

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8859

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to increase the knowledge and skills of principals and school leaders regarding early childhood education.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 15, 2026

Ms. PETTERSEN (for herself and Mrs. HAYES) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to increase the knowledge and skills of principals and school leaders regarding early childhood education.

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 “Creating Early Child-
5 hood Leaders Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Since principals and school leaders have the
9 second largest in-school impact on student achieve-
10 ment (after teachers), a principal or school leader’s

1 knowledge has a substantial impact on the teachers
2 and students under the principal or school leader’s
3 supervision.

4 (2) Principals and school leaders are increas-
5 ingly being asked to supervise teachers and children
6 in pre-kindergarten programs, yet school leaders
7 often do not have training in early childhood edu-
8 cation.

9 (3) Given the critical development that occurs
10 in a child’s early life and the impacts of this develop-
11 mental period on later life outcomes, understanding
12 the standards of early childhood education is par-
13 ticularly important.

14 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to ensure
15 that principals and school leaders are able to effectively
16 support teachers in providing pre-kindergarten students
17 with developmentally appropriate instruction.

18 **SEC. 3. SCHOOL LEADER TRAINING REGARDING EARLY**
19 **CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.**

20 Section 202(f)(1)(B) of the Higher Education Act of
21 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1022a(f)(1)(B)) is amended—

22 (1) by striking clause (v) and inserting the fol-
23 lowing:

24 “(v) engage and involve parents, com-
25 munity members, the local educational

1 agency, businesses, providers of early child-
2 hood education programs, and other com-
3 munity leaders, to leverage additional re-
4 sources to improve student academic
5 achievement;”;

6 (2) in clause (vi), by striking the period at the
7 end and inserting “; and”; and

8 (3) by adding at the end the following:

9 “(vii) understand child development,
10 social and emotional development, develop-
11 mentally appropriate behavioral interven-
12 tions and supports, and effective instruc-
13 tional leadership skills for children from
14 birth through age 8, in order to effectively
15 manage and support developmentally ap-
16 propriate early childhood education pro-
17 grams.”.

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