

## April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 ESEA Blueprint Webinar Transcript

*This document was transcribed from the April 1, 2010 webinar discussing the U.S. Department's Blueprint for Educational Reform. While we made every attempt to make the transcription as accurate as possible, the quality of the audio was such that there may be some inaccuracies in some of the text.*

NBPTS Executive Director of Government Relations Anna Davis: Hi, thank you very much for joining us. We are delighted to be here at the invitation of the Department of Education from a number of people who will be points of contact in developing the ESEA Reauthorization and wanted to hear from National Board Certified Teachers and making sure that they get it right. So we are very appreciative that they've asked to hear the National Board teacher voice. With us tonight we have Judy Wurtzel, who is the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development. Judy has had a long career in education at many different levels, most recently at the Aspen Institute, and she will be the one who will be handling a lot of the development of the proposal for the Department. With her, she has Jason Raymond, a National Board Certified Teacher, who is currently serving a one year appointment as the Teacher Ambassador Fellow. He is a 2009 NBCT from New York. And also, we have Steven Hicks, also a National Board Certified Teacher, recently renewed, and has been asked to stay on in a new capacity as Special Assistant for Early Learning. So we thank you all very much for this opportunity and we look forward to sharing our thoughts on the Blueprint for the Department. And Judy, I'll turn it over to you.

Judy W.: Thank you so much for the kind introduction, and thank you to everyone on the phone for taking the time at the end of a long day to spend about an hour with us, listening about our proposals for the Reauthorization of the Elementary and the Secondary Education Act, and giving us the opportunity to answer your questions at the beginning of what I think will be a series of conversations over the coming months. I'm really pleased to be joined by my colleagues Steven and Jason who are my National Board Certified Teachers, who have been really integral to our ongoing conversations in our development of our ESEA Blueprint.

So I want to start by speaking for a minute about why we think the reauthorization of ESEA is so important. I think it starts with something that each of you on this call know deeply, which is that a world class education is a prerequisite to success and the key to securing a more equal, fair, and just society. We won't be able to keep the American promise of equal opportunity if we don't provide a world class education to every student. A generation ago, we led all nations in college completions, but today, ten countries have passed us. Recognizing that fact, the President has set a goal that by 2020, the United States will once again lead the world in college completion. He and the Secretary are committed to a national priority that every student graduate from high school prepared for college and a career. Today, as you know too well, our education system isn't delivering its promise for all our students. 40 percent of children enter kindergarten without the skills they need to success in school, 25 percent of high school students aren't graduating and 40 percent of college students need to take at least one remedial course. In 2002, Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and called it No Child Left

Behind (NCLB). NCLB did our country a great service. It illuminated persistent achievement gaps, but as you know too well and as the statistics that I started with demonstrate, there's much work to be done and much of NCLB that needs improvement.

So we have in our reauthorization three overarching goals. So over the past year, Secretary Duncan and our senior staff have traveled the country, listening to teachers, to students, to families and community leaders, to everyone with a stake in schools, and we heard quite consistently that NCLB isn't working and needs improvements. So in March, we released a blueprint for ESEA reauthorization that suggests a re-envisioned federal role in education. At its core, it's a focus on kids and educators, since we know that the single most important factor that improves student achievement is the interaction in a classroom between a student and his or her teacher. Our proposal for improvement is built on a few core principals. First, we want to raise the bar and close the achievement gaps. It's a shared level of responsibility of educators, parents, and all levels of government to help ensure that every child succeeds. We also want to create more classrooms like yours-- classrooms of success, by rewarding excellence and growth and move away from a system that only has negative consequences. We want to be able to provide meaningful support and assessment that go beyond a single snapshot in time to capture student growth and improvement, and we want to increase flexibility. NCLB was loose on goals -- every state could set its own bar for what was good enough-- but very tight on needs and micromanaged how you get there. The phrase that Secretary Duncan uses in all his speeches is "we want to flip the switch and be tight on goals, but loose on means and give educators more flexibility on how to reach their goals."

At the same time, we're committed to continuing the important steps that NCLB took in focusing on equity and closing the achievement gaps. We believe that the foundation of this work starts with standards and assessment. NCLB has unintended consequences of encouraging states to dumb down their standards and today we have widely varying standards in different states in a way that just doesn't make sense. For example in Mississippi, 89 percent of fourth graders are proficient on Mississippi state tests, while in Massachusetts, only 50 percent of fourth graders are proficient on the Massachusetts state test, yet when you look at the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which goes across all states, you can see that Massachusetts is one of the highest ranked states and one of the highest performing states and Mississippi ranks next to last. We're not giving teachers, we're not giving families, and we're not giving students good, accurate information about how they're doing and we need to change that situation. That's why our proposal will require all states adopt reading and mathematics standards that are truly college- and career-ready so that students that succeed in those standards will be able to enter college without the need for remediation. I'm sure you've read about the release of the common core standards in English language arts and mathematics. 48 states have been working together to develop these evidence-based internationally benchmarked standards. States are seeking standards that are fewer and higher, and that clearly show what student should know and be able to do grade by grade, from kindergarten to graduation. This state-led effort has potential to relieve some of the hard work that teachers have in planning curriculum for standards that are a mile wide and an inch deep. It could also allow for development of better instructional materials and fruitful collaboration of educators across the country seeking to improve their teaching of these standards.

