

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-14-848T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training and the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education; House Committee on Education and the Workforce

## Why GAO Did This Study

GAO's recommendations create tangible benefits by improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people. In fiscal year 2013 alone, GAO's work resulted in \$51.5 billion in financial benefits for the federal government. However, these benefits can only be achieved when federal agencies implement GAO's recommendations.

GAO has made 286 recommendations to Education since fiscal year 2004. This testimony addresses (1) the status of Education's implementation of GAO's recommendations and the benefits that have resulted from these actions, and (2) the characteristics of recommendations Education has not implemented. To address these topics, GAO reviewed the status of all recommendations, as of August 15, 2014, it made to Education since fiscal year 2004. This time period was selected to capture 10 full years of recommendations in addition to those made during the current fiscal year. GAO also analyzed the financial and other benefits derived from those recommendations that have been implemented, and examined the recommendations that have not been implemented to determine the types of programs and areas related to the recommendations that have not yet been addressed.

View [GAO-14-848T](#). For more information, contact Jacqueline M. Nowicki at (617) 788-0580 or [nowickij@gao.gov](mailto:nowickij@gao.gov) and Melissa Emrey-Arras at (617) 788-0534 or [emreyarrasm@gao.gov](mailto:emreyarrasm@gao.gov).

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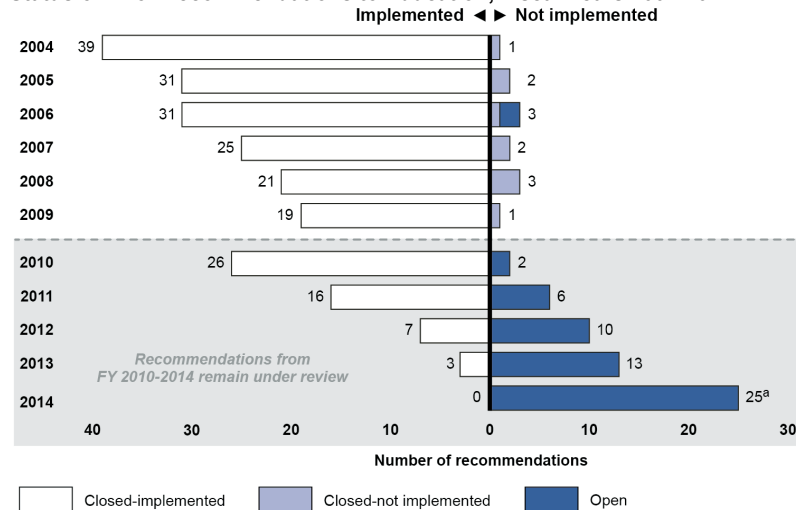
## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Status of Prior GAO Recommendations

## What GAO Found

The Department of Education (Education) has implemented 218 of the 286 recommendations GAO has made since fiscal year 2004, resulting in significant benefits and programmatic improvements. Education implemented 93 percent of recommendations made from fiscal year 2004 through 2009 within 4 years, a standard measure GAO uses to track performance, compared to the governmentwide average of around 80 percent. GAO's recommendations to Education have resulted in more than \$2.1 billion in financial benefits and 145 other documented benefits, such as programmatic and administrative improvements, since fiscal year 2004. These results include improved accuracy in calculating students' need for financial aid, new guidance that ensures students with disabilities have equal opportunity to participate in athletics, and a streamlined and less burdensome grant application process for school districts.

Status of Prior Recommendations to Education, Fiscal Years 2004-2014



Source: GAO analysis of recommendations database as of August 15, 2014. | GAO-14-848T

<sup>a</sup> GAO is in the process of collecting status updates on the 25 recommendations made since the start of fiscal year 2014.

Education has not implemented 68 of the recommendations GAO has made since fiscal year 2004 for making improvements to various programs. These include 10 recommendations GAO closed after 4 years once determining that Education was unlikely to implement them. For these 10 recommendations, circumstances changed making the recommendation no longer valid, or Education disagreed with the recommendations, did not take sufficient action, or cited implementation challenges. GAO is actively monitoring 58 open recommendations, almost all of which were made within the last 4 years. More than one-third of GAO's open recommendations are directed towards Education's goal for strengthening elementary and secondary programs, while the rest focus on postsecondary programs and other cross-cutting goals from Education's strategic plan. Specifically, GAO's open recommendations propose a variety of necessary improvements across Education's strategic goals, such as strengthening external oversight and monitoring of grantees and contractors, increasing coordination and collaboration with other agencies, and improving internal management.