

## **Statement on Education Reform**

*May 3, 2016*

When we came into office at the height of the worst recession in generations, we knew a key to creating true middle-class security would be preparing the next generation to compete in the global economy. Thanks to the hard work of our teachers, students, parents, and state and local leaders, that commitment is paying off in new opportunities for our communities and our country.

Today, on National Teacher Appreciation Day, we say thank you to the leaders in our classrooms and reaffirm our shared belief that all children, no matter where they live or what they look like, can grow up to be whatever they want. A world-class education is the single most important factor in making that possible. It determines not just whether our children can compete for the best jobs, but whether America can out-compete other countries.

At the beginning of my Administration, we set an ambitious goal to once again lead the world in our share of college graduates. By reforming our education system from cradle to career, and with the help of a newly announced \$100 million down payment to help expand free community college programs and connect college graduates to in-demand jobs, we're on our way to realizing that goal.

We're also proud that high school graduation rates are at an all-time high and dropout rates are at historic lows. Across the board, we're raising expectations for everyone from the Congress to the classroom—but we didn't stop there. We've also raised standards so they are rigorous and relevant.

It starts in our children's youngest years. We set a goal to expand high-quality early education investments in every child. Over the last three years, 38 states have increased those investments.

We're also making sure our students have access to a well-rounded education—that includes exposure to a variety of classes, from computer skills and reading to science and math. We've cut our schools' digital divide in half, and today 20 million more students—including many in low-income communities—can access high-speed internet and the modern learning tools it provides.

Mindful of the needs of businesses in high-growth and high-demand industries, and true to the principle that a quality education cannot be a privilege for the few, we also proposed a plan that offers two years of free community college to anyone willing to work for it. We're also proud that there are 1 million more black and Latino students in college than there were at the start of my Administration.

At the center of all this progress are the teachers we celebrate year-round, including today. Like those who made a difference in my life, our students' teachers are the ones who help them discover, dream, believe in themselves, and realize the potential our nation promises. That's why one of the most important priorities of my Administration has been to ensure every classroom has a great teacher. To do that, we've reviewed every element of our education system—from standards to assessments to how we train, support, and reward our teachers—to bolster our national effort to improve the teaching profession. As part of that

progress, we are on track to train 100,000 more outstanding math and science teachers by 2021.

Our teachers deserve credit for each of our accomplishments and the progress we're continuing to make, from better early education and higher standards to better student performance and higher graduation rates.

Like so many patriotic public servants driven by the reward of giving back, our educators didn't choose their field because of the big paychecks, easy work, or short hours. They are passionate about helping our students realize the best versions of themselves so our country can become the best version of itself. Time and again our teachers have met this solemn responsibility, even as we've asked more of them than ever before.

In our changing world, our sons' and daughters' best job qualification isn't what they do—it's what they know. Our commitment to their education means giving them the knowledge they need to thrive and lead. It is a commitment to prepare them not only to get good jobs, but also to be good citizens—not just to know the correct answer, but to be curious and caring about the world around them.

The future belongs to the nation that best educates its people. If we continue building on the progress we've made over the past seven years, I'm confident we will continue to be that nation.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: The statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as part of a White House and Department of Education report entitled "Giving Every Child a Shot: Progress Under the Obama Administration's Education Agenda," in which it was included as the Foreword.

*Categories:* Statements by the President : Education reform.

*Subjects:* Communications : Broadband and wireless technologies; Education : Early childhood education programs; Education : Global competitiveness; Education : High school dropout rate and prevention programs; Education : High school graduation rate; Education : Minority students; Education : Postsecondary education :: Community colleges; Education : Reform efforts; Education : Standards and school accountability; Education : Teachers; Education : Technology and innovation, expansion efforts; Holidays and special observances : Teacher Appreciation Day, National.

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