

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4256

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.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 2, 2024

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

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 (a) IN GENERAL.—Part B of title II of the Higher
8 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1031 et seq.) is amend-
9 ed by adding at 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).”.

17 (b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 200(6) of the
 18 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1021(6)) is
 19 amended by inserting “and section 259” after “section
 20 251”.

