

Archived Information

Helping Teachers Close The Achievement Gap

"Everywhere I go, I'm inspired by hard-working teachers who are committed to doing whatever it takes to leave no child behind. And as we move forward, we must do a better job making sure we have our best teachers in our neediest classrooms."

-- U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings

Teachers are the key to improving student performance and closing achievement gaps. Good teachers have helped students make great progress toward becoming proficient in reading and math. More must be done to ensure teachers have the tools they need to help their students achieve.

Math and science teachers deserve proven, research-based instructional methods to help them reach their students. And teachers who make real progress in closing the achievement gap or who choose to serve in challenging environments deserve to be recognized and rewarded.

Through **Building on Results: A Blueprint for Strengthening the *No Child Left Behind Act***, educators who make great progress will be rewarded through a **Teacher Incentive Fund**. Math teachers will be trained in **scientifically proven instruction**. And students struggling in reading or math in later grades will receive **targeted and intensive intervention**.

- ❖ **Teacher Incentive Fund**—The Fund will help states and districts reward teachers and principals who make progress in raising student achievement levels or closing achievement gaps, as well as educators who choose to serve in the neediest schools.
- ❖ **Math Achievement**—To improve math achievement, the President's *Math Now for Elementary School Students* and *Math Now for Middle School Students* programs will provide competitive grants to train teachers in proven instructional methods, including upcoming findings of the National Math Panel.
- ❖ **Science Achievement**—Beginning in 2008-09, disaggregated results from science assessments will factor into state accountability calculations, with grade-level proficiency expected for all students in science by the 2019-20 school year.
- ❖ **Reading Achievement**—The Striving Readers program, which provides intensive intervention to students in grades 6-12 who are struggling to reach grade level in reading / language arts, will be expanded to reach more students. We will continue to invest in Reading First, the largest, most successful early reading initiative ever undertaken in this country.
- ❖ **Rural School Districts**—New teachers in small, rural school districts will have additional time to meet Highly Qualified Teacher requirements. Larger rural districts will have the flexibility to use federal funds that are currently available to only the smallest districts. Finally, larger per-child Supplemental Educational Services (SES) amounts will be provided for qualified rural students.