

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3347

To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to create a demonstration project to fund additional secondary school counselors in troubled title I schools to reduce the dropout rate.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 28, 2008

Mr. CASEY introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to create a demonstration project to fund additional secondary school counselors in troubled title I schools to reduce the dropout rate.

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 “Put School Counselors
5 Where They’re Needed Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FOR ADDITIONAL SEC-**
2 **ONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELORS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Part H of title I of the Elemen-
4 tary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
5 6551 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
6 lowing:

7 **“Subpart 3—Demonstration Project for Additional**
8 **Secondary School Counselors**

9 **“SEC. 1841. FINDINGS.**

10 “Congress finds the following:

11 “(1) Nationally, only 70 percent of students
12 graduate from high school with a regular high school
13 diploma.

14 “(2) Every school day, 7,000 high school stu-
15 dents in the United States become dropouts.

16 “(3) High school students living in low-income
17 families drop out of school at 6 times the rate of
18 their peers from high-income families.

19 “(4) Only about 55 percent of African-Amer-
20 ican students and 52 percent of Hispanic students
21 graduate on time from high school with a regular di-
22 ploma, compared to 78 percent of white students.

23 “(5) The dropout rate for students with disabil-
24 ities is approximately twice that of general education
25 students.

1 “(6) High school is the final transition into
2 adulthood and the world of work as students begin
3 separating from parents and exploring and defining
4 their independence. Students who are deciding who
5 they are and what they will do when they graduate
6 face many pressures, including high-stakes testing,
7 the challenges of college admissions, the scholarship
8 and financial aid application process, and entrance
9 into a competitive job market. They need guidance
10 in these complex decisions, which have serious and
11 life changing consequences.

12 “(7) School counseling programs are essential
13 for students to achieve optimal personal growth, ac-
14 quire positive social skills and values, set appropriate
15 career goals, and realize full academic potential to
16 become productive, contributing members of the
17 world community.

18 “(8) Professional secondary school counselors
19 are highly qualified educators with a mental health
20 perspective who understand and respond to the chal-
21 lenges presented by today’s diverse student popu-
22 lation.

23 “(9) The professional secondary school coun-
24 selor holds a master’s degree or higher in school
25 counseling (or the substantial equivalent), and is

1 certified or licensed by the State in which the coun-
2 selor works.

3 “(10) Professional secondary school counselors
4 are integral to the total educational program. They
5 provide proactive leadership that engages all stake-
6 holders in the delivery of programs and services to
7 help the student achieve success in school. Profes-
8 sional secondary school counselors align and work
9 with the school’s mission to support the academic
10 achievement of all students as they prepare for the
11 ever-changing world of the 21st century.

12 “(11) Professional secondary school counselors’
13 opportunities to assist students are often hindered
14 by extraordinarily high student-to-counselor ratios.
15 Currently, the average student-to-counselor ratio in
16 America’s public schools is 479 to 1. The American
17 School Counselor Association, the American Coun-
18 seling Association, and the National Association for
19 College Admissions Counseling all recommend a
20 ratio of 1 school counselor to 250 students and a
21 lower ratio for counselors working primarily with
22 students at risk.

23 **“SEC. 1842. DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.**

24 “(a) IN GENERAL.—From amounts made available to
25 carry out this subpart, the Secretary shall carry out a

1 demonstration project under which the Secretary makes
2 grants on a competitive basis to secondary schools that
3 receive funds under this title and have a 4-year adjusted
4 cohort graduation rate of 60 percent or lower.

5 “(b) GRANTS.—A grant under this section shall be
6 for a period of 4 years and may be used—

7 “(1) to provide additional school counselors
8 during that period; and

9 “(2) to provide additional resources (such as
10 professional development expenses or travel expenses
11 for home visits, and any services and materials re-
12 ferred to in subsection (d)) and to pay overhead ex-
13 penses.

14 “(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
15 gress that a secondary school that receives a grant under
16 this section should aim to provide, under subsection
17 (b)(1), 1 additional counselor per 250 students at risk.

18 “(d) SCOPE OF COUNSELING.—The additional school
19 counselors provided with funds under this subpart shall
20 identify students who are at risk of not graduating in 4
21 years and shall provide counseling primarily to those stu-
22 dents. The counselors may identify such students at any
23 time, but shall strive to identify the students before the
24 students enter grade 9. Services shall be provided as long
25 as necessary, including to the extent allowable and appro-

1 puate, after the student's cohort graduation date. The
2 counseling provided—

3 “(1) may include a full panoply of services, in-
4 cluding an individual graduation plan and other re-
5 sources, such as appropriate course placement and
6 supplemental services (to include not only supple-
7 mental educational services tutoring if available at
8 the school site, but also other tutoring as necessary,
9 along with supplemental books and materials); and

10 “(2) shall include meetings with each student
11 identified under this subsection and with the teach-
12 ers, tutors, supplemental educational services pro-
13 viders, and parents of the student, and may also in-
14 clude meetings with other relevant individuals, such
15 as a probation officer, mentor, coach, or employer of
16 the student.

17 “(e) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Funds provided
18 under this subpart shall be used to supplement, and not
19 supplant, funds from non-Federal sources available to
20 carry out activities described in this section. The addi-
21 tional school counselors provided through funds under this
22 subpart shall be in addition to any employees who work
23 in the secondary school guidance or counseling office, such
24 as counselors, college admissions specialists, career devel-

1 opment specialists, guidance information specialists, or
2 any other professional or paraprofessional.

