SUMMARY OF OBAMA-DUNCAN BLUEPRINT FOR THE
REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

President Obama and Education Secretary Duncan want to re-envision the federal government's role in K-12 public education and have produced *The Blueprint for Reform* laying out this vision, their goals and objectives for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

PRIORITY - College and career-ready students.

- Rigorous college- and career- ready standards –
  - English language arts & mathematics standards: States may choose to upgrade their existing standards or work with other states to create state-developed common standards that build toward college- and career-readiness.
  - Science and other standards: States will continue to implement statewide science standards and aligned assessments in specific grade spans, and may include such assessments in their accountability system.
  - English language proficiency standards: States will develop and adopt statewide English language proficiency standards for English Learners, aligned so that they reflect the academic language necessary to master the state's content standards.
- Rigorous and fair accountability and support at every level –
  - States will ensure its statewide system of accountability rewards schools and districts for progress and success, requires rigorous interventions in the lowest-performing schools and districts, and allows local flexibility to determine the appropriate improvement and support strategies for most schools.
  - Therefore states must -
    - have data systems to gather information critical to determine how schools and districts are progressing in preparing students to graduate from high school college- and career-ready;
    - collect and make available public data relating to student academic achievement and growth in English language arts and mathematics, student academic achievement in science, including graduation rates, college enrollment rates, and rates of college enrollment without need for remediation and disaggregated by race, gender, ethnicity, disability status, English Learner status, and family income;
    - collect other key information about teaching and learning conditions, such as student, teacher and school leader attendance; disciplinary incidents; or student, parent, or school staff surveys about their school experience.
- Measuring and supporting schools, districts and states –
  - By 2020 all students graduating or on track to graduate from high school will be ready for college and a career.
  - States will receive funds to design innovative programs to reward high-poverty Reward schools and Reward districts.
- Building capacity for support at every level -
  - Districts will set aside a portion of funds under this program to improve student performance in high-need schools, by implementing effective school improvement strategies and carrying out strategies to ensure the equitable distribution of effective teachers and school leaders. Reward districts will be allowed flexibility.
- Fostering comparability and equity –
  - Districts will ensure that their high-poverty schools receive state and local funding levels comparable to those received by their low-poverty schools.
  - Districts that use their resources to provide strong support to disadvantaged students will be given additional flexibility to provide such support.
  - States will be asked to measure and report on resource disparities and develop a plan to tackle them.

> **Reward schools and districts** will be identified and receive recognition if they successfully reach performance targets, significantly increase student performance for all students, close achievement gaps, or turn around the lowest-performing schools.
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> **Challenge schools** are the lowest-performing 5% of schools in each state, based on student academic achievement, student growth, and graduation rates, that are not making progress to improve and will be required to implement one of four school turnaround models.

- Assessing achievement –
  - States will receive formula grants to develop and implement high-quality assessments aligned with college- and career-ready standards in English language arts and mathematics that accurately measure student academic achievement and growth, provide feedback to support and improve teaching, and measure school success and progress.
  - States may use funds to develop or implement high-quality, rigorous statewide assessments in other academic or career and technical subjects, high school course assessments, English language proficiency assessments, and interim or formative assessments.
  - In 2015, formula funds will be available only to states that are implementing assessments based on college- and career-ready standards that are common to a significant number of states.
  - Competitive grants available to consortia of states and other entities working in partnership with states, for research on, or development and improvement of assessments in such areas as science, history, or foreign languages, career and technical subjects, universally designed assessments and for English Learners and students with disabilities.
- School turnaround grants –
  - States will receive formula funds and may reserve funds to build capacity to improve low-performing schools, including developing and implementing effective school quality review teams to assist schools in identifying school needs and supporting school improvement.
  - States will award remainder of funds competitively to districts or partnerships of districts and nonprofit organizations to implement one of the intervention models to ensure significant changes in the operation, governance, staffing, or instructional program of a school.
  - Districts and their partners will receive 3-year awards to fully and effectively implement one of these intervention models, and will be eligible for two additional years of funding to support a school's ongoing improvement if the school is showing progress.
  - A portion of School Turnaround Grants will be reserved for additional activities designed to enhance state, district, and nonprofit capacity to improve schools, such as investing in model school quality review teams to identify school needs and support school improvement.

