



November 17, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman, House Committee on Education
and the Workforce
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Scott
Ranking Member, House Committee on
Education and the Workforce
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Alexander, Ranking Member Murray, Chairman Kline, and Ranking Member Scott:

We are writing on behalf of a new El Paso, Texas non-profit, the Council on Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development (CREEED) to express our views on some key programs of interest in the pending reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). We are very pleased to learn that you have reached bipartisan agreement on a framework for a new and improved version of ESEA and hope that the priorities described below will be included in the final conference agreement.

CREEED focuses on improving educational achievement for all students and ensuring our graduates are ready to join the 21st Century workforce. So far, we have committed to invest more than \$1 million in programs to close the education gaps and prepare students for college and careers.

Local business and civic leaders came together to form CREEED to help address persistent issues that make it difficult for our region's public school students to succeed in the competitive global economy.

In order to attract high-paying, high-tech jobs to the North American Borderplex, we need a highly educated workforce in place to fill those jobs.

Unfortunately, there is still an attainment gap, particularly with Hispanic students, that limits post-secondary opportunities. Some students are simply not learning the skills they need to succeed in college and beyond. Right now, El Paso ranks at the bottom of all education regions in Texas in terms of college graduates.

Only 16 percent of our students will have a college degree six years after high school graduation. For our workforce to be prepared for the jobs that are coming, that number should be closer to 50 percent. To address this gap, CREEED is promoting several initiatives including Girls Who Code clubs that work to inspire, educate, and equip girls with the computing skills to pursue 21st

century opportunities. CREEED wants to make sure that we are creating a successful pipeline from high school to college.

We know that students who take “dual credit” classes – in which they earn high school and college credit at the same time – see success. They save money on higher education; may be able to finish their studies a semester or two early; and, on average, complete college at higher rates.

In order to make sure we meet demand for these classes, CREEED has committed to providing scholarships for local high school teachers who want to become certified to offer dual credit courses. To date, we have invested \$124,000 in this scholarship fund.

As you and your colleagues on the conference committee work to reach a final bipartisan conference agreement on the ESEA reauthorization, we thus urge you to include policies and programs that promote and support more girls obtaining critical computer skills and the support and expansion of dual enrollment/dual credit/early college programs.

Both the House- and Senate-passed bills have provisions to address these issues. On the issue of promoting computer skills, the House bill includes in Section 3204, as one of the three focus areas of the Local Competitive Grant Program “Activities designed to support students, such as academic subject specific programs including computer science and other science, technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), engineering, and mathematics programs...”

The Senate bill has more robust provisions in Title II – Part E, “Improving Science, Technology, Engineering, And Mathematics Instruction And Student Achievement”. We support the inclusion in the final conference agreement of such a separate program.

In terms of dual enrollment/dual credit and related accelerated learning programs, while both bills include positive provisions, the Senate bill again has more comprehensive and focused provisions such as Title II, Part E—Accelerated Learning; Sec. 5505. