



RESPECT Program

The Challenge

In order to prepare our young people for an increasingly competitive global economy, the United States must do more to ensure that teaching is highly respected and supported as a profession, that accomplished, effective teachers are guiding students' learning in every classroom, and that schools are dynamic and innovative workplaces in which all employees strive to improve student outcomes and close achievement gaps.

Despite the fact that teaching is an intellectually demanding, rigorous, and complex job, American educators are too often not treated like professionals. They typically receive little real-world classroom experience before certification, and once in the profession, they are generally not effectively supported, appropriately compensated, or promoted based on their accomplishments. Too often, teachers find themselves in schools with cultures where inflexible work rules discourage innovation and restrict their opportunities to work together and take on leadership responsibilities. As a result, many of America's brightest college graduates never consider entering the field, others leave prematurely, and those who stay can find themselves working against an outmoded system to meet new, higher expectations. In the end, too many students, especially those on the wrong side of our nation's persistent achievement gaps, are not getting the education they need to thrive in the 21st century.

The Vision

It is time for a radical transformation of the profession. We must develop pioneering innovations in the way we recruit, select, prepare, credential, support, advance, and compensate teachers and school leaders. As in other high-performing countries, our schools of education must be more selective, applied, and rigorous. To attract more top students into the field, we must dramatically increase potential earnings for teachers and principals, and we must create career and leadership opportunities that value success in the classroom as highly as success in management and administration. Rather than linking compensation solely to years of service or graduate credit and degrees, pay should reflect the quality of educators' work (as measured, in part, by their students' performance) and the scope of their professional

responsibilities. To ensure that the students who need the best teachers and school leaders get them, salaries should also reflect work in high-need schools or in hard-to-staff subjects.

To transform the teaching profession, we envision a school model and culture built on shared responsibility and on-going collaboration with colleagues. We propose fundamental increases in professional opportunities and compensation, matched by equally dramatic changes in how the profession is organized, supported, and held accountable for outcomes. We see schools staffed with transformational principals who are fully engaged in training and supporting teachers, and who share leadership with the accomplished teachers in their schools. School leaders must be creative schedulers, providing teachers with time in the workday to collaborate and bringing resources together to provide authentic, job-based professional learning experiences.

Teachers and leaders work every day with our nation's children – an intrinsically rewarding and often joyful occupation. Our vision is to redesign the profession and school environments to unleash this joy, to foster innovation, and to deliver the outcomes that our children deserve and our country's future demands. Moving towards this vision will require tough choices, but the urgency for change and the opportunity for real and meaningful progress have never been greater.

Our Response

To support the work of transforming teaching into a 21st century profession, the U.S. Department of Education has launched a project called RESPECT, which stands for Recognizing Educational Success, Professional Excellence, and Collaborative Teaching. Our goal is to work with teachers, school and district leaders, teachers' associations and unions, and state and national education organizations to spark a dialogue that results in strong policy and a sustainable transformation of the teaching profession. Our larger goal is to bring a new generation of well-prepared, bright and capable men and women into the classroom from a diversity of backgrounds, lift up the accomplished teachers in our classrooms today, ensure that schools are led by strong teams, and establish teaching as a respected profession on a par with medicine, law, and engineering. Society's most important work should also be society's most valued work.

To bring this vision to fruition, the President proposed a new \$5 billion grant program to support states and districts that commit to pursuing bold reforms at every stage of the teaching profession. Under this program, funds would be awarded competitively to states with participating districts, and, in non-participating states, to consortia of districts." The program would have six key elements.

Key Elements of a Program

1. Attracting Top-Tier Talent into Education and Preparing them for Success: Attract a high performing and diverse pool of people to become teachers and leaders in education – whether new graduates or career switchers – and ensure that they are well prepared to be successful in the school environments in which they will work.
2. Creating a Professional Career Continuum with Competitive Compensation: Retain, promote, and maximize the talents of accomplished teachers and leaders, while creating well-supported roles for novices, by creating career pathways that offer competitive compensation and opportunities for increasingly impactful roles and responsibilities, whether educators choose to stay in the classroom or move into administration.
3. Creating Conditions for Success: Create schools whose climates and cultures, use of time, approaches to staffing, use of technology, deployment of support services, and engagement of families and communities are optimized to continuously improve outcomes for the students they serve.
4. Evaluating and Supporting the Development and Success of Teachers and Leaders: Improve the effectiveness of teachers and leaders by highlighting and sharing the practices of those who successfully improve student outcomes; supporting continuous improvements in instructional practice for everyone, especially those in the middle; and dismissing those who (despite support) are not effective in improving student outcomes.
5. Getting the Best Educators to the Students who Need them Most: Create an education system that provides the highest need students (including low-income students, minority students, English learners, and students with disabilities) with the most effective teachers and principals, and provides access to other necessary resources (such as technology, instructional materials, and social, health, and nutritional services) to support every student's academic success.
6. Sustaining a New and Improved System: Use the funds from this grant to transition to a significantly more effective and efficient educational system that is sustainable after the grant is over.