These common standards are, I need to emphasized, developed by the states, not the Department of Education, but we are very optimistic about their potential for improving education in this country. Clearly, college- and career-related standards need to be accompanied by high-quality assessments. Our current assessments don't fully measure what our students know or are able to do. Low quality, fill-in-the bubble tests just don't provide you with specific enough data about how to tailor instruction. Too often the data comes back slowly, and most of these tests don't measure the full range of the standards, and they leave out some of the most important skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, the things that you know your students need to be most successful. As a result, the Department will be providing \$350 million to a consortium of states that want to take on the opportunity to build the next generation of assessments that can be more instructionally useful and promote improvement in teaching and learning.

The next theme of our reauthorization is a focus on rigorous, but fair accountability. We believe in an accountability system rooted in meaningful standards and better assessments, can be a fair, smart tool for supporting improvement. We want an accountability system that's less about labeling failure and more about providing support for improvement. Our accountability proposal attempts to do just that. So we would focus on the growth your students make in their learning this year, not on a single test in a single day. We know that a fifth grade teacher may get a student who's reading on a second grade level, and we want to recognize a teacher that moves their student from a second grade level to a fourth grade level has made tremendous strides and that student's growth should be recognized, which just does not happen in today's accountability system. We want to applaud teachers, schools and districts who accomplish so much for their students. We also want to differentiate responses to schools. There's a better way than just saying 'pass,' 'fail.' Those are labels identifies too many schools as failing, when they're actually making real progress, and then saying that there's the same intervention for every school, whether it's missing its target by a point or thirty points for every subgroup or just for one.

So if you look at this chart on the web, you can see on the right a green box that's labeled "Recognize and Reward Success." That green box is attempting to represent schools that are doing well by all their students and all their subgroups, and schools that are making high rates of gains. We want to recognize and reward these schools for their outstanding performance. For the schools on the rest of the screen, those in the red box, those are what we would call the challenge [Technical Disruption] [schools]...and we believe require some significant intervention. We believe that there are approximately 5,000 schools in this country, the bottom 5 percent of schools in each state that are chronically low performing. In some of these schools, as you know all too well, fewer than 60 percent of students...[Technical Disruption]...

...fewer than 10 percent of students are at grade level. These are schools where substantial and dramatic change is necessary. We want to provide substantial resources for change and ask districts and teachers to do the hard work of turning around these schools. In addition, we'll ask states and districts who identify schools that are close to the bottom, although not in that bottom five percent, to look at the data and do interventions that they think will improve student achievement in those schools. In addition, we're asking states and districts to look at those schools that have persistent performance gaps and identify interventions to close those gaps. But if you look at this middle box, the blue box, it says most schools, because we think that in most

places, the federal government should be providing flexibility for results and allow educators to unleash their creativity and their innovation to solve local problems and ensure that all students are on track for success. So we're asking schools in the middle to collect data, not only student achievement data, but data around school climate, around graduation rates, other indicators that are important to teachers in how they improve their programs and then use that data for improvement. We know that schools should not have to do this work alone, which is why we wanted an accountability system that no longer falls solely on the doorstep of schools and of teachers to solve all problems. We think that districts and states need to be accountable for providing schools, principals, and teachers with the support they need to succeed. That's why schools, districts, and states are successful in improving student performance. Those in the green box would receive recognition, and they would also receive awards, which could be in the form of financial awards or flexibility in the use of funds. Districts and states at the other end of the spectrum would face additional restrictions on the use of their federal funds and might be required to work with outside organizations in order to improve student achievement. That's a picture of our accountability provisions as well as our thinking about standards and assessment and I'm sure at the end of this assessment many people on the call will have questions about that. What I'm going to do now is turn the microphone over to my colleague Jason who will be talking about our work on teachers and leaders and how that's threaded throughout our entire reauthorization proposal.

Jason: Great, thanks a lot, Judy. So I'd like to take a minute just to talk about the third theme in our reauthorization project, a great teachers and great leaders. Standards, assessments, and accountabilities are only useful if there are well-prepared and well-supported teachers and leaders in schools who are carrying out the hard work of improving student performance every day. So our proposal is built on a simple, but transformative premise that teachers and leaders matter, and are the greatest school-based drivers of student achievement, but for too long, our policies haven't recognized this frankly. Our policies treated teachers who meet a few minimum standards as interchangeable and state local policies don't do enough to meaningfully evaluate teachers to give them the support and recognition they deserve or to provide them with opportunities for collaboration and support. The federal policies often ignored principals who are essential in building effective teams, setting a vision, and creating an environment of professional learning and collaboration. So we're committed to six ideas- one, elevating the profession, our proposal encourages the development of meaningful career leaders and stronger efforts to retain the great teachers that we have. Teachers should have career ladders that allow them to continue teaching while taking on broader role and responsibilities at the school. We want to fund teachers and we want to support teachers in this kind of development. We want to encourage opportunities for growth throughout a teacher's career.