> **INTERVENTION MODELS**
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> **Transformation model:** Replace the principal, strengthen staffing, implement a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement new governance and flexibility.
> **Turnaround model:** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the school staff, implement a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement new governance structure.
> **Restart model:** Convert or close and reopen the school under the management of an effective charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization.
> **School closure model:** Close the school and enroll students who attended it in other, higher-performing schools in the district.

PRIORITY - Great teacher and leaders in every school.
- Effective teacher & principals –
  - States and districts will put in place specific policies and systems, including:
    - Statewide definitions of "effective teacher," "effective principal," "highly effective teacher," and "highly effective principal," developed in collaboration with teachers, principals, and other stakeholders, that are based in significant part on student growth and also include other measures, such as classroom observations of practice.
    - State-level data systems that link information on teacher and principal preparation programs to the job placement, student growth, and retention outcomes of their graduates.
    - District-level evaluation systems that (i) meaningfully differentiate teachers and principals by effectiveness across at least three performance levels; (ii) are consistent with state's definitions of "effective" and "highly effective" teacher and principal; (iii) provide meaningful feedback to teachers and principals to improve their practice and inform professional development; and (iv) are developed in collaboration with teachers, principals, and other education stakeholders.
- Developing effective teachers & leaders -

- States may use funds to recruit and develop effective teachers and principals, support the creation of effective educator career ladders, and improve teacher and principal certification and retention policies to better reflect a candidate's ability to improve outcomes for students.
- States will work to improve the effectiveness of principals, through activities such as strengthening principal preparation programs and providing training and support to principals of high-need schools.
- States will develop meaningful plans to ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals that receive at least an "effective" rating.
- School districts may use funds to develop and implement fair and meaningful teacher and principal evaluation systems, working in collaboration with teachers, principals, and other stakeholders to –
  - foster and provide collaboration and development opportunities in schools and build instructional teams of teachers, leaders, and other school staff, including paraprofessionals;
  - support educators to improve their instructional practice through effective, ongoing, job-embedded, targeted professional development; and
  - carry out other activities to improve the effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school staff, and ensure the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals.
- States and districts must publish report cards at least every two years that provide information, such as -
  - teacher qualifications and teacher and principal designations of effectiveness;
  - teachers and principals hired from high-performing pathways;
  - teacher survey data on levels of support and working conditions in schools;
  - the novice status of teachers and principals;
  - teacher and principal attendance;
  - retention rates of teachers by performance level; and
  - the performance of teacher and principal preparation programs by their graduates' impact on student growth and other measures, job placement, and retention.

- Teacher and leader innovation fund –
  - Continue competitive grants for states and school districts willing to implement reforms to better identify, recruit, prepare, develop, retain, reward, and advance effective teachers, principals, and school leadership teams in high-need schools.
  - Grantees may use funds to reform compensation systems to provide differentiated compensation and career advancement opportunities to educators who are effective in increasing student academic achievement, who take on additional roles and responsibilities in their schools, and who teach in high-need schools, subjects, areas, and fields.
  - Grantees may use funds to staff high-need schools more effectively, such as through the implementation or use of earlier hiring timelines.
  - States and districts will be encouraged to use these funds to take on additional innovative reforms, such as improving teacher salary schedules so as to eliminate incentives for teachers to obtain credentials that have been shown not to be linked with student performance.
- Teacher and leader pathways –
  - Competitive grants available for the recruitment, preparation, placement, and induction of promising teacher candidates for high-need schools, subjects, areas, and fields.
  - The Secretary will carry out a teacher recruitment campaign, working with states, districts, and outside organizations to recruit talented candidates into the teaching profession.
- Transformational leaders –
  - Competitive grants available for the recruitment, preparation, and support of effective principals and leadership teams to turn around persistently low-performing schools.

