

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4973

To authorize the Project GRAD program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 22, 2004

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York (for herself, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. FATTAH, and Mr. BERMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To authorize the Project GRAD program, 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 The Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) The national high school graduation rate is
9 only 70 percent, and in urban districts that percent-
10 age drops further to only 50 percent.

1 (2) The national graduation rate for the class
2 of 2001 was only 51 percent for African Americans
3 and 52 percent for Latino students.

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

6 (4) Six million secondary students who make up
7 the lowest 25 percent in terms of achievement scores
8 are 3.5 times more likely to drop out than students
9 in the next highest quarter of academic achievement,
10 and are 20 times more likely to drop out than high
11 achieving students.

12 (5) Approximately 25 percent of secondary
13 school students are reading at “below basic” levels.
14 The problem is even more severe for poor students
15 of color. The average minority or low-income ninth
16 grader performs at only the fifth or sixth grade level
17 in reading.

18 (6) Low graduation rates are evidence that, in
19 the earlier grades, schools are not meeting the fun-
20 damental achievement needs of low-income students.

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

1 nity college students are assigned to at least one re-
2 medial course.

3 (8) 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 two- or four-year col-
8 lege degree within eight years.

9 (9) Graduation rates impact early drop-out
10 rates in the military. The attrition rates of both non-
11 high school graduates and GED recipients are 8 per-
12 centage points higher than the rates of graduates.
13 As a result, the Armed Services no longer accepts
14 high school drop-outs and put less value on alter-
15 native certificates.

16 (10) Students who fail to graduate from high
17 school are more likely to engage in criminal activity
18 than students who graduate. A one percent increase
19 in high school graduation rates would save approxi-
20 mately \$1.4 billion in costs associated with incarcer-
21 ation, or about \$2,100 for each male high school
22 graduate.

23 (11) In today's workplace, nearly 8 in 10 adults
24 with bachelors degrees are employed, but for those
25 who completed high school only, the figure falls to

1 about 6 in 10. And for students who dropped out,
2 the figure drops further to 4 in 10.

3 (12) Employment projections indicate that jobs
4 requiring only a high school degree will grow by just
5 9 percent by the year 2008, while those requiring a
6 bachelor's degree will grow by 25 percent and those
7 requiring an associate's degree will grow by 31 per-
8 cent.

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

18 (14) Effective research-based education pro-
19 grams that improve high school graduation rates are
20 comprehensive in nature and include interventions
21 that begin in kindergarten and span all the grades
22 through 12th.

23 **SEC. 3. PROJECT GRAD.**

24 (a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the program author-
25 ized under this Act is—

1 (1) to provide support and assistance to pro-
2 grams implementing integrated education reform
3 services to improve high school graduation and col-
4 lege going rates for disadvantaged students; and

5 (2) to promote the establishment of new pro-
6 grams to implement such integrated education re-
7 form services.

8 (b) GRANT AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary is author-
9 ized to award a grant to Project GRAD USA, a nonprofit
10 educational organization that has as its primary purpose
11 the improvement of high school graduation and college
12 going rates for disadvantaged students (hereinafter in this
13 section referred to as the “grantee”), to provide support
14 and technical assistance to existing programs imple-
15 menting the set of integrated education reform services
16 described in subsection (d)(2) and to promote the expan-
17 sion of such programs.

18 (c) REQUIREMENTS OF GRANT AGREEMENT.—The
19 Secretary shall enter into an agreement with the grantee
20 that requires that—

21 (1) the grantee will enter into subcontracts with
22 nonprofit educational organizations (hereinafter in
23 this section referred to as “subgrantees”) under
24 which the subgrantees will agree to establish, oper-

1 ate, and provide the non-Federal share of the cost
2 of implementing Project GRAD programs;

3 (2) the grantee will provide such technical as-
4 sistance to the subgrantees as may be necessary to
5 carry out the provisions of this section;

6 (3) funds made available under the grant can
7 be used to pay the Federal share of the cost of es-
8 tablishing and operating programs as provided in
9 paragraph (1) and costs associated with the provi-
10 sion of technical assistance as provided in paragraph
11 (2); and

12 (4) the grantee will select only subgrantees that
13 serve a substantial number or percentage of low-in-
14 come students.

