To create and expand innovative teacher and principal preparation programs known as teacher and principal preparation academies.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To create and expand innovative teacher and principal preparation programs known as teacher and principal preparation academies.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Growing Education Achievement Training Academies for Teachers and Principals Act” or the “GREAT Teachers and Principals Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to encourage innovation in the field of teacher and principal preparation by creating and expanding teacher or principal preparation academies that will increase the number of effective teachers and principals serving in high-needs schools and hard-to-staff subjects.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) Principal preparation academy.—The term “principal preparation academy” means a public or other nonprofit institution for preparing principals that—

(A) enters into a charter with a State authorizer that specifies the goals and outcomes expected of the principal preparation academy and the obligations of the State authorizer, including—

(i) a requirement that—

(I) principal candidates, or principals serving on alternative certificates, licenses, or credentials, who are
enrolled in the principal preparation academy receive a significant part of their training through clinical preparation that partners the principal candidate with a mentor principal; and

(II) the academy will provide instruction to the principal candidate that links to the clinical preparation experience;

(ii) the number of principals the principal preparation academy will produce and the minimum number and percentage of effective principals with a demonstrated track record of success in getting a school’s students on track to being career and college ready;

(iii) a requirement that a certificate of completion (or degree, if the principal preparation academy is, or is affiliated with, an institution of higher education) will be conferred upon a graduate from the principal preparation academy only after the graduate demonstrates a track record of success in getting a school’s students on track to being college and career ready;
(iv) a requirement that the principal preparation academy survey the academy’s alumni not less than once every 3 years to track the number of alumni employed as principals and in education; and

(v) timelines for producing cohorts of graduates and conferring certificates of completion (or degrees, if the principal preparation academy is, or is affiliated with, an institution of higher education) from the principal preparation academy;

(B) shall not have unnecessary restrictions on the methods the principal preparation academy will use to train principal candidates, including restrictions or requirements—

(i) obligating the faculty of the principal preparation academy faculty to hold advanced degrees;

(ii) obligating such faculty to conduct academic research;

(iii) related to the physical infrastructure of the principal preparation academy; or
(iv) related to the number of course credits required as part of the program of study; and

(C) limits admission to its program to candidates who demonstrate strong potential to be effective principals, based on a rigorous, competency-based selection process that reviews a candidate’s prior academic achievement or record of professional accomplishment.

(2) STATE AUTHORIZER.—The term “State authorizer” means an entity designated by the State to recognize teacher or principal preparation academies within the State that—

(A) may be a nonprofit organization, State educational agency, or other public entity, or consortium of such entities (including a consortium of States); and

(B) does not renew a teacher or principal preparation academy’s charter if the academy fails to produce the minimum number or percentage of effective teachers or principals, respectively, identified in the academy’s charter.

(3) TEACHER PREPARATION ACADEMY.—The term “teacher preparation academy” means a public
or other nonprofit institution for preparing teachers that—

(A) enters into a charter with a State authorizer that specifies the goals and outcomes expected of the teacher preparation academy and the obligations of the State authorizer, including—

(i) a requirement that—

(I) teacher candidates, or teachers teaching on alternative certificates, licenses, or credentials, who are enrolled in the teacher preparation academy receive a significant part of their training through clinical preparation that partners teacher candidates with mentor teachers with a demonstrated track record of success in improving academic achievement in the classroom; and

(II) the academy will provide instruction to teacher candidates that links to the clinical preparation experience;

(ii) the number of teachers the teacher preparation academy will produce and
the minimum number and percentage of effective teachers with a demonstrated track record of success in getting students on track to being college and career ready, based on multiple measures of student achievement;

(iii) a requirement that a teacher preparation academy will only award a certificate of completion (or degree, if the teacher preparation academy is, or is affiliated with, an institution of higher education) after the graduate demonstrates the track record of success described in clause (ii), either as a student teacher or teacher-of-record on an alternative certificate, license, or credential;

(iv) a requirement that the teacher preparation academy survey the academy’s alumni not less than once every 3 years to track the number of alumni employed as teachers and in education; and

(v) timelines for producing cohorts of graduates and conferring certificates of completion (or degrees, if the teacher preparation academy is, or is affiliated with, an
institution of higher education) from the teacher preparation academy;

(B) shall not have unnecessary restrictions on the methods or inputs the teacher preparation academy will use to train teacher candidates or teachers teaching on alternative certificates, licenses, or credentials, including restrictions or requirements—

(i) obligating the faculty of the teacher preparation academy to hold advanced degrees;

(ii) obligating such faculty to conduct academic research;

(iii) related to the physical infrastructure of the teacher preparation academy;

(iv) related to the number of course credits required as part of the program of study;

(v) related to the undergraduate coursework completed by teachers teaching on alternative certificates, licenses, or credentials, as long as such teachers have successfully passed all relevant State-approved content area examinations; or
(vi) related to obtaining additional accreditation from a national accrediting body; and

(C) limits admission to its program to candidates who demonstrate strong potential to be effective teachers, based on a rigorous selection process that reviews a candidate’s prior academic achievement or record of professional accomplishment.

(4) Teacher or Principal Preparation Academy.—The term “teacher or principal preparation academy” means a teacher preparation academy or a principal preparation academy.

