

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1963

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to direct the Secretary of Education to award institutions of higher education grants for teaching English learners.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 8, 2021

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Mr. CORNYN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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## A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to direct the Secretary of Education to award institutions of higher education grants for teaching English learners.

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 “Reaching English  
5 Learners Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. TEACHING ENGLISH LEARNERS GRANT.**

7 Part B of title II of the Higher Education Act of  
8 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1031 et seq.) is amended by adding at  
9 the end the following:

1       **“Subpart 6—Teaching English Learners Grant**

2       **“SEC. 259. TEACHING ENGLISH LEARNERS GRANT.**

3           “(a) AUTHORIZATION OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary  
4 shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible part-  
5 nerships to improve the preparation of teacher candidates  
6 to ensure that such teacher candidates possess the knowl-  
7 edge and skills necessary to effectively instruct English  
8 learners.

9           “(b) DURATION OF GRANTS.—A grant under this  
10 section shall be awarded for a period of not more than  
11 5 years.

12          “(c) PREFERENCE.—In awarding grants under this  
13 section, the Secretary shall give preference to eligible part-  
14 nerships that recruit and enroll teacher candidates who  
15 are from underrepresented populations or former English  
16 learners.

17          “(d) NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—An eligible partnership  
18 that receives a grant under this section shall provide not  
19 less than 50 percent of the cost of the activities carried  
20 out with such grant from non-Federal sources, which may  
21 be provided in cash or in kind.

22          “(e) USES OF FUNDS.—An eligible partnership that  
23 receives a grant under this section shall use the grant to—

24               “(1) develop, or strengthen, an undergraduate,  
25               postbaccalaureate, or master’s teacher preparation  
26               program that enables the graduate to meet the

1 State’s licensure or certification requirements to  
 2 teach English learners and incorporates evidence-  
 3 based strategies for teaching English learners (in-  
 4 cluding bilingual, immersion, and dual-language edu-  
 5 cation) into the education curriculum and academic  
 6 content;

7 “(2) provide teacher candidates participating in  
 8 a program under paragraph (1) with skills related  
 9 to—

10 “(A) helping English learners—

11 “(i) achieve at high levels in early  
 12 childhood education programs, and elemen-  
 13 tary schools and secondary schools so such  
 14 English learners can meet the challenging  
 15 State academic standards that—

16 “(I) have been adopted under  
 17 section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary  
 18 and Secondary Education Act of 1965  
 19 (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)) by the State  
 20 of the school attended or to be at-  
 21 tended by the English learners; and

22 “(II) apply to all public school  
 23 students in the State; and

24 “(ii) attain English proficiency;

1           “(B) appropriately identifying and meeting  
2           the specific learning needs of children with dis-  
3           abilities who are English learners;

4           “(C) recognizing and addressing the social  
5           and emotional needs of English learners; and

6           “(D) promoting parental, family, and com-  
7           munity engagement in educational programs  
8           that serve English learners; and

9           “(3) provide teacher candidates participating in  
10          the program with high-quality preservice clinical ex-  
11          perience that includes, to the extent practicable—

12                 “(A) clinical learning in classrooms that  
13                 service English learners; and

14                 “(B) mentoring by a teacher certified to  
15                 teach English learners.

16          “(f) APPLICATION.—An eligible partnership seeking  
17          a grant under this section shall submit an application to  
18          the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and con-  
19          taining such information as the Secretary may require.  
20          Such application shall include—

21                 “(1) a self-assessment by the eligible partner-  
22                 ship of the existing teacher preparation program at  
23                 the institution of higher education and the needs re-  
24                 lated to preparing teacher candidates to instruct

1 English learners in the manner described in sub-  
2 section (e)(2);

3 “(2) a self-assessment by the eligible partner-  
4 ship of the personnel needs for teachers who instruct  
5 English learners at local, early childhood education  
6 programs, and elementary schools and secondary  
7 schools;

8 “(3) a description of the intended uses of such  
9 grant; and

10 “(4) a description of the plan to carry out the  
11 evaluation under subsection (g)(1).

12 “(g) EVALUATIONS.—

13 “(1) REPORT FROM ELIGIBLE PARTNER-  
14 SHIPS.—An eligible partnership receiving a grant  
15 under this section shall submit to the Secretary the  
16 results of an evaluation conducted by the partner-  
17 ship at the end of the grant period to determine—

18 “(A) the effectiveness of teachers who com-  
19 pleted a program under subsection (e)(1) with  
20 respect to instruction of English learners;

21 “(B) the systemic impact of the activities  
22 carried out by such grant on how such partner-  
23 ship prepares teachers to provide instruction in  
24 early childhood education programs, and ele-  
25 mentary schools and secondary schools; and

1           “(C) the percentage of teacher candidates  
2           that meet the State certification and licensure  
3           requirements for teaching English learners.

4           “(2) REPORT FROM THE SECRETARY.—Not  
5           later than 180 days after the last day of the grant  
6           period under this section, the Secretary shall make  
7           available to the authorizing committees and the pub-  
8           lic—

9           “(A) the findings of the evaluations sub-  
10          mitted under paragraph (1); and

11          “(B) information on best practices related  
12          to effective instruction of English learners.

13          “(h) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—An eligible  
14          partnership receiving a grant under this section may use  
15          the grant only to supplement funds made available from  
16          non-Federal sources to carry out the activities supported  
17          by such grant, and in no case to supplant such funds from  
18          non-Federal sources.

19          “(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

20                 “(1) CHILD WITH A DISABILITY.—The term  
21                 ‘child with a disability’ has the meaning given the  
22                 term in section 602 of the Individuals with Disabil-  
23                 ities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401).

24                 “(2) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDU-  
25                 CATION.—The term ‘eligible institution of higher

1 education' means an institution of higher education  
2 that has a program of study that leads to an under-  
3 graduate degree, a master's degree, or completion of  
4 a postbaccalaureate program required for teacher  
5 certification or licensure, including any requirements  
6 for certification obtained through alternative routes  
7 to certification.

8           “(3) ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIP.—The term ‘eligi-  
9 ble partnership’ means an eligible institution of  
10 higher education in partnership with a high-need  
11 local educational agency or a high-need early child-  
12 hood education program.

13           “(4) ENGLISH LEARNER.—The term ‘English  
14 learner’ has the meaning given the term in section  
15 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education  
16 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).”.

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