

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1282

To provide for Project GRAD programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 14, 2005

Mrs. MCCARTHY (for herself and Ms. PRYCE of Ohio) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To provide for Project GRAD programs, and for other purposes.

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

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Graduation Really
5 Achieves Dreams Act” or the “GRAD Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) The national secondary school graduation
9 rate is only 70 percent. For the class of 2001, the
10 national graduation rate was only 51 percent for Af-

1 rican-American students and 52 percent for Latino
2 students.

3 (2) In our nation’s high poverty urban districts,
4 as few as one-third of students graduate from sec-
5 ondary school. In these places, completion rates
6 among certain disadvantaged groups of students are
7 often lower still.

8 (3) In rural areas, where one-third of American
9 students attend school, only 58.8 percent of students
10 attend institutions of higher education, compared
11 with 68.2 percent of American students from urban
12 and suburban areas.

13 (4) Each school day, approximately 3,000 sec-
14 ondary school students drop out of school.

15 (5) The 6,000,000 secondary students who
16 make up the lowest 25 percent in terms of achieve-
17 ment scores are 3.5 times more likely to drop out
18 than students in the next highest quarter of aca-
19 demic achievement, and are 20 times more likely to
20 drop out than high achieving students.

21 (6) Approximately 25 percent of secondary
22 school students are reading at “below basic” levels.
23 The problem is even more severe for poor students
24 of color. The average minority or low-income ninth

1 grader performs at only the fifth or sixth grade level
2 in reading.

3 (7) Achievement gaps persist across racial and
4 socioeconomic lines in rural schools—there are
5 2,500,000 poor children in rural areas, and the child
6 poverty rate in some rural areas is 2 to 3 times the
7 national average.

8 (8) Recruiting and retaining good teachers is
9 an enormous challenge in rural areas: the average
10 salary in rural districts is 13.4 percent lower than
11 in nonrural areas; and teachers often teach more
12 than 1 subject, teach in poor working conditions, live
13 far from colleges, have little access to training, and
14 face geographic and social isolation.

15 (9) Low graduation rates and college attend-
16 ance rates are evidence that, in the earlier grades,
17 schools are not meeting the fundamental achieve-
18 ment needs of low-income, minority, and rural stu-
19 dents.

20 (10) Even those students who do graduate from
21 secondary schools and go on to college are struggling
22 because they lack the basic skills to succeed. Ap-
23 proximately 40 percent of all 4-year college students
24 take a remedial course and 63 percent of all commu-

1 nity college students are assigned to at least 1 reme-
2 dial course.

3 (11) A small percentage of low-income students
4 who manage to enter college are able to complete a
5 degree. Of students from families in the bottom 20
6 percent in terms of income who enter college, only
7 27 percent go on to complete a 2- or 4-year college
8 degree within 8 years.

9 (12) Graduation rates impact early drop-out
10 rates in the military. The attrition rates in the mili-
11 tary of both individuals who are not secondary
12 school graduates and GED recipients are 8 percent-
13 age points higher than the attrition rate of sec-
14 ondary school graduates. As a result, the Armed
15 Services no longer accepts secondary school dropouts
16 and puts less value on alternative certificates.

17 (13) Students who fail to graduate from sec-
18 ondary school are more likely to engage in criminal
19 activity than students who graduate. A 1-percent in-
20 crease in secondary school graduation rates would
21 save approximately \$1,400,000,000 in costs associ-
22 ated with incarceration, or about \$2,100 for each
23 male secondary school graduate.

24 (14) In today's workplace, nearly 8 in 10 adults
25 with baccalaureate degrees are employed, but for

1 those who completed secondary school only, the
2 number falls to about 6 in 10. And for students who
3 dropped out of secondary school, the number drops
4 further to 4 in 10.

5 (15) Employment projections indicate that jobs
6 requiring only a secondary school degree will grow
7 by just 9 percent by the year 2008, while those jobs
8 requiring a bachelor's degree will grow by 25 percent
9 and those jobs requiring an associate's degree will
10 grow by 31 percent.

11 (16) Personalization of the school environment
12 has been proven to increase success rates for low-
13 performing secondary school students. Nearly 50
14 percent of middle school youth and 40 percent of
15 secondary school youth report feelings of disengage-
16 ment from school. Rates are even higher for teens
17 and minorities in urban schools. These feelings re-
18 sult in failure to work hard, to seek assistance, or
19 to take appropriate courses.