PRIORITY – Meeting the needs of English learners and other diverse learners.
- Students with disabilities –
  - Increased support for the inclusion and improved outcomes of students with disabilities by helping to ensure that teachers and leaders are better prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners, that assessments more accurately and appropriately measure the performance of students with disabilities, and that more districts and schools implement high-quality, state- and locally-

determined curricula and instructional supports that incorporate the principles of universal design for learning to meet all students' needs.

- English learner education –
  - Continue formula grant assistance and require states to:
    - Establish new criteria to ensure consistent statewide identification of students as English Learners, and to determine eligibility, placement, and duration of programs and services, based on the state's valid and reliable English language proficiency assessment.
    - Implement a system to evaluate the effectiveness of language instruction educational programs, and to provide information on the achievement of subgroups of English Learners, to drive better decisions by school districts for program improvement, and to support districts in selecting effective programs.
    - Adopt and implement statewide grade-by-grade English language proficiency standards that are linked to the state's college- and career-ready academic content standards.
  - New competitive grants to states, districts, and nonprofit partners to support the development of innovative programs, build the knowledge base about promising practices, and scale up effective practices to improve instruction for English Learners, including graduate fellowships and state or district partnerships with colleges and universities for developing effective teachers.
- Migrant education –
  - Continue and strengthen formula grants to states, districts, and other providers to meet the educational needs of migrant students.
  - Update the current funding formula to incorporate more accurate and timely data so funds are most effectively targeted to the areas in which migrant students live.
  - Strengthen and facilitate interstate efforts to support the educational transition of migrant students into local schools and communities.
- Homeless children and youths education –
  - Continue and strengthen formula grants to help states and districts put in place systems and services to meet the educational needs of homeless students by allocating funds on the basis of counts of homeless students rather than by shares of Title I allocations.
  - Remove barriers to effective services for homeless children.
  - Clarify provisions of the current statute where ambiguity resulted in delays in services for homeless children and youths.
  - Require grantees to report on the academic outcomes for students served program.
- Neglected and delinquent children and youths education –
  - Continue and strengthen formula grants to states to improve educational services for students in state-operated institutions and community day programs for neglected or delinquent children and youths.
  - Encourage districts to reserve funds received under the College- and Career-Ready Students program to support programs conducted by locally-operated institutions.
- Indian, native Hawaiian, and Alaska native education –
  - Continue formula and competitive grants to states, districts, Indian tribes, Indian institutions of higher education, educational and community-based and nonprofit organizations and agencies.
  - Provide greater flexibility to use funds to carry out programs that meet the needs of Indian students, including Native language immersion and Native language restoration programs, and develop tribal specific standards and assessments.
- Rural education –
  - Continue formula grants to rural districts to address the specific needs of students in rural areas, through the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs.
  - Update the method used to identify districts as rural.
  - Expand the current "REAP Flex" authority, which allows eligible small districts to use other federal education funds flexibly, to districts that are eligible to receive funds under RLIS.
  - Better align the accountability requirements of the College- and Career-Ready Students program with the rural education program, so that the rural education program supports school improvement efforts in persistently low-performing districts.
  - Funds may be reserved for national activities such as technical assistance and research on innovative programs that are designed to help rural districts overcome common capacity constraints.

- Impact aid –
  - Continue formula grant support to compensate districts for the expense of educating federally-connected children and for the presence in their districts of tax-exempt federal property or other property removed from the tax rolls by the federal government.

PRIORITY - A complete education.

