

RAISE THE BAR: LEAD THE WORLD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT IS RAISE THE BAR: LEAD THE WORLD?

“Raise the Bar: Lead the World” is the U.S. Department of Education’s call to action to transform P-12 education and unite around what truly works—based on decades of experience and research—to advance educational equity and excellence.

Raising the bar means recognizing that our nation already has what it takes to lead the world—if we deliver a comprehensive, rigorous education for every student; boldly improve conditions for learning; and ensure every student has a pathway to multilingualism and to college and careers.

When we partner with parents, families, and educators to raise the bar in education, all our nation’s students will build the skills to thrive inside and outside of school. Our students will reach new heights in the classroom, in their careers, and in their enriched lives and communities, making a positive difference in the world, for generations to come.

WHAT IS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION’S FOCUS?

Over the next year, the Department will focus on providing tools, resources, and assistance to states, districts, and schools to advance the three focus areas below, which are connected to six strategies aimed at promoting academic excellence for every learner and better preparing our nation for global competitiveness.

The focus areas for the Department have been shaped by the extensive learning we've gathered from those in the field, including parents and families; state, district, and school leaders; teachers; workforce partners, and other stakeholders. There has never been a more important time for us to intentionally collaborate so that, together, we can prepare our students to truly thrive.

As we move this work forward together, the Department will continue to engage directly with parents and families about what’s working, what’s not, and what they want to see for their children’s education, and we will work to help parents and families be true partners with their child’s school.

1. ***Assist states and districts in achieving academic recovery and excellence by supporting the conditions to accelerate learning and offer a comprehensive and rigorous education for every student.*** This includes efforts such as supporting innovative teaching and learning models; promoting more and better individual and small-group support for students, such as through high-dosage tutoring; increasing access to strong science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) and arts education; improving funding for education; promoting more equitable school

disciplinary practices; and expanding access to high-quality afterschool and summer learning and enrichment programs.

2. ***Boldly support improved learning conditions by working to eliminate the teacher shortage and investing in every student's mental health and well-being.*** This includes efforts such as promoting better pay, working conditions, retention strategies, and professional development for teachers and specialized instructional support personnel; strengthening and diversifying the teacher pipeline; and increasing access to school-based mental health professionals and community schools for our students.
3. ***Prepare all students for global competitiveness and engagement by reimagining college and career pathways and providing better opportunities for our students to become multilingual.*** This includes efforts to establish and scale career and college pathways that lead to students earning industry-recognized credentials and securing in-demand jobs and providing more and better opportunities for our students to become multilingual.

WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIES THAT THE DEPARTMENT IS USING TO ADVANCE THIS WORK?

1. ***Accelerate Learning for Every Student:*** Advance academic recovery and work to close academic achievement gaps by elevating efforts showing the greatest promise through the Department's [Best Practices Clearinghouse](#); continue to develop guidance and bolster technical assistance efforts; support the field to expand access to high-quality afterschool, summer learning, and enrichment programs through the [Engage Every Student](#) initiative; and support states, districts, and community-based organizations in providing high-quality tutoring, mentoring, and other supports to students through the [National Partnership for Student Success](#), working toward the President's goal of an additional 250,000 adults in these roles. Tackle student chronic absenteeism, in partnership with educators and families, through a multi-state collaborative in two areas: finding missing students and strengthening state accountability systems through the Student Engagement and Activities Center; and provide districts with support to implement evidence-based strategies that promote academic recovery through the [Comprehensive Center Networks](#) and the [National Center for Education Research](#). The Department also will continue to work with states and districts to leverage American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to accelerate students' learning. Via the [School Pulse Panel](#) and other tools, the Department will continue to track ARP spending and support schools so they may address their evolving on-the-ground challenges and opportunities. Additionally, through the [Raise the Bar Math and Literacy](#) series, the Department surfaced the latest evidence-based practices and highlighted promising recovery strategies that districts successfully are pursuing.
2. ***Deliver a Comprehensive and Rigorous Education for Every Student:*** Support states and districts in providing every child with access to a rigorous and well-rounded education, with high-quality instruction that prepares them to be active, engaged, and lifelong learners; support developmentally appropriate early learning and promote access to high-quality preschool and full-day kindergarten as a sturdy bridge to the elementary grades; promote [resources](#) from the Department's Comprehensive Center Network focused on supporting effective teaching and

