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### PRESS RELEASES

## U.S. Secretary of Education Calls on State Officials and Researchers to Deliver Honest Answers about Reforms

FOR RELEASE:  
June 8, 2009

Contact: John White, Press Secretary  
(202) 401-1576

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[How can educators use data?](#)

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said today that school reforms should be monitored and judged by results that can be backed up by research proving their effectiveness.

Speaking at the fourth annual conference of the Institute of Education Sciences, Duncan told an audience of education researchers that supporting states' efforts to build warehouses of data on student achievement is one of his top priorities.

"Education reform is not about sweeping mandates or grand gestures," Duncan told the group of researchers who conduct research for IES, which is an independent section of the Education Department. "It's about systematically examining and learning, building on what we've done right, and scrapping what hasn't worked for kids."

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, states must make assurances that they are making progress in four key areas of school reform:

- Adopting rigorous standards that prepare students for success in college and the workforce;
- Recruiting and retaining effective teachers, especially in classrooms where they're needed most;
- Turning around low-performing schools; and
- Building data systems to track student achievement and teacher effectiveness.

States must report their progress toward completing these assurances in their applications to receive money under the \$48.6 billion State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. The Department of Education will evaluate states' success in meeting the four assurances when considering states' applications for competitive grants under the \$4.35 billion Race to the Top Fund.

Duncan told the researchers today that the data systems should inform education policies that will improve practices. He urged them to work on improving accountability models based on the growth of student test scores and developing fair models of compensating teachers and other school staff based on the achievement of their students. Ultimately, he added, the data should be used to ensure that students are on track to graduation and success in college.

"Hopefully some day we can track kids from pre-school to high-school and from high school to college and college to career," Duncan said. "Hopefully we can track good kids to good teachers and good teachers to good colleges of education."

Duncan's speech is the first in a series over four weeks in which the secretary will detail the Department of Education's policies on each of the four assurances.

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