained at this conference are responsible for administering \$150 billion in total annual aid to students. There were over 2,000 institutions represented at this conference.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 199
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 6,997

### 3. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Annual Conference

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 9/25/2012 – 9/27/2012
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$204,699
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This conference brought together HBCU Presidents and Chancellors, Congressional members, academic officers, federal agency representatives, and HBCU sponsors and partners to focus on building the capacity of HBCUs to advance their respective missions.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 15
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 1,000

## Research and Evaluation

1. **Regional Educational Laboratory Opening Conference**
  - **Date(s) of Conference:** 1/24/2012 – 1/26/2012
  - **Total Conference Expenses:** \$188,000
  - **Location:** Washington, DC
  - **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This conference brought together key staff from each of the 9 Regional Educational Labs that were awarded new contracts in 2012. The purpose of this meeting was to provide information and direction to the contractors regarding ED's requirements for these contracts. The Regional Educational Labs work in partnership with states, districts, and others to use data and research to improve academic outcomes for students.
  - **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 77
  - **Total Conference Attendees:** 139
  
2. **Winter National Forum on Education Statistics/Management Information Systems Conference**
  - **Date(s) of Conference:** 2/13/2012 – 2/17/2012
  - **Total Conference Expenses:** \$531,000
  - **Location:** San Diego, CA
  - **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This conference provided states, districts, and schools with advice on the collection, maintenance, and use of elementary and secondary education data. Education researchers, policymakers, and data system managers from state and local districts discussed technical and policy issues related to the collection, maintenance, and use of education data to improve the quality of education.
  - **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 126
  - **Total Conference Attendees:** 627
  
3. **National Center on Education Statistics' Testing Integrity Symposium**
  - **Date(s) of Conference:** 2/28/2012
  - **Total Conference Expenses:** \$172,029
  - **Location:** Washington, DC
  - **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This Symposium provided information to state-level administrators, policymakers, academics, and representatives from education associations and commercial testing companies on the prevention, detection, and investigation of academic testing irregularities, as well as testing integrity practices and procedures for on-line and computer based assessments. Panelists included experts from the academic community, the testing industry, and state and local education agencies.
  - **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 16
  - **Total Conference Attendees:** 120
  
4. **Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Coordinator Workshop and State Data Conference**
  - **Date(s) of Conference:** 4/30/2012 – 5/3/2012

- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$364,005
  - **Location:** Bethesda, MD
  - **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This conference provided information to state coordinators who are responsible for reporting information to the Department from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution in the state that participates in federal student financial aid programs. The IPEDS data system collects data needed to describe and analyze trends in postsecondary education in the United States, in terms of the numbers of students enrolled, staff employed, dollars expended, and degrees earned.
  - **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 130
  - **Total Conference Attendees:** 160
5. **Technical Working Group Meeting for the Study of the Implementation of Title I/II Programs**
- **Date(s) of Conference:** 5/31/2012
  - **Total Conference Expenses:** \$113,842
  - **Location:** Washington, DC
  - **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** Experts on the technical working group provided advice on data collection, sampling, and baseline analyses for the study on the implementation of the Title I and Title II programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).
  - **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 8
  - **Total Conference Attendees:** 26
6. **Program for the International Student Assessment (PISA) Summer Conference**
- **Date(s) of Conference:** 6/21/2012 – 6/22/2012
  - **Total Conference Expenses:** \$149,830
  - **Location:** Washington, DC
  - **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This conference brought together schools selected for the 2012 PISA study to provide information on the importance of the PISA project, encourage school participation in the PISA study, and facilitate communication between the contractor and schools on administering PISA. PISA, an international assessment of 15-year-olds, is part of the mission of the Department's National Center on Education Statistics to track the progress of students in comparison with others around the world.
  - **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 95
  - **Total Conference Attendees:** 120
7. **Summer Research Training Institute: Single Case Intervention Research Design and Analysis**
- **Date(s) of Conference:** 6/25/2012 – 6/29/2012
  - **Total Conference Expenses:** \$185,478
  - **Location:** Madison, WI
  - **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** The purpose of this Institute was to increase the number of researchers who are highly qualified to conduct single-case experimental design investigations to study the effectiveness of interventions. Single-case designs are often the only applicable experimental design for

research with children and youth with more severe disabilities such as autism, intellectual disabilities, and sensory impairments; currently, a limited number of scientists have the knowledge to conduct rigorous studies using these methods.

- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 41
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 42

**8. National Data Institute: Using Federal Data to Support Research on Science, Engineering, and Post-Secondary Education**

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 7/8/2012 – 7/14/2012
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$285,000
- **Location:** Alexandria, VA
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This Institute provided intensive training on using postsecondary data from the National Center on Education Statistics (NCES) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) to address key questions in the social sciences and education. Participants included university faculty and doctoral students, as well as researchers, who will take their knowledge of these federal datasets to conduct their own research and instruct their students on the wealth of data available through NCES and NSF.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 60
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 65

**9. Summer National Forum on Education Statistics/STATS-DC Data Conference**

- **Date(s) of Conference:** 7/9/2012 – 7/13/2012
- **Total Conference Expenses:** \$629,000
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Description of How the Conference Advanced ED's Mission:** This conference provided states, districts, and schools with advice on the collection, maintenance, and use of elementary and secondary education data. Education researchers, policymakers, and data system managers from states and districts discussed technical and policy issues related to the collection, maintenance, and use of education data to improve the quality of education.
- **Number of Attendees Whose Travel or Other Conference Expenses Were Paid for By ED:** 144
- **Total Conference Attendees:** 800