Second, we're making a big investment in instructional teams, focused on data to inform instruction. Improving student performance cannot be placed solely on the shoulders of teachers. Instructional teams led by principals committed to driving a culture of continuous improvement, are powerful levers for school change.

Third, we're putting educators at the center of our idea of professional development and school success. Educators have the time to collaborate and participate in effective professional development as we all know too well, are going to be able to improve their practice, get better

results, and support their colleagues. Teachers need time to tackle student data together, reflect, learn and construct appropriate interventions and supports focused on your students' needs. Fourth, we want evaluations that are based on multiple measures, developed in partnership with teachers. Evaluations of teacher effectiveness should be based on multiple measures, including student achievement and observations, and we need to prepare principals whose evaluations will provide meaningful feedback to improve practice. We'll ask districts to work with educators to build evaluation systems that meaningfully evaluate and differentiate teachers based on the results they achieve, and we'll support them in using this information to make decisions around support, compensation and advancement, but not just teachers—we'll ask the same for principals, that they also be evaluated based on the results they achieve.

Fifth, compensation that rewards you for growth and student learning and tackling tough assignments. This includes the \$950 million box you see on the right hand side of your screen-- an unprecedented investment in competitive grants for states and school districts that are willing to implement ambitious reforms to better identify, recruit, prepare, develop, retain, reward, and advance effective teachers, principals, and school leadership teams in the schools that need them the most.

Sixth, and finally, we need to strengthen teacher and leader preparation. There's a huge disconnect between the way we prepare our teachers and leaders and the skills needed to be successful in classrooms and schools. And we need to provide training and ongoing support to ensure that educators have the tools that they need to be effective. And we need the colleges of education to be a part of the process of ongoing improvement by refining their training based on the success of their graduates. We'll ask preparation program to track and report on the results. We'll also invest unprecedented sums in teacher and leader preparation to ensure a continuing supply of effective teachers and leaders for high needs schools. We're proposing to more than double the federal investment in teacher preparation and more than quintuple the federal investment in leader preparation. This all drives to one overarching commitment at the heart of our proposal: every child deserves an effective teacher and every child deserves an effective principal. I want to turn it back over to Judy.

Judy: Thank you, Jason. I want to note that those here who are manning the computers and writing down the questions, have many, many questions. So we're going to go as quickly as we can, through the rest of the presentation, although we do want to provide you with enough information that you walk away at the end of the presentation and you understand the overall themes of our proposal, but we are going to work very hard to make sure that we have time to answer as many of your questions as possible. So, some of the questions actually have asked about what is our view about narrowing the curriculum, so here's an opportunity for me to speak a little bit to those. We are very committed to a well-rounded, complete education. We've been very concerned that NCLB, with its very stringent focus on accountability added, tended to focus on mathematics and English language arts testing, unduly narrow the curriculum. And we're proposing to invest over \$1 billion in supporting a complete education. This will support improvements in teaching and learning, especially in our highest needs community. We'll start and with a focus of literacy and STEM, but we also know that there are many other subjects that students need a firm grounding in, in order to receive a complete education and succeed in college and in the workforce, whether it's history or art or foreign languages, or financial

literacy. There's a world of content for students to learn and get excited about. We know that student and teachers can be most effective when they have the opportunity to work together around what students are learning and when they have the tools that students need, whether it's high quality assessments or great curriculum materials or other instructional support. And these funds and these programs will support that kind of activity and those kinds of materials. These funds will also support the strategies that are needed to support English-learners and students with disabilities to achieve to high levels in literacy, STEM, and other subjects. We also know that access to challenging high school curriculum has a tremendous impact on students' life chances and whether they go on to a four year college. And we also know that low-income students are much less likely to have opportunities to accelerate coursework at the high school level, which is why we have a college passport and accelerated learning program, which will provide these opportunity, models, and strategies for low-income students to succeed.

