



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **FMCS Partners with U.S. Department of Education and Others to Convene Labor-Management Conference for Public Education Reform**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — George Cohen, Director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), announced today that the Agency has joined with U.S. Education Secretary, Arne Duncan, in embarking upon an exciting new partnership together with the major public education organizations representing teachers, school administrators and school boards. A federally-sponsored conference will be held in Denver on February 15 and 16 with the far-reaching goal of advancing student achievements in our nation's public schools through labor-management collaboration.

Mr. Cohen noted that the underlying premise which all the parties have endorsed is that innovative and reform-oriented programs focused on student achievement are essential if the United States is to survive and flourish in our highly competitive global education environment. "To that end, our Agency has a cadre of highly trained and experienced mediators committed to offering labor and management their services in facilitating the discussions concerning any of the myriad of reform-related issues that may arise throughout the course of their relationship," Cohen said. FMCS offers specialized programs to assist labor and management in developing and enhancing committees and partnerships to make them collaborate more effectively.

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said, "We have seen how good labor-management relations can create the conditions that drive student success so we want to bring together leaders in labor and management who are committed to collaboration around bold reforms."

Invitations to the conference went out to approximately 2,000 school districts that secured federal funding in the past year under key programs, including Race to the Top, the Teacher Incentive Fund, School Improvement Grants and Investing in Innovation. Mr. Cohen thanked U.S. Education Secretary Duncan and the other partners for supporting the conference, adding, "We are honored and pleased to have the opportunity to play a constructive role in this all-important project."

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*The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, created in 1947, is an independent U.S. government agency whose mission is to preserve and promote labor-management peace and cooperation. Headquartered in Washington, DC, with 10 district offices and 68 field offices, the agency provides mediation and conflict resolution services to industry, government agencies and communities.*