

The Educator Preparation Reform Act – S. 969
116th Congress

BACKGROUND:

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, including 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 TEACH Grants to target student eligibility to those in the latter half of their preparation at the undergraduate level or those in graduate programs. It also requires the Secretary to establish an appeals process for grants wrongly converted to loans.

SUMMARY:

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 these 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

- Streamlines the data reporting requirements of indicators of program quality and performance for states as well as both institutions of higher education and other entities offering teacher preparation programs.
- Offers states and institutions of higher education the option to utilize a valid and reliable teacher performance assessment to determine candidate profession readiness.
- Requires reporting on candidate academic preparation as measured by grade point averages for admitted students.
- Requires the state to evaluate the capacity of the state longitudinal data system to report outcome indicators on program graduates and report what is available.

- Strengthens the state's role in not only identifying at-risk and low-performing teacher preparation programs, but includes provisions to supply technical assistance to low-performing programs and close programs which, given technical assistance and time to implement change, fail to improve
- Engages key state-level and community stakeholders in the determination of the criteria necessary to determine the performance level of the teacher preparation programs in the state. Clarifies what it means for a program completer to be profession ready.

Streamlines Reporting 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.
- Allows for partial payback based on the length of service completed for TEACH Grant recipients who do not finish the four-year service requirement.
- Requires the Secretary to establish an appeals process for grants wrongly converted to loans and requires the Secretary to report annually on the number of conversions and appeals.

The Educator Preparation Reform Act is supported by:

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
 American Federation of Teachers
 Higher Education Consortium for Special Education
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 National Association of Elementary School Principals
 National Association of Secondary School Principals,
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