Another theme of our work is supporting students as a whole child. We know that what happens outside the classroom is important to kids' success and their ability to make the most of their opportunity in the classroom. The achievement gap doesn't exist in isolation, it's reinforced by the lack of opportunity and supports that many students in high-poverty communities receive. That's why we're proposing over \$1.75 billion to support student success in three major programs. One is called Promise Neighborhoods, and it's based on the Harlem Children's Zone model, which is really a cradle to adulthood, full community development model, which brings schools, community services, students, teachers, families, and community supports for increasing success for low-income students. A second program, "Safe, Successful, and Healthy Students," would help schools and their partners provide the environment that students need to have a safe passage to school, safety in schools, and a healthy environment and supportive school climate. The third program, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning centers, recognizes that students often need more times for learning and a safe place to be after three o'clock. So this program supports after school programs, as well as expanded day programs, which really restructures the day to provide a longer day, a longer year, more time for teacher collaboration, more time for enrichment activities and learning for students. We recognize that the whole child is critical and we want to encourage communities and schools to come together around a collaborative and comprehensive approach to supporting students. I'm now going to turn it over to Steven Hicks, who was introduced as senior advisor on early learning to talk for a minute about our early learning agenda.

Steven Hicks: Thank you, Judy. And these programs that Judy was just speaking about really talk about partnerships that begin at birth. Speaking of partnerships focused on beginning at birth and learning, we'd like to take a moment to emphasize a recurring theme that we hear when listening to teachers-- that students must be prepared at each grade of the P-12 system and that every link must be strong. Our approach takes a comprehensive view toward improving student performance, starting with early learning and a commitment to ensure our youngest are kindergarten-ready and on the road to continue developing the skills they need for future success. And we want to make sure our schools are ready as well. I'm a pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, first grade teacher, and I know as you do that early learning begins long before children enter kindergarten. The achievement gap begins very early and is unacceptably large. The quality of our kindergarten through third grade early learning programs must improve so that we can ensure that children start on track to be college- and career-ready. Across the country, states and LEAs

have increased their commitment to an investment in high-quality preschool programs, but more must be done. With our partners at the Department of Health and Human Services, we are working to ensure that children have access to high-quality, early learning programs, birth through third-grade. I'm going to turn it back to you Judy.

Judy: Thank you. So moving on to the next slide, I want to start by saying there are obviously other themes and priorities in our ESEA proposal that we won't be able to cover in the time-frame here, but let me just mention two that I think would be of particular interest. So one is I'm sure almost everyone on this call has read at least one news story about Race to the Top, and the Department just awarded the first Race to the Top grants to Tennessee and Delaware this past week. We have been very excited about this response from the states to this unprecedented opportunity for reform and innovation, and we are proposing to continue that program in our ESEA proposal. In addition, we, through what we're calling the Investing in Innovation Fund, are proposing to continue to focus on building, validating, researching and putting into our teachers hands tools and models that work. We know that in this country we don't have enough high quality, validated tools that are going to promote instructional improvement, and we've invested \$650 million this year and have asked for \$500 million in our next budget to continue to grow the bed of proven strategies that will help you do your jobs better every day. I now want to turn to a summary of some of the biggest differences between NCLB and our proposal for the ESEA Reauthorization.

First, we believe that NCLB lowered the bar. Our proposal would raise the bar. The goal in our proposal is simple. Every student should graduate from high school prepared for college or a career. Right now, too many students don't finish high school, and those that do are not always prepared for success at the next stage. NCLB lowered the bar, we want to make sure that states set a high, meaningful bar with college- and career-ready standards, and then help all students meet those standards. Second, we believe that NCLB was too prescriptive for too many schools, and we're proposing a vision of the federal role in education where all levels of the system have responsibility for continuous improvement, flexibility to meet results, and the federal government's role moves away from compliance to fostering innovation and building capacity of states, districts, and schools to take the local challenges of reform.

Third, we'd like to recognize success. NCLB was a blunt instrument that ignored growth and progress, and it sometimes mislabeled schools as failures, and it sometimes failed to recognize success. We want to start recognizing and rewarding success by providing positive incentives to schools and districts. We want to identify the schools that are making the most improvements, get the models, and learn from them. But we also want to focus on a smaller number of schools, those schools that are truly failing their students and do something about that. We believe it's a moral imperative that we as a country cannot ignore.

Fourth, we believe that a well-rounded education should be the birthright of every child, not just children that can afford to go to schools in suburban communities, and we want to provide support for states and districts to build strong instructional systems focused on complete education and gives states the flexibility to choose to include other subjects, such as history or science in their accountability systems. One place where you see an equal sign and not an arrow is on the focus on gaps and equity. We believe that NCLB was right to illuminate those

achievement gaps. We want to keep the light shining on those gaps, and we want to recognize that our obligation as a country is to continue to work together to close those gaps over time.

Let's move to the next slide. Thank you.

Clearly, we're proposing some ambitious reforms. We will want to match our proposal with increased resources for states, districts and schools in order to help them do the work. Thus, we are going to ask, in next year's budget request, for a three billion dollar increase for programs under ESEA. And we've also said that if Congress would reauthorize the law this coming year, we would also ask for an additional billion dollars that's contingent on reauthorization. This would be the largest increase ever proposed in the 45 year history of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We are very hopeful that this reauthorization will take place in the coming years, the law is long overdue for reauthorization. We've been having very productive conversations with Congress, both Democrats and Republicans have said this is not a partisan issue. This is an issue where both houses and both parties can come together and work on what's right for students. Education is an issue that rises above bipartisanship and unites adults together to do what's best for kids. We thank you for joining us in this conversation, and look forward to your questions. Thanks.