20 (17) Effective research-based education pro-
21 grams that improve secondary school graduation
22 rates are comprehensive in nature and include inter-
23 ventions that begin in kindergarten or earlier and
24 span all the grades through grade 12.

1 **SEC. 3. PROJECT GRAD.**

2 (a) **PURPOSES.**—The purposes of this Act are—

3 (1) to provide support and assistance to pro-
4 grams implementing integrated education reform
5 services in order to improve secondary school grad-
6 uation and college attendance and completion rates
7 for disadvantaged students; and

8 (2) to promote the establishment of new pro-
9 grams to implement such integrated education re-
10 form services.

11 (b) **GRANT AUTHORIZED.**—The Secretary is author-
12 ized to award a grant to Project GRAD USA (referred
13 to in this Act as the “grantee”), a nonprofit educational
14 organization that has as its primary purpose the improve-
15 ment of secondary school graduation and college attend-
16 ance and completion rates for disadvantaged students, to
17 implement and sustain the integrated education reform
18 services described in subsection (d)(3) at existing Project
19 GRAD program sites and to promote the expansion of
20 such programs to new sites.

21 (c) **REQUIREMENTS OF GRANT AGREEMENT.**—The
22 Secretary shall enter into an agreement with the grantee
23 that requires that the grantee shall—

24 (1) enter into subcontracts with nonprofit edu-
25 cational organizations that serve a substantial num-
26 ber or percentage of low-income students (referred

1 to in this Act as “subcontractors”), under which the
2 subcontractors agree to implement the programs de-
3 scribed in subsection (d) and provide matching funds
4 for such programs;

5 (2) directly carry out—

6 (A) activities to implement and sustain the
7 literacy, mathematics, classroom management,
8 social service, and college access programs fur-
9 ther described in subsection (d)(3);

10 (B) activities to build the organizational
11 and management capacity of the subcontractors
12 to effectively implement and sustain the pro-
13 grams;

14 (C) activities for the purpose of improving
15 and expanding the programs, including but not
16 limited to activities to further articulate a pro-
17 gram for one or more grade levels and across
18 grade levels, to tailor a program for a particular
19 target audience, and provide tighter integration
20 across programs;

21 (D) activities for the purpose of imple-
22 menting new Project GRAD program sites;

23 (E) activities for the purpose of promoting
24 greater public awareness of integrated edu-
25 cation reform services to improve secondary

1 school graduation and college attendance rates
2 for disadvantaged students; and

3 (F) other activities directly related to im-
4 proving secondary school graduation and college
5 attendance and completion rates for disadvan-
6 taged students; and

7 (3) use grant funds available under this act to
8 pay—

9 (A) the amount determined under sub-
10 section (f)(1); and

11 (B) costs associated with carrying out the
12 activities and providing the services, as provided
13 in paragraph (2) of this subsection.

14 (d) SUPPORTED PROGRAMS.—

15 (1) DESIGNATION.—The subcontractor pro-
16 grams referred to in subsection (c)(1) shall be
17 known as “Project GRAD programs”.

18 (2) FEEDER PATTERNS.—Each subcontractor
19 shall implement a Project GRAD program and shall,
20 with the agreement of the grantee—

21 (A) identify or establish not less than one
22 “feeder pattern” of public schools, where “feed-
23 er pattern” is defined as a high school and the
24 elementary schools and middle schools that
25 channel students into that high school; and

1 (B) provide the integrated educational re-
2 form services described in paragraph (3) at the
3 identified feeder pattern or feeder patterns.

4 (3) INTEGRATED EDUCATION REFORM SERV-
5 ICES.—The services provided through a Project
6 GRAD program may include—

7 (A) research-based programs in reading,
8 mathematics, and classroom management; and

9 (B) campus-based social services programs,
10 including a systematic approach to increase
11 family and community involvement in the
12 schools served by the Project GRAD program;

13 (C) a college access program that in-
14 cludes—

15 (i) providing college scholarships for
16 students who meet established criteria;

17 (ii) proven approaches for increasing
18 student and family college awareness; and

19 (iii) assistance for such students in
20 applying for higher education financial aid;
21 and

22 (D) such other services identified by the
23 grantee as necessary to increase secondary
24 school graduation and college attendance and
25 completion rates.