SEC. 4. STATE GRANTS.

(a) In General.—The Secretary is authorized to award grants to States having applications approved under subsection (b) to enable such States to create or expand teacher or principal preparation academies.

(b) Applications.—Each State that desires a grant under this Act shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may reasonably require. The application shall include—

(1) an assurance that the State does not have in place legal, statutory, or regulatory barriers to the
creation or operation of teacher or principal preparation academies;

(2) a description of how the State will promote the creation and expansion of teacher or principal preparation academies;

(3) a description of how the authorization and approval of teacher or principal preparation academies is separate and distinct from the requirements otherwise established by the State for approval of other teacher or principal preparation programs;

(4) a description of the process the State authorizer will use to authorize and approve a teacher or principal preparation academy that—

(A) enables participants in the academy to be eligible for State financial aid to the same extent as participants in other State-approved teacher or principal preparation programs, including alternative certification, licensure, or credential programs;

(B) enables teachers who are teaching on alternative certificates, licenses, or credentials to teach in the State while enrolled in a teacher preparation academy; and

(C) enables graduates from teacher preparation academies to be eligible to teach in such
State and graduates from principal preparation academies to be eligible to be a principal in a school in such State;

(5) a description of the process the State authorizer will use to monitor the success of—

(A) a teacher preparation academy in—

(i) producing effective teachers that demonstrate a track record of success in getting students on track to being college and career ready, based on multiple measures of student achievement; and

(ii) preparing teachers to teach in high-needs schools or hard-to-staff subjects; and

(B) a principal preparation academy in—

(i) producing effective principals that demonstrate a track record of success in getting students in a school on track to being career and college ready; and

(ii) preparing principals to serve in high-needs schools or hard-to-staff subjects;

(6) the criteria the State authorizer will apply in renewing or denying a teacher or principal preparation academy’s charter, including the minimum
number and percentage of effective teachers or principals such academy must produce in order to renew its charter; and

(7) an assurance that the State will recognize a certificate of completion (from a teacher or principal preparation academy that is not, or is unaffiliated with, an institution of higher education), as at least the equivalent of a master’s degree in education for the purposes of teacher or principal hiring, retention, compensation, and promotion in the State.

(c) USES OF FUNDS.—A State receiving a grant under this Act shall use grant funds to—

(1) implement a process by which to—

(A) create or designate State authorizers;

and

(B) create or approve teacher or principal preparation academies;

(2) support, directly or through a nonprofit intermediary organization, the establishment and operation of teacher or principal preparation academies by assisting entities with the planning, program design, and implementation of such programs; and
(3) award subgrants to teacher or principal preparation academies in the State in accordance with section 5.

SEC. 5. SUBGRANTS TO TEACHER OR PRINCIPAL PREPARATION ACADEMIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—From the amounts made available under section 4(c)(3), a State shall award subgrants to nonprofit entities to carry out activities described in subsection (d).

(b) APPLICATIONS.—Each nonprofit entity desiring a subgrant under this section from a State shall submit an application to a State authorizer designated by the State to receive such applications. The application shall include, at a minimum—

(1) a description of the teacher or principal preparation academy’s proposed curriculum, training of teacher or principal candidates (including clinical training), and approach to teacher or principal development;

(2) the student achievement outcomes the entity will require of academy graduates before conferring a degree or certificate of completion from the program, with timelines for obtaining such outcomes;

(3) a multi-year financial and operating model for the entity;
(4) the qualifications of the entity’s chief executive officer or organization leader; and

(5) a description of how the teacher or principal preparation academy is designed to prepare teachers or principals to serve in high-need areas (including rural areas and Native American communities), or hard-to-staff subjects.

(c) PRIORITY.—In awarding subgrants under this section, a State shall give a priority to entities proposing to expand previously existing teacher or principal preparation programs, as of the date of application, with a demonstrated track record of success in getting students on track to being college and career ready.

(d) USES OF FUNDS.—An entity that receives a subgrant under this section shall use its subgrant—

(1) to establish a teacher or principal preparation academy;

(2) to expand the capacity of a teacher or principal preparation academy;

(3) to measure the effectiveness of a teacher or principal preparation academy in improving student academic achievement, as demonstrated by getting students on track to be college and career ready; or

(4) to recruit candidates for a teacher or principal preparation academy who have demonstrated
strong potential to be effective teachers or principals, based on a rigorous, competency-based selection process that reviews a candidate’s prior academic achievement or record of professional accomplishment.

SEC. 6. COORDINATION WITH THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE.

(a) Interagency Agreement.—The Secretary shall enter into an interagency agreement with the Corporation for National and Community Service under section 121(b) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12571(b)) under which the Corporation shall approve positions, for candidates at each teacher or principal preparation academy that receives financial assistance under this Act, as approved national service positions, as defined in section 101 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12511). Such interagency agreement shall specify how a degree or certificate of completion for a term of service as a participant at a teacher or principal preparation academy will be submitted to the Corporation.

(b) Special Rule.—Notwithstanding section 148 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12604), the Secretary and the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community
Service shall develop a program under which national service educational awards may be disbursed to a teacher or principal preparation academy to cover or reimburse the costs of attending the academy.

SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2012 through 2016.