Anna: Thank you very much Judy, Jason, and Steven. That was a great overview and I think probably clarified a lot of the questions that may have come up. We've been taking down questions as quickly as we can, and a lot of them have come in. We're going to get through as many of them as we can. The first one I want to start with comes from Sandra Meredith, who asks, "How will the reauthorization address schools who are not identified as Title I?"

Judy: It's a great question. So, I think, clearly as in No Child Left Behind, ESEA will be asking states to have an unified accountability system in which all schools are included, not only Title I schools. So that would continue as under current law. One of the things though that we are proposing to change is that as we look at the very lowest performing schools in every state, we would propose that schools that are not Title I, if they are in the very lowest schools, and that's in the very lowest 5 percent, would be asked to do the same types of interventions that we see in Title I schools, because whether it's a Title I school or not, there are students in that school and it's got a graduation rate that might be below 60 percent and it's got a proficiency rate that's under 10 or 15 percent, it's one of the lowest performing schools in the state. Those students deserve to have something happen for the good in that school.

Anna: Judy, I have follow-up: Kimberly Roberts would like to know what would be the criteria be for selecting that bottom 5 percent, and who will be overseeing that selection?

Judy: So that selection would be in the hands of the states. We would say to states that you should look at the achievement of your school, based both on the actual achievement levels and on growth of students and progress of that school over time. One of the problems with NCLB is there can be a low performing school that's making great strides over time and that school's progress is not recognized or rewarded. We want to have an accountability system that is looking at the persistently, the chronically low-performing schools-- those that have both low levels of achievement and have not been making progress over time. We would also ask states to look at

graduation rates and put together composites of those different kinds of data for identifying the very lowest performing schools in the state.

Anna: Great, thank you. Joseph Espinoza has a question about common standards. He mentions that the California's mathematical standards are higher than those proposed common standards. He wants to know if states will be punished for not adopting the common core standards if their state standards are already higher and prepare students better without mediation.

Judy: Thank you for that question, and I noticed there was another question whether we require national standards, so if I may, I'll answer both of those questions together. So the short answer is no, we are not requiring national standards. We are committed to college- and career-ready standards, standards that would enable all students to graduate from high school with the skills necessary to be successful in a credit-bearing force at the college level or to go into a post-secondary training program or to be launched into a career where they have the chance at being able to put food on the table for their family. That does not mean that every state needs to adopt the common standards, and we would never say to a state that we want you to adopt standards that are not as rigorous as the ones that you have in your own state. We see that many states are working together around these common standards that have been released in drafts and I know that many teachers were involved in the development of those standards and are now commenting on those standards as the process moves forward. We're optimistic about the potential of those standards, but we are not requiring them.

Anna: Thank you, Judy. We've had a number of questions that relate to standards. The next one comes from Jolynn Plateau, who wants to know: "Why is college-prep stressed so much in this plan? What about other post-high school ed options? What about specialized subjects?"

Judy: Thank you, that's a great question. So we do emphasize college- and career-ready because we recognize that college may not be the choice for all students, but we also recognize that there is a fair amount of data that has been developed over the past decade showing that the skill set that students need to be successful in credit-bearing courses as they enter college and what they need to be able to be successful in their career or in the military are not dissimilar. We want to make sure that students have options so that when students graduate from high school, they're not closed off from college if that's what they want to do or not closed off from a post-secondary training credential in the computer science or the health care field or whatever it is. So we think it's always an equity challenge that we need to face, that we want to make sure that all students can at the twelfth grade level have the choice to go forward. Also we recognize the data that even now in non-college pathways, there's need for fairly high levels of mathematics and literacy skills.

Anna: Okay, the next question is from Lorraine Hirokawa. In the blueprint, it looks like there will be a tracking system for students who transfer from different states. Will all states have the same standards?

Judy: Thank you for that question. First, I think the answer to will all states have the same standards is no, unless all states choose to go in that direction. As I said before, we are not supporting national standards, we are encouraging this state-led effort and supportive of states

who choose to move forward in adopting common standards but recognize that other states may choose to have other standards, and as long as they're college- and career-ready, they would be acceptable to us. In terms of tracking, I'm not exactly sure where in the blueprint the questioner is referring to. We're clearly interested in strengthening state data systems so that we can understand student growth and use data for improvement purposes, but we have not set up a national tracking system or anything approximating that.

Anna: Okay, we've had several questions that ask about the competitive framework that's proposed in the blueprint. A couple of things-- are you proposing that Title I be made competitive? What is the justification for the competitive programs, and does this not harm or disenfranchised states that don't have as many resources for grant writing and support for competitive grants?