learning strategies; and advance equity through [Title I](#) and the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#). Importantly, the Department will support the integration of the arts in a high-quality public school education through \$36 million in continuation awards for the [Assistance for Arts Education program](#), which promotes arts education for all students through activities such as professional development for educators and the creation of arts-based educational programs. The Department also will continue to build on the [You Belong in STEM](#) initiative; target grant funds toward activities that promote a well-rounded education; and highlight how formula funds, including \$1 billion for [21st Century Community Learning Centers](#), can support high-quality summer learning and enrichment, afterschool programs, and financial literacy, among other areas. And through the Department's new [Family Engagement Learning Series](#), we are focused on boosting families' engagement in their children's education and lifting up the voices of parents to support students' success.

3. ***Eliminate the Educator Shortage for Every School:*** Work to ensure schools are appropriately staffed by supporting high-quality educator preparation, including teacher residencies and Registered Apprenticeship Programs for teachers, building on the approval of the first federally recognized apprenticeship program for teachers last year. Continue to build a strong educator workforce by supporting effective induction and professional learning programs and leadership opportunities for teachers; steward the effective implementation of Title II and IDEA discretionary grants to support high-quality teachers and school leaders; and continue to provide guidance to the field for how ARP funds can be used to hire and support educators. For decades, schools and districts have faced shortages in critical staffing areas, such as special education and bilingual education, disproportionately impacting students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. That is why the Department has devoted \$400 million in federal funds to efforts that recruit, train, support, and retain talented educators, including an additional \$129 million from fiscal year 2021 to 2023. To help ensure that teaching is a career that people from all backgrounds are eager to pursue, the Department also will help to expand pathways into the profession and support the early success of teachers of color, who currently make up less than 20 percent of the educator workforce. The Department will continue to advance initiatives and funding to improve educators' working conditions. We also will promote the need to increase teacher compensation and efforts that welcome teachers as full partners in improving education.
4. ***Invest in Every Student's Mental Health and Well-Being:*** Increase access to school-based mental health services for students and help to build schools that support students' overall wellness, in part, by working together with parents and educators to grow and scale community schools that offer wraparound supports and connections to vital healthcare and mental health services on site, both for children and their families. The national rise in psychological distress and the mental health needs of our youth—combined with the disruption brought about by the pandemic—continue to take a toll on our students' academic success and their physical, social, emotional, and mental well-being. Students are six times more likely to receive mental health services when those services are delivered in educational settings. That is why the Department also will continue to assist states to recruit and retain mental health professionals with support

from the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) and the [Stronger Connections](#) grant program. Additionally, the [School-Based Mental Health Services](#) and the [Mental Health Service Professional Demonstration](#) grant programs will help to meet the President’s goal of doubling the number of mental health professionals nationwide. The Department also will work to strengthen the capacity of existing infrastructure to respond to youth mental health needs and to create a continuum of support for students and their families by maximizing the benefits of the Medicaid program to provide health and mental health services to Medicaid-enrolled children at schools.

5. ***Ensure Every Student Has a Pathway to College and a Career:*** Create and expand opportunities for all students to engage in innovative pathways that blur the lines between high school, college, and careers—propelling students to equitable and rewarding futures. These pathways provide four core experiences for all students: 1.) earning college credits through dual enrollment in general education and career-connected courses; 2.) participating in real-world, work-based learning with skilled professionals; 3.) earning their first industry-sought, in-demand credential(s); and 4.) receiving personalized career guidance that empowers them and their families to make real choices about their futures. Such pathways require intensive collaboration among high schools and school districts, community colleges and other higher education partners, as well as business and industry. Other stakeholders—such as state and local governments, workforce development organizations, and community-based organizations—also are key partners in the work. Through the [Raise the Bar: Unlocking Career Success](#) initiative, the Department also will partner with other federal agencies and external partners, build the capacity of school leaders, educators, parents, and communities to transform high schools, and create strong education-workforce strategies and systems that provide economic and social mobility for students and their families.

