



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

March 2, 2012

Dear District Superintendent, School Board President, and Teachers' Union/Association Leader:

In order to prepare our young people for an increasingly competitive global economy, the United States must do more to ensure that teaching is highly respected and supported as a profession; that accomplished, effective teachers are guiding students' learning in every classroom; and that schools are dynamic and innovative workplaces in which all employees are working toward the goal of improving student outcomes and closing achievement gaps. Teachers possess the same intrinsic motivation and enthusiasm for sharing knowledge and facilitating learning as generations past, but should have new, modern advantages to support their success. Despite the tight budgets we find ourselves working with, we need innovative and reform-oriented districts to lead the way when it comes to transforming the teaching profession.

As follow-up to the February 2011 *Conference on Advancing Student Achievement Through Labor-Management Collaboration*, the U.S. Department of Education is working in collaboration with the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, the National School Boards Association, the American Association of School Administrators, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Council of the Great City Schools, and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to sponsor a conference in **Cincinnati, Ohio**, on **Collaborating to Transform the Teaching Profession**. This event will commence on the afternoon of **May 23, 2012**, and conclude on the afternoon of **May 24, 2012**. National foundations and support organizations will join us to support our efforts in fostering these important relationships. We extend many thanks to the Ford Foundation and the GE Foundation for their support of the conference. As an invitee to last year's conference, we wanted to extend a special invite to you for this year's conference.

All teams that register are expected to present and participate in the "Transformers' Dialogue," an event designed to showcase the work being done by – and to build networks among – all State and district participants. On Day One, all attendees will showcase and share their accomplishments and plans for transforming the profession in an exhibition-like setting. On Day Two, teams will attend breakout sessions led by highlighted practitioners and experts. Toward the end of the event, teams will have opportunities to reflect on and improve their own plans.

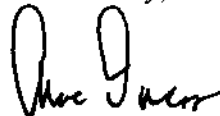
While we are inviting districts all over the country to participate, we expect attendees who are earnestly working collaboratively toward reforms that will increase student achievement by transforming the teaching profession. The costs of travel and accommodations will be provided for your three required district team members; you may bring a fourth team member at your own expense if you would like.

If you would like to attend, we ask three things of you. First, the superintendent, the teachers' union or association leader, and the school board president must agree to attend the event together (no substitutions permitted). Second, your team must jointly prepare and present at the

conference your district's plan for collaboratively transforming the teaching profession; you will share this work at the "Transformers' Dialogue," a session at the conference that is designed to showcase the work being done by – and to build networks among – State and district participants. And third, you must pledge to work collaboratively to improve student achievement through your collective bargaining agreement or other jointly developed district policies and related labor-management practices.

Please see the attached preliminary conference agenda. If you are interested in attending, please complete the attached RSVP form (including all three required signatures), and return it to us by 5:00 p.m. ET on March 30, 2012. If we are oversubscribed, as a prior attendee or a district that wanted to attend but was not selected, we will give your application preference. You will receive final confirmation of your attendance no later than April 6, 2012. I hope that you choose to join us this year and look forward to seeing you in Cincinnati.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arne Duncan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "D".

Arne Duncan