15 (d) SUPPORTED PROGRAMS.—

16 (1) DESIGNATION; FEEDER PATTERNS.—The
17 programs supported with funds available under this
18 section shall be known as “Project GRAD pro-
19 grams”. Such programs shall, with the agreement of
20 the grantee, identify one or more groups of public
21 schools at which services will be provided through es-
22 tablishing a “feeder pattern” through which elemen-
23 tary and secondary schools channel students having
24 participated in Project GRAD services into an iden-
25 tified high school.

1 (2) INTEGRATED EDUCATION REFORM SERV-
2 ICES.—The services provided through project GRAD
3 programs shall include—

4 (A) research-based programs in reading,
5 mathematics, and classroom management;

6 (B) campus-based social services programs
7 including a systematic approach to increase
8 family and community involvement in the
9 schools served;

10 (C) a college access program, which in-
11 cludes the provision of a college scholarship for
12 students that meet established criteria, proven
13 approaches to increasing student and family
14 college awareness, and assistance for those stu-
15 dents in applying to college for financial aid;
16 and

17 (D) such other services identified by the
18 grantee as necessary to increase high school
19 graduation and college going rates.

20 (e) USE OF FUNDS.—Not less than 75 percent of the
21 funds received by the grantee under this section shall be
22 used to fund awards to subgrantees to carry out the re-
23 quirements of subsection (d)(1). The balance of such
24 funds shall be used by grantee to carry out the require-
25 ments of subsection (d)(2), as well as other such activities

1 to promote greater public awareness of integrated edu-
2 cation reform services to improve high school graduation
3 and college going rates for disadvantaged students as de-
4 scribed in subsection (d)(2).

5 (f) FEDERAL SHARE.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of subsection
7 (c), the term “Federal share” means, with respect to
8 the costs of Project GRAD programs authorized in
9 subsection (c), subgrants provided by the grantee
10 averaging \$200 per pupil, adjusted to take into con-
11 sideration the resources available to the school at
12 which the subgrantee will implement the program,
13 and the need for Project GRAD USA services to im-
14 prove student outcomes.

15 (2) EXCEPTION.—Nothing in this subsection
16 shall preclude the awarding of subgrants reflecting
17 a per student cost of more than \$200 if the grantee
18 determines that additional resources were not avail-
19 able consistent with the requirements placed on the
20 grantee in subsection (c)(4).

21 (3) MORE MAY BE REQUIRED.—If funds or re-
22 sources are available to a subgrantee, the grantee
23 may elect to award the subgrantee less than the
24 Federal share of the cost associated with the pro-
25 gram.

1 (g) EVALUATION.—

2 (1) EVALUATION BY THE SECRETARY.—The
3 Secretary shall select an independent entity to evalu-
4 ate every 3 years the performance of students who
5 participate in a program under this section. The
6 evaluation shall be contracted using the strongest
7 possible research design for determining the effec-
8 tiveness of programs funded under this section. The
9 evaluation shall include a comparison of reading and
10 mathematics achievement and, where applicable,
11 high school graduation, college going, and college
12 completion rates of students who participate in the
13 programs funded under this section with those indi-
14 cators for students of similar backgrounds who do
15 not participate in such programs.

16 (2) EVALUATION BY GRANTEE AND SUB-
17 GRANTEES.—The grantee shall require each sub-
18 grantee to prepare an in-depth report of the results
19 of the programs supported with funds, and the use
20 of funds, made available under this section. Such re-
21 view shall include data on the reading and math
22 achievement of students involved in the programs
23 and statistics on high school graduation, college
24 going, and college completion rates, and such finan-
25 cial reporting as deemed relevant to review the effec-

1 tiveness and efficiency of the program. The report
2 shall be in a form and include such content as shall
3 be determined by the grantee in consultation with
4 the Secretary or the entity selected by the Secretary
5 to evaluate the Project GRAD program.

6 (3) AVAILABILITY OF EVALUATIONS.—Copies of
7 any evaluation or report prepared pursuant to this
8 section shall be available to the Secretary and the
9 Chairman and ranking member of the Committee on
10 Education and the Workforce of the House of Rep-
11 resentatives and the Committee on Health, Edu-
12 cation, Labor and Pensions of the Senate.

13 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
14 are authorized to be appropriated to make grants under
15 this section \$27,000,000 for fiscal year 2005 and such
16 sums as may be necessary for each of the 5 succeeding
17 fiscal years.

18 (i) LOW-INCOME STUDENT.—For purposes of this
19 section, the term “low-income student” means a student
20 who is determined by a local educational agency to be from
21 a low-income family using the measures described in sec-
22 tion 1113(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education
23 Act of 1965.

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