

SUPPORTING ENGLISH LEARNERS

English Learners (ELs) are the fastest-growing major student population in the United States, and America's long-term prosperity is linked to whether these students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge they need for college and careers. ELs face the dual challenges of learning English and learning academic content at the same time. Results from the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress show that those competing challenges lead to performance levels far below those of their English-proficient peers in mathematics, reading, and science. Moreover, the areas of the country with the greatest increases in the number of ELs are often those that have less experience serving these students, and we must ensure that these States, districts, and schools are able to meet the needs of ELs.

- The President's 2013 budget request recognizes the need for a thoughtful approach to the education of ELs by incorporating their needs throughout various programs, providing significant investments in their education, and funding the implementation of key reforms to support innovative, effective, and promising programs outlined in the Administration's *Blueprint for the Reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*.
- **\$732 million for English Learner Education.** The Administration is maintaining its commitment to supporting States and districts in operating high-quality language instruction educational programs by continuing to provide significant formula funding to all States for English Learner Education. This request would also provide grants for the preparation and training of teachers of ELs, and would fund evaluation activities and a clearinghouse for the dissemination of research-based information and data on effective methods, programs, and strategies for ELs.
- **Strengthening English Learner Education through the ESEA reauthorization.** The President's ESEA proposal would strengthen this program by ensuring States' implementation of valid and reliable assessments of English language proficiency, consistent identification of ELs within States, and a system to evaluate the effectiveness of programs for ELs. It would also provide new competitive grants to support innovative, effective, and promising practices, including dual-language programs that promote literacy in both English and the student's home language.
- **Improving assessments for ELs.** Through the Race to the Top Assessment program, the Department provided \$350 million to two consortia of States to develop high-quality assessments aligned with common, college- and career-ready standards in reading or language arts and mathematics. The designers of these assessments will ensure, from the very beginning, that they are reliable and valid for ELs.
- **Including ELs in key programs.** The President's 2013 budget requests for high-priority programs will help improve outcomes for all students, including ELs. These requests include the \$14.5 billion for the College- and Career-Ready Students program (formerly Title I

Grants to Local Educational Agencies), which requires States, districts, and schools to focus on closing achievement gaps between ELs and other students, and \$11.6 billion for the IDEA Part B Grants to States program, which requires States to report disaggregated data on ELs with disabilities. In addition, the Administration's 2013 budget includes:

- **Race to the Top (RTT) (\$850 million)**, to continue to provide incentives for both States and districts to implement bold reforms that will improve outcomes for students and close achievement gaps, including gaps between ELs and their peers. Twenty states and DC have been awarded grants through Race to the Top, which includes the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge. Many winners included strategies focused on ELs. For example, New York's plan included the development of specific strategies for ELs in its implementation of college- and career-ready standards, and Rhode Island, Maryland, Georgia, and Ohio will use incentives and targeted teacher preparation programs to address shortages of teachers of ELs. In addition, California, the State with the largest population of ELs, is one of the nine winners under the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge.
- **Investing in Innovation (i3) program (\$150 million)**, to promote the development and expansion of innovative practices with evidence of effectiveness in improving outcomes for students. In 2011, the i3 program included a competitive preference for applicants that focused on serving ELs, and several winning applicants addressed this priority. The Department would continue to give this same priority to applicants in 2013.
- **Promise Neighborhoods program (\$100 million)**, to support projects that significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth by providing a cradle-to-career continuum of ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive education reforms, effective community services, and strong systems of family and community support – with high-quality schools at the center. Grantees will plan and implement these projects for all children and youth in the community, including ELs and their families, and many of the current grantees serve communities with high percentages of ELs. Of the 21 current grantees, seven are working with schools where more than 25 percent of students are ELs, and another three are in communities where more than 40 percent of the residents speak a language other than English at home.
- **Presidential Teaching Fellows program (\$190 million)**, to fund formula grants to States to support scholarships for talented teaching candidates to attend top-tier teacher preparation programs, receive training in high-need areas such as teaching ELs, and teach in a high-need school. This new program would help ensure that low-income students, minority students, ELs, and students with disabilities have access to effective teaching in academic content areas and in language instruction educational programs.