

The Teacher and School LEADERS Act

Senator John Cornyn (R-TX), Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO), Senator Tim Scott (R-SC), Senator Mark Warner (D-VA)

Background

Research has shown that strong school leaders can dramatically improve the quality of teaching and accounts for 25 percent of a school's effect on student achievement. Despite the critical importance of school leadership within a school, our current state of educator preparation and training does not adequately prioritize the need to recruit, select and train teacher and school leaders, particularly in high-need schools. At the same time, recent reports and statistics show that traditional methods of training new educators do not adequately prepare them for the realities of teaching or leading in a school setting. To do their best for students, aspiring teachers, teacher leaders, principals and other school leaders need more practical, on-the-job experience and targeted support from their preparation programs and colleges. Innovative programs and partnerships are responding to the need for stronger educator development, but continued innovation and progress require even more dramatic changes to the sector.

Reforming Teacher Quality Partnership Grants to Support Principals and School Leaders

In order to meet these demands, this legislation amends Part A of Title II of the Higher Education Act to better support opportunities for principal and school leader preparation programs within the Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Program. In doing so, it explicitly allows for high-need school districts to enter into new partnerships dedicated solely to train educators who aspire to fill leadership roles in high-need schools. It also supports pre-service residency opportunities for aspiring school leaders which would train them to offer high-quality administration and leadership to geographically diverse or high-need schools.

Allowing for More Innovation and Promoting Evidence in Educator Preparation Will Help Elevate the Sector

This legislation also affords high-needs school districts the opportunity to forge new partnerships for the newly re-named Teacher, Principal, and Other School Leader Quality Enhancement grants under Title II of the Higher Education Act. It allows districts to choose which teacher or school leader preparation organization (e.g., a college of education, nonprofit provider, alternative certification provider, etc.) will serve as their primary partner for the grant, based on shortages in teacher areas and qualifications.

This bill also fosters a stronger connection between teacher and school leaders' professional development and induction within the partnership grants. It allows for up to 10 percent of grant funds to be used to create a nexus between an educator's clinical experiences and their professional development once placed in a school or district. By strengthening the link between educator preparation and professional development, this bill will help teacher and school leaders develop and will support innovation in educator preparation based on district feedback.

Furthermore, this legislation encourages teachers and school leaders to use both qualitative and quantitative data to improve student achievement and classroom instruction. It also requires the Institute of Educational Sciences to evaluate independently the effectiveness of the Teacher, Principal, and Other School Leader Quality Enhancement Grants.

Support

BEST NC, Center for the Study of Education Policy, Chiefs for Change, Council for Exceptional Children, Data Quality Campaign, Deans for Impact, Democrats for Education Reform, EdAllies (MN), EDGE Consulting Partners, Educators for Excellence, Hope Street Group, Innovation Classroom, Kappa Delta Pi, Knowledge Alliance, Laotian American National Alliance, Leading Educators, League of Education Voters, National Center for Learning Disabilities, National Council of Teachers of English, National Council on Teacher Quality, National Writing Project, Network of Michigan Educators, New

Leaders, NJ Principals and Supervisors Association, National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NNSTOY), NYC Leadership Academy, Profound Gentlemen, TASH, Teach for America, Teach Plus, Teaching Matters, Third Way, TNTP.

If you have any questions, please contact Claire Sanderson in Senator Cornyn's Office at 202-224-2934