

Press Release: Obama Administration Seeks to Elevate Teaching Profession, Duncan to Launch RESPECT Project: Teacher-Led National Conversation

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The Obama Administration's 2013 proposed budget includes a new \$5 billion competitive program to challenge states and districts to work with teachers, unions, colleges of education and other stakeholders to comprehensively reform the field of teaching. The proposal touches on every phase of teaching from training and tenure to compensation and career opportunities.

Today, Education Secretary Arne Duncan will hold a town hall meeting with teachers to launch the RESPECT Project, a national conversation led by active classroom teachers working temporarily for the Department to help inform the administration's proposal and the broader effort to reform teaching. RESPECT is an acronym that stands for **Recognizing Educational Success, Professional Excellence and Collaborative Teaching**.

"Our goal is to work with teachers and principals in rebuilding their profession and to elevate the teacher voice in federal, state and local education policy. Our larger goal is to make teaching not only America's most important profession, but also America's most respected profession," Duncan said.

The administration's proposal builds on the President's State of the Union speech when he said: "Give [schools] the resources to keep good teachers on the job, and reward the best ones. In return, grant schools flexibility: To teach with creativity and passion; to stop teaching to the test; and to replace teachers who just aren't helping kids learn. That's a bargain worth making."

Details of the program will be developed through budget negotiations with Congress and the competition process itself, but the proposal considers a broad range of reforms:

- Reforming teacher colleges and making them more selective.
- Creating new career ladders for teachers.
- Linking earnings more closely to performance rather than simply longevity or credentials.
- Compensating teachers for working in challenging learning environments.
- Making teacher salaries more competitive with other professions.
- Improving professional development and providing time for collaboration.
- Providing teachers with greater autonomy in exchange for greater accountability.
- Building evaluation systems based on multiple measures, not just test scores.
- Reforming tenure to raise the bar, protect good teachers, and promote accountability.

"This effort will require the entire educational sector—states, districts, unions, principals, schools of education—to change, and teachers have to lead the change," Duncan said.

"We need to change society's views of teaching—from the factory model of yesterday to the professional model of tomorrow—where teachers are revered as thinkers, leaders and nation-builders. No other profession carries a greater burden for securing our economic future. No other profession holds out more promise of opportunity to children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. And no other profession deserves more respect," he said.