

Statement on International Education Week 2012
by U. S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan
November 12-16, 2012

It's my pleasure to invite you to participate in the 13th annual International Education Week, starting on November 12. This year's theme is *International Education: Striving for a Healthier Future Worldwide*.

This year, the United States celebrates the 40th anniversary of Title IX, the historic act which opened the doors of athletics to millions of girls and young women. It's one of the great educational and civil rights success stories of our time. Title IX is an example of how it's imperative to nurture our children so they grow into intellectually and physically healthy global citizens who are able to pursue their dreams at home or abroad. As First Lady Michelle Obama described at the launch of the *Let's Move!* health initiative, "The physical and emotional health of an entire generation and the economic health and security of our nation is at stake."

By putting children on the path towards a healthy future, we give them every advantage to excel on the world stage in whatever career choice they make – be it academics, athletics, business or government. While Title IX has ensured equal opportunity in sports, the benefits extend far beyond the playing field. Students who play sports are more likely to achieve academic success as college graduates and less likely to use drugs, get pregnant as teenagers or become obese.

Since I was a child, sports have been a huge part of my life. My sister, brother and I all grew up playing sports together. My sister and I actually both ended up playing college basketball and then playing professionally overseas. I am absolutely convinced that when sports are done right, there is no better way to develop future world leaders than by the invaluable life lessons such as discipline, selflessness, resilience, passion and courage that I think are often best learned on the playing field or on the court.

This summer, these life lessons took center stage at one of the most renowned international arenas. For the first time, as athletes from around the world gathered for the Games of the XXXth Olympiad, the playing field was closer to being level. With at least one female athlete representing every country at the Olympics, the international community is moving forward in the right direction to give all of our children the same advantages, the same opportunities in life.

Since November 2000, our U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of State have celebrated International Education Week, an ideal opportunity to encourage our students to become globally competent and globally successful through international education and international engagement. Please join us this year.