Judy: That's a great question, thank you very much for that. So, first, unequivocally, we are not suggesting that Title I become a competitive program. It is a formula program and will remain so. We're committed to the base formula that Title I provides for our high poverty schools, and we believe that funding is essential. If you look, the chart has gone up there, so if you look at our proposal, we're proposing essentially level funding in the formula funding during our Fiscal Year 2010 and Fiscal Year 2011 at that request. We are asking for new funds to be competitive for a couple of reasons. One is that our experience with Race to the Top and other well-designed competitive programs is that they have managed to bring stakeholders together in states and in districts towards reform agendas that are quite powerful. They have sparked very useful conversations and tremendous work, and we'd like to be able to continue to incentivize that kind of behavior in states and districts. Second, as many of you know, the Department has many, many small programs and so we've actually proposed a consolidation of our programs. We, too, are concerned about the resources for grant writers, which is why we proposed a consolidation from over forty programs down to a number that you can count with, well I can't say two hands, so I guess three hands. We think that states and districts and schools would benefit from fewer more flexible grant programs, where they can look at their local needs and resources and put together a more comprehensive program, instead of spending their time applying for twenty or thirty different Department of Education programs. We also think that it will allow districts and states to have more staff focused on support, rather than compliance and monitoring of individual grants or writing proposals or reports on individual grants. So we're very enthusiastic about the opportunities to be able to target more resources on flexible approaches to support local needs by moving in this direction.

Anna: The next question comes from Linda Robert DeNiro, who asks, "I agree that teachers need time to collaborate and attend ongoing staff development. How will the districts be held accountable to allow educators to do that? Will there be sufficient funding available for professional development?"

Judy: So, we agree that time is essential, and we support that in a number of ways. So first, in our proposals around supporting great teachers and leaders, we're investing \$2.5 billion in high-quality support for districts, schools, and teachers that can be used for effective professional development, development of instructional teams at the school [inaudible] level, where teachers have the opportunity to collaborate and use data around student learning to improve instruction.

In that context, we're also advocating that states and districts consider developing career ladders because we know that having coaches, mentors, and instructional leaders in a school working with teachers as part of a learning team can often be a critical element to making that time productive for teachers as they work together to improve student learning. We also have a proposal that I mentioned for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centers, which is over \$1 billion for extended learning time. And then in our vision of this, extended learning time provides not only more time for students to learn, but more time for teachers. When you think about the school day and what a schedule looks like, and you expand the opportunities for students to be in the school building, you also expand opportunities for teachers to work together, to reshape their scheduling, so you can have grade level teams, vertical teaming, times when all the students are working. There are potential for community partners so that the teachers have time to work on instructional planning. It's really what we think is a core piece of a strategy that ensures more time for teachers to work together.

Anna: Thank you. I'm going to say right now that we've got hundreds of questions and we're not going to be able to get to them all, so we're trying to group them together in categories so we can cover the key topics. The next question comes from Dianne Murphy. She said that on page 15 of the blueprint, Equitable Distribution of Teachers sounds like the state districts can afford to have NBCTs teach at the challenging schools if they are currently teaching in successful schools. Is this a correct interpretation?

Judy: No. There's nothing in the Blueprint or the Proposal that is intended to suggest that teachers can be assigned against their will to a school. However, I will say that we as an administration are deeply committed to ensuring that all students, particularly those most in need have access to great teachers because we know how important a great teacher is to the success of a student in need. So we are supporting a range of strategies that would incentivize attracting strong teachers into high-poverty and low-performing schools, whether its through compensation reform, ways of bringing teams together, a new principal and a team of teachers into a low-performing school, or other strategies through strengthening teacher preparation and making sure that schools have a steady supply of teachers with the skills to be successful in those schools. We see a multipronged approach to ensuring that there's the human talent, the teacher and leader talent in these schools to meet the needs of these students. So I will reiterate that teachers didn't sign up for the Army—they're not going to be redeployed by their districts.

Anna: Ok, the next question comes from Ann Brown. Under the blueprint, principals should be able to choose their own staff. What are the implications for this on the tenure system that helps retain ineffective teachers?

Judy: I apologize, I don't have the blueprint in front of me, so I'm not sure I know exactly what you are referring to, but let me make a couple of comments that I think might be responsive. In the context of our lowest performing schools we believe that it's essential that principals, a strong principal leader with a strong team of teachers who are committed to a constant vision of turning around a low-performing school is essential. And so in the context of our lowest performing schools, we would like to be able to incentivize different ways of bringing together teams of teachers and their principals in our collective effort to turn around a school. I think you may also be referring to our program called Teacher and Leader Incentive Fund—Innovation

Fund, excuse me, the Teacher and Leader Innovation Fund, which is building off our current program, the Teacher Incentive Fund, which provides some support to districts and states who want to develop alternative compensation systems and bring great teachers into high need schools and high need subjects and to recognize and reward teachers for their contributions to student learning. In our proposal, we're proposing to expand that program to go beyond compensation to a larger set of reforms that we believe are essential to strengthening the teaching profession. We've heard from teachers, we've heard from districts, we've heard from states that compensation reforms are important, but they are not a silver bullet. They need to be integrated into an order or strategy for strengthening the teaching profession and strengthening teaching and learning in a district, and that's part of the reforms that enable teachers and principals to work together in staffing placements—we believe it's a piece in overall reform agenda.