6. ***Provide Every Student with a Pathway to Multilingualism:*** Support the field to provide students in every state in the country with the opportunity to become multilingual and succeed in today’s global economy by issuing new toolkits and guidance that will help to align current programming at the state and local levels to best practices for serving English learners. Expand nationwide access to multilingual and dual language education programs through unprecedented efforts to prepare and support a pipeline of diverse and talented multilingual educators, including through teaching fellowships and opportunities for paraprofessionals to gain bilingual certification; and work to ensure that English learners have the full range of educational opportunities available to them in school—including high-quality teachers, rigorous coursework, strong school-family partnerships, and other resources they need to succeed by providing technical assistance and guidance to states and districts. Multilingual and multicultural learners bring perspectives to our schools that promote open dialogue, increase collaboration and cultural competencies, and improve learning for all students. That is one important reason why the Department also will continue to provide support so that all our multilingual students and their families have access to educational experiences that affirm and protect their cultural and linguistic identities. The Department also will highlight the benefits of [seals of biliteracy](#) and other research-based strategies to support multilingual learners and engage multilingual parents. Additionally, the Department will offer a series of webinars through its [National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition](#) to provide teachers, school staff, education leaders, parents, families, and

policymakers around the country with the opportunity to hear expert speakers and connect to the latest research on all aspects of best serving English learners.

WHAT IS THE DEPARTMENT DOING TO RAISE THE BAR?

The Department will continue to collaborate with parents and families, teachers, education leaders, and students to support them in doing what works in their communities and schools; provide technical assistance, resources, and tools on pressing topics, including learning acceleration; engage in interagency partnerships to better serve children and families; build communities of practice; and elevate promising practices that are making a positive, transformative difference in schools.

For more, see a sampling of how the Department is advancing the strategies summarized above:

Achieve Academic Excellence through Recovery and Learning Acceleration

- Distributed, with record speed, \$130 billion in [ARP](#) funds, which allowed schools to safely reopen their buildings and work to address their students' academic and mental health needs.
- Delivered historic increases in funds for students with the greatest needs, including:
 - An additional \$1.9 billion for [Title I](#) to close achievement and opportunity gaps in our schools and assist students from low-income backgrounds.
 - An additional \$1.26 billion for [IDEA](#) to support students with disabilities.
 - An additional \$93 million for [Title III](#) to assist English learners and implement high-quality language instruction.
- In coordination with key partners, provided comprehensive assistance to states and districts through guidance, webinars, and communities of practice for effectively using ARP dollars to support students' academic recovery and mental health, address staffing shortages, and keep schools safe.
- Established best practices to focus ARP funds on high-impact strategies and ensure states and districts are meeting the law's requirements.
- Released a [checklist](#) to help parents engage with their children's schools about the ways in which ARP funds are being put to use, and to support parents in ensuring that these funds make a difference for their children.
- Mobilized the field to scale high-impact strategies that support students:
 - Launched the [National Partnership for Student Success](#), a partnership with AmeriCorps and more than 120 organizations to recruit, support, and engage an additional 250,000 mentors, tutors, student success coaches, and others in roles that can accelerate students' learning and help them thrive.

- Launched the [Engage Every Student](#) initiative to promote the expansion of summer learning and afterschool programs and ensure that every student who wants a spot in a high-quality, out-of-school-time program has one.
- Designed and enforced first-of-their kind “[maintenance of equity](#)” requirements for school funding systems, which are helping to protect high-poverty districts and schools from disproportionate and unfair cuts to their education funding.