1 (e) USE OF FUNDS.—Of the funds made available
2 under this Act, not more than 8 percent of such funds,
3 or \$4,000,000, whichever is less, shall be used by the
4 grantee to pay for administration of the grant, with the
5 remainder of funds to be used for the purposes described
6 in subsections (c)(1) and (2).

7 (f) GRANTEE CONTRIBUTION AND MATCHING RE-
8 QUIREMENT.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—The grantee shall provide to
10 each subcontractor an average of \$200 for each
11 pupil served by the subcontractor in the Project
12 GRAD program, adjusted to take into consider-
13 ation—

14 (A) the resources available in the area
15 where the subcontractor will implement the
16 Project GRAD program; and

17 (B) the need for Project GRAD programs
18 in such area to improve student outcomes.

19 (2) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—Each subcon-
20 tractor shall provide funds for the Project GRAD
21 program in an amount that is equal to the amount
22 received by the subcontractor from the grantee.
23 Such matching funds may be provided in cash or in
24 kind fairly evaluated.

1 (3) WAIVER AUTHORITY.—The grantee may
2 waive, in whole or in part, the requirement of sub-
3 section (f)(2) for a subcontractor, if the subcon-
4 tractor—

5 (A) demonstrates that it would not other-
6 wise be able to participate in the program; and

7 (B) enters into an agreement with the
8 grantee with respect to the amount to which the
9 waiver will apply.

10 (4) DECREASE IN GRANTEE SHARE.—Based on
11 the funds or resources available to a subcontractor,
12 the grantee may elect to provide the subcontractor
13 with an amount that is less than the amount deter-
14 mined under paragraph (1).

15 (g) EVALUATION.—

16 (1) EVALUATION BY THE SECRETARY.—The
17 Secretary shall select an independent entity to evalu-
18 ate, every 3 years, the performance of students who
19 participate in a Project GRAD program under this
20 Act. The evaluation shall—

21 (A) be conducted using the strongest pos-
22 sible research design for determining the effec-
23 tiveness of the Project GRAD programs funded
24 under this Act; and

1 (B) compare reading and mathematics
2 achievement and, where applicable, the sec-
3 ondary school graduation, college attendance,
4 and college completion rates of students who
5 participate in a Project GRAD program funded
6 under this Act with those indicators for stu-
7 dents of similar backgrounds who do not par-
8 ticipate in such programs.

9 (2) EVALUATION BY GRANTEE AND SUB-
10 CONTRACTORS.—

11 (A) IN GENERAL.—The grantee shall re-
12 quire each subcontractor to prepare an in-depth
13 report of the results and the use of funds of
14 each Project GRAD program funded under this
15 Act that includes—

16 (i) data on the reading and mathe-
17 matics achievement of students involved in
18 the Project GRAD program;

19 (ii) statistics on secondary school
20 graduation, college attendance, and college
21 completion rates; and

22 (iii) such financial reporting as re-
23 quired by the Secretary to review the effec-
24 tiveness and efficiency of the program.

1 (B) FORM OF REPORT.—The report shall
2 be in a form and include such content as shall
3 be determined by the grantee, in consultation
4 with the Secretary or the entity selected by the
5 Secretary to evaluate the Project GRAD pro-
6 grams in accordance with paragraph (1).

7 (3) AVAILABILITY OF EVALUATIONS.—Copies of
8 any evaluation or report prepared under this sub-
9 section shall be made available to—

10 (A) the Secretary;

11 (B) the chairperson and ranking member
12 of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor,
13 and Pensions of the Senate; and

14 (C) the chairperson and ranking member
15 of the Committee on Education and the Work-
16 force of the House of Representatives.

17 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

18 In this Act:

19 (1) ELEMENTARY SCHOOL; SECONDARY
20 SCHOOL.—The terms “elementary school” and “sec-
21 ondary school” have the meanings given such terms
22 in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary
23 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

24 (2) LOW-INCOME STUDENT.—The term “low-in-
25 come student” means a student who is determined

1 by a local educational agency to be from a low-in-
2 come family using the measures described in section
3 1113(a)(5) of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
4 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6313(a)(5)).

5 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
6 the Secretary of Education.

7 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

8 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
9 this Act \$27,000,000 for fiscal year 2006, and such sums
10 as are necessary for each of the 5 succeeding fiscal years.

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