Anna: Okay, the next question comes from Kathryn Hillyer, who wants to know how will teachers of classes other than STEM and English / Language Arts be recognized and rewarded under the blueprint?

Judy: So that's a terrific question. In all proposals, we are emphasizing the importance of high quality teacher evaluation because we believe that every professional should have the opportunity to get constructive feedback on their work and the opportunity to have good information to improve their practice over time. We know from the data that many teachers are barely evaluated, with drive-by evaluations, and don't get the feedback and support that they deserve. As a result, we would be asking every district to put in place a high-quality teacher evaluation system that looks at multiple measures in evaluating teachers. So we are asking that these evaluation systems would include some consideration of teacher contributions to student learning, as well as observations and other measures. In terms of teachers in non-tested subjects and grades, so teachers who are not teaching English language arts or mathematics that is in the state accountability system, we see that there are multiple avenues that states and districts could pursue a local assessment or a district assessment that's not part of the state accountability system, local assessment data, portfolios of student work, and other kinds of evidence of student learning. We really want to leave room for states and districts to work this out in consultation with teachers to develop systems that do take student learning seriously, but also are fair and credible to teachers.

Anna: I want to mention to anyone who joined the call late that you are listening to a Webinar with Department of Education officials. We have Judy Wurtzel, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development; joined by two NBCTs at the Department, Jason Raymond, who is a Teacher Ambassador Fellow, and Steven Hicks, a former Teacher Ambassador Fellow, who is now on a Special Assistant in Early Learning. We are now going to take a question from Mary Tedrow, she asked: “[There are] Lots of provisions for data collection. I'm concerned that the money will be absorbed at the state and district level to make data collection tools and will not make it down to the classroom and school level.”

Judy: Thank you for that question. So first, let me say that we are committed to data. We think data is a powerful driver of improvement in multiple levels. One, this administration is committed to transparency. We think that good information about how schools are doing, how districts are doing on multiple indicators, not just on student achievement, but on multiple

indicators is important for communities to know, for families to know, for policymakers to know. Second, we know that data is a driver of improvements in performance, whether it's a teacher in the classroom that has a wide range of data about student learning who can use that to better understand how their students are doing, adjust instruction, identify interventions that are needed, decide what needs to be re-taught, what specialists might be brought in to help students, all of that is improved and fostered by good data, and good data systems that get information to you in a timely and useful way. We also believe that data is very important for understanding how schools and programs are doing. We want over time to become more and more an evidence-based profession, to be continually looking at the data about how students are doing, how teachers are doing and using that to improve, to learn more about what works and what doesn't, and to use that to improve our practice. So you were right to recognize that there is a big commitment to data, data systems, and data collections in our blueprint, however, I don't share your concern about whether all the data collection requirements would prevent funds from getting down to the school level for a couple of reasons. One, we know that states and districts are getting smarter about how they collect and use data. The costs are going down, and we think that there are efficiencies that can be achieved as we move forward over the coming decades to make ourselves more a data-driven profession. Second, within the context of ESEA, most of the money is required, by law, to reach its way down to the district level so that it's going to be able to really inform and improve instruction on the ground.

Anna: okay, next we have a question from Marlene Henriques, who wants to know how the Department would suggest changes be made to teach our preparation program. I believe this was a subject that the secretary had something to say.

Judy: Yes, Secretary Duncan has spoke quite eloquently on his concerns about the quality of teacher preparation programs in this country. I first met the secretary when he was superintendent in Chicago and heard him in that context about their challenge in finding teachers who were well-prepared to meet the challenges that students posed in Chicago. They might be tremendously talented teachers, they might be tremendously well-prepared for some other school systems, but for high-poverty schools in Chicago, he had a hard time finding teachers prepared to really meet the needs of students. I think that's one reason he's so committed and so passionate on this agenda, and that's one reason why we have a commitment in our reauthorization proposal to significantly increase the investment in teacher preparation and I should add in leadership preparation, which has been sorely untended to in federal policy. For all of you, high quality teacher preparation has a couple of different factors. So one is I think that high quality teacher preparation focuses on preparing teachers for the classrooms in which they'll be teaching. So there's a closed connection to the actual work to be done as teachers with the types of students in the types of schools where teachers ultimately will be. Clearly, strong clinical practice experiences are an important piece of that work. That happens in many schools of education across the country, clearly not all. There's great room for improvement here, and we would like to incentivize that.