Achieve Academic Excellence through a Comprehensive and Rigorous Education for Every Student

- Launched the [YOU Belong in STEM](#) initiative to scale equitable, high-quality science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education from preschool through higher education.
- Released [proposed amendments to Title IX](#) to restore crucial protections for students against sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment and sexual assault, making it clear that Title IX protects students from discrimination on the basis of gender identity and pregnancy.
- Continued to encourage the use of Title IV funding to promote robust financial literacy at every level of education.
- Invested, annually, \$1.4 billion across all 50 states to help students access a comprehensive and well-rounded education, including learning opportunities that engage parents and families, promote academic enrichment, and support student success.
- Awarded, annually, more than \$1 billion through the [21st Century Community Learning Centers](#) program to support summer school and afterschool programs, which may include financial literacy programs.

Improve Learning Conditions by Eliminating the Teacher Shortage

- Providing \$2.69 billion in funding to states and districts through: [Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants](#) and the [Teacher Quality Partnership](#), [Supporting Effective Educator Development \(SEED\)](#), [Special Educator Preparation](#), [Teacher and School Leader Incentive](#), [State Personnel Development](#), and [Augustus F. Hawkins Center of Excellence](#) programs.
- Distributed [new guidance](#) making clear how Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds can be used to address educator shortages and support teachers. Districts are [projected to spend](#) \$30 billion of their ESSER funds to support staffing.
- After the approval of the first federally recognized [Registered Apprenticeship Program \(RAP\)](#) for teachers by the Department of Labor last year, worked with external partners and Labor to expand high-quality apprenticeship programs, resulting in the number of states with approved RAPs for teachers increasing from just two to 16, since last summer.

- With the Department of Treasury, urged state and local officials to use a portion of the [\\$350 billion](#) in ARP State and Local Fiscal Recovery funds to address teacher shortages, including by increasing teacher compensation.

Improve Learning Conditions by Investing in Students' Mental Health and Well-Being

- Delivered \$2 billion through [the BSCA](#) to states and districts to foster safe and healthy learning environments in schools and to increase access to school-based mental health professionals.
- Prioritized students' access to mental health supports and programs that support their overall well-being through unprecedented [ARP funding](#).
- Released first-ever [joint-guidance](#) with the Department of Health and Human Services to make clear to educators, school leaders, and families how Medicaid funds can be used to support school-based health services.
- Increased funding for [community schools](#) from \$30 million in 2021 to \$150 million today.
- Released [guidance](#) on using Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) provided in the ARP for mental health resources and services at colleges and universities.
- Released [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on using BSCA Stronger Connections grant funds to promote safe and healthy learning environments.

Prepare Students for Global Competitiveness and Engagement by Reimagining College and Career Pathways

- Launched [Raise the Bar: Unlocking Career Success](#), a new initiative to strengthen the connection among K-12 education, postsecondary education, and workforce programs.
- Issued [new guidance](#) to leverage \$130 billion in ARP funding and \$1.4 billion in Perkins Career and Technical Education funding to expand access to high-quality dual enrollment programs; strong career and college advisement; high-quality work-based learning; and opportunities to earn industry-sought credentials.
- Established a new \$25 million [Career-Connected High Schools grant program](#) that will support students to participate in rigorous academic instruction and career and technical coursework, gain access to work-based learning opportunities, and engage in academic and career counseling.

- Created plans to develop a national playbook for improving College and Career Pathways in the United States. The playbook will include exemplars and technical assistance to ensure continuous growth for districts and opportunities for all students.

Prepare Students for Global Competitiveness and Engagement Through Multilingualism

- Awarded a total of [\\$120 million](#) to 44 colleges and universities to deliver professional learning and support for teachers of English learners, with a focus on school readiness and early childhood development for our youngest English learners.
- Awarded, for the first time ever, [funding](#) under the Augustus F. Hawkins Center of Excellence program, to support colleges and universities in prioritizing educator preparation programs that prepare multilingual teachers of color to become fully certified to teach multilingual learners, including in dual language programs.

Help get the word out about the urgent need to Raise the Bar in education by sharing [this one-pager in English](#) and [in Spanish](#) with your colleagues.

And visit [ED.gov/RaiseTheBar](https://ed.gov/RaiseTheBar) to connect with additional resources and to find links to programs and grants cited in this executive summary, which can support the efforts and strategies of states and districts.