

**U.S. Department of Education's  
Policy Statement on Climate Change Adaptation  
June 3, 2011**

**I. Background:**

- a) While the scope, severity, and pace of future climate change impacts are difficult to predict, it is clear that potential changes could have important impacts on the Department of Education's (the Department's) ability to fulfill its mission. Climate change adaptation is a critical complement to mitigation; both are required to address the causes and consequences of climate change.
- b) Adaptation planning will allow the Department to minimize negative impacts of climate change that are already occurring and take advantage of any new science or technologies that may mitigate or moderate climate change.
- c) Through adaptation planning, the Department will identify how climate change is likely to affect our ability to achieve our mission, operate our facilities, and meet our policy and program objectives. Through adaptation planning the Department will develop, prioritize, implement, and evaluate actions to moderate climate change risks and exploit any new opportunities that climate change may bring.
- d) By integrating climate change adaptation strategies into our programs and operations, the Department better ensures that taxpayer resources are invested wisely, and Department services and operations remain effective in current and future climate conditions.
- e) Through climate adaptation planning, the Department is contributing to the Federal Government's leadership role in sustainability and pursuing the vision of a resilient, healthy, and prosperous nation in the face of a changing climate.

**II. Directive:**

- a) The goal of this policy is to ensure that the Department executes its mission and operations securely, effectively, and efficiently as the climate continues to change.
- b) This policy establishes an approach for integrating climate change adaptation planning and actions into Department programs, policies, and operations.
- c) The Department shall undertake climate change adaptation planning measures, in consultation with the Department's Principal Offices, to use best available science and information. The Department shall consider potential climate change impacts when undertaking long-term

planning efforts and making decisions affecting Department resources, programs, policies, and operations.

d) The Department shall develop and publish a Department-wide climate adaptation plan no later than June 2012. The plan shall include consideration of each of the Department's Principal Offices, as appropriate, and incorporate this policy statement. The plan will identify how climate change may impact the Department's ability to achieve its mission, programs, policies, and operations. The plan will identify and prioritize actions and establish a mechanism to evaluate progress toward continually improving the Department's capacity to effectively adapt to current and future changes in the climate.

e) The Department shall, in a manner consistent and compatible with its mission:

i. analyze how climate change may impact its ability to achieve its mission, policy, program, and operational objectives by reviewing existing programs, operations, policies, and authorities to: (1) identify potential impacts of climate change on Principal Office component areas of responsibility; (2) prioritize and plan for implementation of response actions; and (3) assess and improve capacity to adapt to current and future changes in the climate.

ii. identify to the Budget Service through the Department's annual budget process areas where Principal Office-level budget adjustments may be necessary to carry out the actions identified under this policy.

iii. identify for the Office of the General Counsel areas where legal analysis may be needed to carry out Department actions identified under this policy.

iv. coordinate actions with representatives to the Department's Climate Change Adaptation Work Group established in Section III below.

f) The Department shall fully consider the climate change adaptation *Implementing Instructions* issued by the White House Council on Environmental Quality under Executive Order 13514, *Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance*, and other applicable authorities.

g) The Department will apply the guiding principles and planning framework for climate change adaptation found in the October 5, 2010, *Progress Report of the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force: Recommended Actions in Support of a National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy*.

h) The Department will coordinate with other agencies and interagency efforts, including the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, on climate change adaptation issues that cut across Federal Department jurisdictions, including areas where national adaptation plans are being or have been developed, and will identify a process for sharing climate change adaptation planning information throughout the Department and with the public.

### **III. Department Coordination and Implementation**

- a) The Department's Senior Sustainability Officer is responsible for ensuring implementation of all aspects of this policy. This policy does not alter or affect any existing duty or authority of individual components or Principal Offices.
  
- b) Through this policy, the Secretary establishes the Department Climate Change Adaptation Work Group to coordinate Department-wide climate change adaptation planning and implementation. The Work Group is chaired by the Department's Senior Sustainability Officer and will include representation from each Principal Office, as appropriate.
  
- c) This policy is effective immediately and will remain in effect until it is amended, superseded, or revoked.

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/s/  
Arne Duncan

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JUN 3 2011  
Date