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## Secretary Spellings Announces New Teaching Ambassador Fellowship

*By Carina Zaragoza*

Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings has announced the new Teaching Ambassador Fellowship Program. The fellowships offer positions with the U.S. Department of Education for teachers to share their input with policymakers. The Teaching Ambassador Fellowship Program will initiate its first cohort in the 2008-2009 school year.

The program will be composed of up to 20 classroom fellows who will continue to work as teachers but also work as part-time employees at the Department of Education. These fellows will be assigned various projects within the Department of Education. The program also calls for up to five Washington fellows, who will work full-time as federal employees in Washington, DC, collaborating on education programs and policy deliberations.

Public school teachers from across the country can apply for the program but must meet eligibility requirements. Among these are:

- They must currently teach at a U.S. K-12 school.
- They must have three years' teaching experience.
- They must meet their state's highly qualified teacher requirements.
- They must be U.S. citizens.
- They must obtain a recommendation from a principal.

The Teaching Ambassador Fellowship Program provides public school teachers with leadership roles and opportunities to participate in the education policymaking process. The Department of Education is seeking to tap into the knowledge and experience of public school teachers to better develop education programs and policies. The Department of Education anticipates fellows will collaborate directly with district, state, and federal officials to shape national policy on education.

The Department of Education has outlined the goals of the program as follows:

- To recognize motivated and innovative public school teachers and provide them with leadership roles outside the classroom.

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- To improve education programs and policies. Efforts will be made to connect policy to the realities of the classroom.
- To assist teachers with voicing their opinions, needs, and ideas within the education community and throughout the country.
- To encourage principals to work with program fellows to promote collaboration at the school level.

The program will begin in the summer of 2008 with a convention outlining the details of the program to fellows. Each fellow will also be matched with a government liaison and be responsible for the completion of projects, including a collaborative class project. Upon completion of the program, fellows will be encouraged to create community leadership groups to further the program's mission.

## **On the Net**

U.S. Department of Education