- Literacy - Competitive grants to support the transition to higher standards by assisting states in strengthening their literacy programs and by providing substantial support to high-need districts in implementing high-quality literacy instruction.
- STEM - Competitive grants to support the transition to higher standards by assisting states in strengthening their STEM programs and by providing substantial support to high-need districts in implementing high-quality instruction in at least mathematics or science and may also include technology or engineering.
- Ensuring a well-rounded education - Competitive grants to states, high-need districts, and nonprofit partners to strengthen the teaching and learning of arts, foreign languages, history and civics, financial literacy, environmental education, and other subjects.
- College pathways and accelerated learning - Competitive grants to states, districts, and nonprofit partners to increase access to accelerated learning opportunities for students. At the high school level, these opportunities will include college-level work. At the elementary and middle school levels, these opportunities will include access to gifted and talented education programs.
- Activities to strengthen a complete education – Additional funds will be reserved to improve teaching and learning in academic subjects, such as grants for the creation of high-quality educational digital content; grants to states to develop and improve their capacity to use technology to improve instruction; or grants to nonprofits to develop and implement innovative and effective strategies to improve the teaching and learning of specific subjects.

PRIORITY - Successful, safe and healthy students.

- Promise neighborhoods – New, competitive grants to support the development and implementation of a continuum of effective community services, strong family supports, and comprehensive education reforms to improve the educational and life outcomes for children and youths in high-need communities, from birth through college and into careers.
- 21st century community learning centers - Competitive grants for states, school districts, nonprofit organizations, and partnerships to implement in school and out of school strategies that provide students and, where appropriate, teachers and family members, with additional time and supports to succeed.
- Successful, safe and healthy students – Competitive grants to support states, school districts, and their partners in providing learning environments that ensure that students are successful, safe, and healthy.

PRIORITY - Fostering innovation and excellence

- Race to the Top - Competitive grants to states and school districts to take on ambitious and comprehensive reforms, and to encourage the broad identification, dissemination, adoption, and use of effective policies and practices.
- Investing in innovation - Competitive grants to expand the implementation of, and investment in, innovative and evidence-based practices, programs, and strategies that significantly improve student outcomes.
- Expanding educational options – Competitive grants aimed at increasing the supply of high-quality public educational options available to students that include -
  - Charter schools competitive grants to states, charter school authorizers, charter management organizations, districts, and nonprofit organizations
  - Public school choice competitive grants to districts, consortia of districts, and states in partnership with districts to expand high-quality public school educational options for students.
  - Magnet schools assistance program competitive grants to districts to support magnet schools under a desegregation plan ordered by a federal court, state court, or other authorized state agency or official, or approved by the Secretary.

Additional cross-cutting priorities –

- <u>Flexibility for success</u> - additional flexibility in how they spend federal dollars as long as they are continuing to focus on what matters most – improving outcomes for students.
- <u>Growing success -</u> For each competitive program in this proposal, grantees that are significantly improving outcomes will be eligible for both continuation funds and additional funds to expand their strategies to additional students, schools, districts, or states.
- <u>Evaluation and building the knowledge base</u> - encourages federal, state, and local levels to work together to use data for continuous improvement, test innovative ideas, evaluate and replicate promising approaches, and scale up what strong research evidence suggests works across all ESEA programs. In addition, a new evaluation authority will authorize rigorous, objective evaluations of ESEA programs, policies, and practices and support performance measurement of those programs. The Secretary will submit to Congress a biennial plan on ESEA evaluation and performance measurement and will establish an independent panel that advises on the plan.
- <u>Cross-cutting priorities</u> –
  - Technology -- improve how schools work, how teachers teach, and how students learn. Priority may be given to programs, projects, or strategies that leverage digital information or communications technology to accomplish the stated goals of the grant.
  - Evidence -- funding should be devoted to the areas with the most evidence of effectiveness in improving outcomes for students. Priority may be given to programs, projects, or strategies on the strength of their evidentiary base.
  - Efficiency -- it is important to do more with fewer resources. Priority may be given to programs, projects, or strategies that are designed to significantly increase efficiency in the use of resources to improve student outcomes.
  - Supporting English Learners and Students With Disabilities -- Schools, districts, and states must be held responsible for educating all students, including English Learners and students with disabilities. Priority may be given to programs, projects, or strategies that are designed to specifically improve the performance of English Learners or students with disabilities.
  - Supporting Rural and Other High-Need Areas -- ensure rural districts and other high-need districts are not disadvantaged and are able to receive the funding they need to help students succeed. Priority may be given to programs or projects designed to serve rural and other high-need areas.