

Obama seeks more federal money for education

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(Photo: Jacquelyn Martin, AP)

WASHINGTON — President Obama said Monday the nation's schools are improving, but need more federal money to keep pace.

"The challenge that we face is that this is a monumental task and it requires resources," Obama told reporters at the White House.

The president spoke briefly after meeting with a group of superintendents, board members, and educators from some of the nation's largest school districts.

Education figures to be a flash point between the Democratic White House and the Republican-run Congress as this year's budget battles heat up.

Congressional Republicans are expected to propose a budget this week.

After his meeting with educators from big city school officials, Obama said that math and reading schools are up, but that progress could end if schools don't have more help.

Obama said he is ready to challenge congressional Republicans if their proposed budget does not include adequate funding for schools, calling for an "approach at the federal level that says we care about all kids, and not just some."

Said Obama: "This is something worth fighting for."

Cory Fritz, a spokesman for House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, said the GOP budget plan is designed in part to improve education.

"The Republican budget will reaffirm our commitment to reforms to expand opportunities for students, empower parents and restore local controls," Fritz said. "We welcome the opportunity to contrast our common-sense approach with the president's vision for tax hikes on college savings and new powers for federal bureaucrats."