3 “(f) ADDITIONAL GRANT PERIODS.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A secondary school that re-
5 ceives a grant under this section and demonstrates
6 adequate improvement over the period of the grant
7 is eligible to receive a second grant for a second pe-
8 riod. If the secondary school again demonstrates
9 adequate improvement over that second period, the
10 school is eligible to receive a third grant for a third
11 period. The third grant shall provide amounts that
12 decrease for each year of the third period and re-
13 quire the school to provide corresponding increases
14 in non-Federal funds.

15 “(2) ADEQUATE IMPROVEMENT.—For purposes
16 of paragraph (1), a school demonstrates adequate
17 improvement over a grant period if the 4-year ad-
18 justed cohort graduation rate increases (or is pro-
19 jected to increase) by 10 percent or more over that
20 period.

21 “(g) SELECTION.—The Secretary shall carry out the
22 demonstration project under this section in not less than
23 10 schools. The first 5 schools selected to participate shall
24 each be from a different State.

1 **“SEC. 1843. DEFINITIONS.**

2 “In this subpart:

3 “(1) 4-YEAR ADJUSTED COHORT GRADUATION
4 RATE.—The term ‘4-year adjusted cohort graduation
5 rate’ means the number of students who earned a
6 regular high school diploma at the conclusion of
7 their fourth year, before their fourth year, or during
8 a summer session immediately following their fourth
9 year, divided by the number of students who formed
10 the adjusted cohort for that graduating class.

11 “(2) ADJUSTED COHORT.—

12 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subpara-
13 graphs (B), (C), (D), (E), and (F), the term
14 ‘adjusted cohort’ means the students who en-
15 tered grade 9 together, and any students that
16 transferred into the cohort in grade 9 through
17 12 minus any students removed from the cohort
18 as described in subparagraph (C).

19 “(B) TRANSFERS IN.—The term ‘transfers
20 in’ means enrolls or re-enrolls after the begin-
21 ning of the entering cohort’s first year in high
22 school, up to and including in grade 12.

23 “(C) COHORT REMOVAL.—To remove stu-
24 dents from a cohort, the school or local edu-
25 cational agency shall confirm that the stu-
26 dent—

1 “(i) has transferred out;

2 “(ii) is in the custody of the juvenile
3 justice system; or

4 “(iii) is deceased.

5 “(D) TRANSFERS OUT.—

6 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clauses
7 (ii), (iii), and (iv), the term ‘transfers out’
8 means transfers to another school, local
9 educational agency, or other educational
10 program from which the student is ex-
11 pected to receive a regular high school di-
12 ploma.

13 “(ii) CONFIRMATION.—Confirmation
14 of a student’s transfer to another school,
15 local educational agency, or program re-
16 quires formal documentation that the stu-
17 dent enrolled in the receiving school.

18 “(iii) NOT CONSIDERED TRANS-
19 FERS.—A student who enrolls in a GED or
20 other alternative educational program that
21 does not issue or provide credits toward
22 the issuance of a regular high school di-
23 ploma shall not be considered to have
24 transferred out for purposes of this sub-
25 paragraph.

1 “(iv) REMAIN IN COHORT.—A student
 2 who was enrolled in a school, but for whom
 3 there is no confirmation of transfer or
 4 completion, may not be labeled a transfer
 5 or error, but shall remain in the cohort as
 6 a non-graduate for reporting and account-
 7 ability purposes.

8 “(E) TREATMENT OF OTHER LEAVERS
 9 AND WITHDRAWALS.—A student who was re-
 10 tained in a grade, enrolled in a GED program,
 11 or left school for any other reason may not be
 12 counted as a transfer out for the purpose of cal-
 13 culating graduation rates and shall remain in
 14 the adjusted cohort.

15 “(F) SPECIAL RULE.—For those high
 16 schools that start after ninth grade, the cohort
 17 shall be calculated based on the earliest high
 18 school grade.

19 “(3) REGULAR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA.—

20 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘regular
 21 high school diploma’ means the standard high
 22 school diploma awarded to the preponderance of
 23 students in the State that is fully aligned with
 24 State standards, or a higher diploma, and does

1 not include GEDs, certificates of attendance, or
 2 any lesser diploma award.

3 “(B) SPECIAL RULE.—For a student who
 4 has a significant cognitive disability and is as-
 5 sessed using an alternate assessment aligned to
 6 alternate achievement standards, receipt of a
 7 regular high school diploma or State-defined al-
 8 ternate diploma aligned with completion of the
 9 student’s entitlement under the Individuals with
 10 Disabilities Education Act shall be counted as
 11 a graduate with a regular high school diploma
 12 for the purposes of this subpart. Not more than
 13 1 percent of students in a school may be count-
 14 ed as graduates with a regular high school di-
 15 ploma under this subparagraph.

16 **“SEC. 1844. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

17 “There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
 18 this subpart \$6,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008
 19 through 2011.”.

20 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents in
 21 section 2 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
 22 of 1965 is amended by inserting after the item relating
 23 to section 1830 the following:

“SUBPART 3—DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FOR ADDITIONAL SECONDARY
 SCHOOL COUNSELORS

“Sec. 1841. Findings.

“Sec. 1842. Demonstration project.

“Sec. 1843. Definitions.

“Sec. 1844. Authorization of appropriations.”.

