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Letter From Secretary Arne Duncan to School Principals

August 26, 2009

Please note that the time of this speech has changed to 12:00 noon eastern standard time.

Dear Principal:

In a recent [interview with student reporter](#), Damon Weaver, President Obama announced that on September 8 — the first day of school for many children across America — he will deliver a national address directly to students on the importance of education. The President will challenge students to work hard, set educational goals, and take responsibility for their learning. He will also call for a shared responsibility and commitment on the part of students, parents and educators to ensure that every child in every school receives the best education possible so they can compete in the global economy for good jobs and live rewarding and productive lives as American citizens.

Since taking office, the President has repeatedly focused on education, even as the country faces two wars, the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression and major challenges on issues like energy and health care. The President believes that education is a critical part of building a new foundation for the American economy. Educated people are more active civically and better informed on issues affecting their lives, their families and their futures.

This is the first time an American president has spoken directly to the nation's school children about persisting and succeeding in school. We encourage you to use this historic moment to help your students get focused and begin the school year strong. I encourage you, your teachers, and students to join me in watching the President deliver this address on Tuesday, September 8, 2009. It will be broadcast live on the White House website www.whitehouse.gov 12:00 noon eastern standard time.

In advance of this address, we would like to share the following resources: a menu of classroom activities for students in grades preK-6 and for students in grades 7-12. These are ideas developed by and for teachers to help engage students and stimulate discussion on the importance of education in their lives. We are also staging a student video contest on education. Details of the video contest will be available on our website www.ed.gov in the coming weeks.

On behalf of all Americans, I want to thank our educators who do society's most important work by preparing our children for work and for life. No other task is more critical to our economic future and our social progress. I look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead to continue improving the quality of public education we provide all of our children.

Sincerely,

Arne Duncan

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Last Modified: 08/31/2009

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Grades preK-6

PDF (64K) | [MS Word](#) (32K)

Grades 7-12

PDF (108K) | [MS Word](#) (80K)