

Obama recognizes master teachers

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WASHINGTON, DC -- The Obama Administration announced the President's plan for the creation of a new national Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Master Teacher Corps comprised of some of the nation's finest educators in STEM subjects.

The STEM Master Teacher Corps will begin with 50 STEM teachers established in 50 sites and will be expanded over four years to reach 10,000 Master Teachers. These selected teachers will make a multi-year commitment to the Corps and, in exchange for their expertise, leadership and service, will receive an annual stipend of up to \$20,000 on top of their base salaries. The Administration will launch this Teacher Corps with the \$1 billion from the President's 2013 budget request currently before Congress.

"If America is going to compete for the jobs and industries of tomorrow, we need to make sure our children are getting the best education possible. Teachers matter, and great teachers deserve our support," said the President.

The administration also announced that the President will immediately dedicate approximately \$100 million of the existing Teacher Incentive Fund toward helping school districts implement

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high-quality plans to establish career ladders that identify, develop, and leverage highly-effective STEM teachers. With an application deadline of Jul. 27, more than 30 school districts across America have already signaled their interest in competing for funding to identify and compensate highly effective teachers who can model and mentor STEM instruction for their teaching peers, providing those teachers with additional compensation, recognition, and responsibilities in their schools.

These administration plans build on a key recommendation of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST), calling for a national STEM Master Teacher Corps to recognize and help retain America's most talented STEM teachers, build a community of practice among them, raise the profile of the STEM teaching profession and leverage excellent teachers to collaborate with their peers to strengthen STEM education in America's public schools.

Supporting Master Teachers through recognition, respect, and rewards

Early in his Administration, President Obama called for a national effort to help move American students from the middle to the top of the pack in science and math achievement. The Obama Administration is committed to preparing young people both to learn deeply and think critically in STEM, and to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary for jobs in the high-growth fields that fuel American innovation.

Improving STEM teaching is a key strategy to reaching this national goal. To meet this critical need, PCAST issued the Prepare and Inspire report, with a key recommendation calling for the creation of a new, national STEM Master Teacher Corps.

Master Teachers are classroom-based educators who are highly effective in improving learning outcomes for their students, model outstanding teaching and share their practices and strategies with their professional colleagues to lead and guide improvements across education. Master teachers know and are deeply interested in their subject, care about improving their craft, and inspire both their students and fellow teachers. PCAST recommended that the STEM Master Teacher Corps become a national resource – a networked community of outstanding public school teachers of STEM subjects who can serve as resources to each other and to other educators in schools and communities nationwide, and who would signal the value of STEM education to America's future.

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An administration statement said in order to ensure America's students are prepared for success in an increasingly competitive global economy, we must do more to ensure that teaching is highly respected and supported as a profession, and that accomplished, effective teachers are guiding students' learning in every classroom.

The Obama Administration's 2013 budget includes a new, \$5 billion program – the RESPECT Project, which stands for Recognizing Educational Success, Professional Excellence, and Collaborative Teaching – that it said will re-envision the teaching profession for the 21st Century. The announcements build on the RESPECT project by supporting STEM master teachers as a key strategy to retain and reward our nation's most accomplished STEM educators, and by enabling them to work in new ways to dramatically improve student achievement. Lifting up America's teachers is critical to recruiting promising talent, retaining the best, and continuously improving outcomes for students.

As part of the RESPECT project, the STEM Master Teacher Corps will be supported by the U.S. Department of Education, and established in collaboration with independent, non-profit organizations and local public-private partnerships between STEM-related businesses and industries and school districts. Key parts of the plan include a rigorous selection of the best and brightest math and science teachers from across the country, a national recognition and rewards, including compensation to keep Corps members in the profession and Corps members as a national resource, for their schools and for other STEM educators.

The statement went on to say these efforts will be complemented as well by private sector responses to the President's call for an "all hands on deck" approach to excellence in STEM education.

The announcements align with the President's belief that excellent STEM teaching requires both deep content knowledge and strong teaching skills, and his strong leadership in working to improve STEM education.