Anna: Thank you. We've had a number of questions regarding the role of parents. What will be done to hold parents accountable for student achievement?

Judy: I think we can all agree that parents play an essential role as their children's first teacher and have a critical role to play every day in ensuring that students come to school ready to learn, and have the support they need to be successful and to set high expectations for their students, for their children about their future success. In the ESEA reauthorization proposal, we are very committed to supporting parent involvement and ensuring that states and districts have the policies and practices in place that make schools open to parents and give them the information they need to make good decisions about their children and the choices they have about their children's educational programs and pathways for them.

Anna: Great, Renee Moore, who is a National Board Certified Teacher from Moorhead, Mississippi, and one of our Board of Directors wants to know what the transition will look like from NCLB to the reauthorized ESEA, and can you talk about what's going to happen if we don't get it done?

Judy: Thank you for that question Renee, it's a really terrific question, one we actually think about a lot here at the Department of Education. So clearly this will be a multiyear transition from the current law to reauthorization. Every time ESEA is reauthorized, and it's been 6, or 7, I don't know the exact number, but it's been reauthorized many times since 1965. There's had to be a transition period as new requirements come into effect and old ones lapse, and this would be no different. I would say, however, that through the work that we're doing with Race to the Top and the way states are responding to that through our Investing in Innovation Fund, through the school improvement grants that are being made to be able to support the important changes at our lowest performing schools, some of the themes that we've been talking about are already being actualized in states around the country. I think we've seen tremendous progress already that will be laying a really nice ground work for states to be prepared to implement these kinds of changes in NCLB well.

Anna: So I think we have time for one more question, and it'll be a combination question of a theme that has come through a lot of questions that have been submitted, and that is if you could share your thoughts on the role of the National Board and how we fit into the blueprint, and whether or not the Department would consider the designation of National Board Certification as an effective teacher?

Judy: So thank you for that question, let me answer the policy question, and then I want to turn it over to my colleagues who are National Board Certified Teachers to continue the answers to that and then close out this session. So in terms of whether National board Certified Teachers would be a part of the definition of an effective teacher, let me give you a little of the framework around that issue and our proposal so you can see how that would fit. In our proposal we are saying that states need to ensure that every district have a high quality teacher evaluation system that differentiates teachers by performance- at least three performance levels, which is typical to what many districts have now. We also say that each state would need to set some criteria or state-wide definition-it would be up to the state- for what an effective teacher is and what a highly-effective teacher is. That definition would need to take into account student learning, but could have other measures as well, and we are leaving it up to state's discretion about how they would go about that. So clearly a state could choose to think about including National Board Certification as part of its mix of measures in its definition of effective or highly effective

teachers. That's not something that we would require however. But now, I'll turn it over to my colleagues.

Steven: Thank you, Judy. I would just say that as a National Board Certified Teacher, I think the role of certified teachers is to be those models of effective teachers. It's certainly not going to be the only way you can be an effective teacher, but I think that we have a responsibility to be that model and to take on strong leadership roles as schools, especially those that are looking to turn themselves around in that P-12 school reform effort. I think that it's a responsibility that you carry as a certified teacher.

Jason: I would just add to that, thank you, Steven, that the work, as you all know, you've talked to National Board Certified Teachers and the thing that's so rewarding about the experience is the opportunity to reflect, work collaboratively on your practice, and how your instruction improves student learning. That's in fact what's asked from the National Board Certified Teachers to demonstrate and improve on an ongoing basis. So, it seems that National Board Certified Teachers who have gone through that work are in a key position to continue to influence how schools implement the things that we want to encourage and well positioned to do that, so I hope we will.

Anna: Thank you very much. That's the conclusion of today's webinar. I want to thank everyone-Judy, Jason, and Steven, you guys were terrific. You only were able to answer a small tip of the iceberg of questions that came in. We had over 250 participants on the phones. So I would like to say for everyone that's listening, we will have an archive of the slides and an audio tape will be available and you can get information from that on the NBPTS web page as early as tomorrow. Also, we will summarize the questions that came in that we weren't able to get through and share them with the Department. You won't be able to get an individual response, but they will be able to see the kinds of questions that have been asked and know that those are the types of issues to be addressed as they move forward. Also, feel free that you could share with us, and us meaning the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, your comments on the blueprint in writing. You can send them in to Anna Davis, [adavis@nbpts.org](mailto:adavis@nbpts.org). You can also look for a dialogue that will continue on NBCTLink, and we're hopeful that maybe we can get some of the NBCTs from the Department to participate in future discussions. You may also submit them directly to the Department at [ESEA.comments@ed.gov](mailto:ESEA.comments@ed.gov). So, this is only a start, the Department has been very, very proactive in seeking out the perspectives of National Board Certified Teachers and that will continue. So we want to thank you for tonight, and please continue to share the accomplished teaching voice. Have a good evening.

[End]