



## Secondary School Innovation Fund

Far too many students attend high schools where expectations are low, dropping out is the norm, and the minority who graduate leave unprepared for college and meaningful employment. This situation is untenable for individuals and our nation. The students who dropped out of the Class of 2008 will cost the economy an estimated \$319 billion in lost wages over the course of their lifetimes, and these non-graduates will earn an average of almost \$10,000 less each year compared to their peers who graduated. Since almost 90 percent of the fastest-growing and best-paying jobs require some postsecondary education, failing to improve our graduation rates means that U.S. students and the American economy will be unprepared to compete in the global economy.

The Secondary School Innovation Fund seeks to solve this problem by capitalizing on a unique American strength: the locally designed and driven innovation that has made our economy the largest in the world. Just as small businesses need venture capital to help their companies reach their full potential, local educational innovators need resources to invest in innovative practice, determine its impact, and replicate best practices. This legislation would support research and development of successful school models and program that are both replicable and systemic. The Secondary School Innovation Fund would give educational innovators, who are doing important work across the country, the opportunity to evaluate and expand upon their strategies for increasing student achievement and graduation rates.

The Secondary School Innovation Fund would provide competitive grants for innovative models and programs in our nation's middle and high schools that improve student achievement and prepare students for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. The Secondary School Innovation Fund would:

- provide grants for partnerships to create innovative models of reform in our nation's secondary schools;
- create evidence-based, systemic, and replicable models of reform in secondary schools that improve student achievement and prepare students to succeed in postsecondary education and the twenty-first-century workforce;
- expand on the success of emerging models like multiple pathways, which includes dropout prevention and recovery models, career and technical education, career academies, and personalized learning environments; early college high schools and dual enrollment; and early warning indicator and intervention systems;
- provide opportunities for the expansion of programs such as expanded learning time; middle to high school transitions; high school to postsecondary transitions; increasing flexibility in scheduling, curricula, budgeting, and governance; distance learning and other improved learning opportunities in rural schools; increased rigor; improving teaching; and leveraging community-based services;
- provide resources necessary for high-quality research and evaluation to ensure that federal funding can be leveraged for programs with a proven track record in improving student achievement; and
- support a variety of models and strategies for innovation in secondary schools such as multiple pathways, personalization, early college and dual enrollment, early warning systems, career academies, improved transitions and alignment, expanded learning time, postsecondary and work-based learning opportunities, increased autonomy and flexibility at the school level, improved learning opportunities in rural schools, and increased rigor at all levels of secondary education aligned with postsecondary education and the workforce.