

The Educator Preparation Reform Act

Senator Jack Reed and Representative Mike Honda

A bill to improve the quality of teaching in high need schools by reforming and strengthening accountability of educator preparation programs, and supporting partnerships to meet the needs of educators and educational leaders

Overview

Research has shown that the most important school-based factors for improving student outcomes and turning around struggling schools are teacher quality and school leadership. The Educator Preparation Reform Act will improve accountability for teacher preparation programs by requiring reporting on program features that are related to future success in the classroom such as admissions standards, clinical preparation requirements, and outcome measures such as placement, retention, and performance. It makes significant improvements to the Teacher Quality Partnership Grants in Title II of the Higher Education Act by expanding the residency programs to include principals and providing partnerships flexibility in meeting the instructional needs of local school districts. The bill reforms the TEACH Grants to target student eligibility to those in the latter half of their preparation at the undergraduate level or those in graduate programs and restricts eligibility for grants at institutions designated as “low-performing” or “at risk.”

Key Provisions

Improves the Teacher Quality Partnership Grants Program

- Maintains the core mechanism of the program providing for partnerships between institutions of higher education, high-need LEAs, and high-need schools to recruit and prepare teachers, principals, and other educators who commit to serve at least three years in a high need school.
- Requires that partnership grants be used to reform undergraduate teacher preparation programs, establish teacher or principal residency programs, or a combination of those activities.
- Allows partnership grants to support and improve programs to develop other educators needed by school districts, such as librarians, literacy specialists, and school counselors.

Strengthens Accountability for Programs that Prepare Teachers

- Requires all teacher preparation entities – higher education and non-higher education based – to submit report cards to the public with key indicators of program quality and performance.
- Offers states and institutions the option to utilize a valid and reliable teacher performance assessment to determine candidate readiness.
- Requires reporting on candidate selectivity as measured by grade point averages for admitted students and scores on standardized admissions tests
- Collects data about clinical preparation, a key component of effective preparation programs.
- Requires institutions to report on the availability of outcome data on program graduates and report that data, as applicable.
- Strengthens the current state requirement to identify and report low-performing programs by requiring states to provide technical assistance to low-performing programs and to report programs that have been closed. Clarifies that it is the state’s responsibility to develop criteria for determining program performance levels in consultation with stakeholders and that the criteria must be submitted for public comment.

Coordinates Elementary and Secondary Education Act Teacher Quality Initiatives with Educator Preparation Education Programs

Requires that states use the 2.5 percent set aside under the ESEA Title II teacher quality state formula grant to:

- develop and implement teacher performance assessments to determine the readiness of new teachers to be effective in the classroom;
- provide technical assistance to low-performing preparation programs; and
- develop a system for assessing the quality and effectiveness of professional development programs.

Reforms TEACH Grants in Title IV of the Higher Education Act

- Amends the TEACH Grants to limit the eligibility for grants to juniors, seniors, and master's degree level students.
- Restricts institutional eligibility for institutions designated as "low performing" or "at-risk" by the state.
- Allows for partial payback based on the length of service completed for TEACH Grant recipients who do not finish the four-year service requirement.

Organizations supporting the Educator Preparation Reform Act

Alliance for Excellent Education
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Psychological Association
Association of American Universities
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Council for Christian Colleges and Universities
First Focus Campaign for Children
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Down Syndrome Society
National School Boards Association
National Science Teachers Association
Opportunity to Learn Action Fund
Public Education Network
Rural School and Community Trust
Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children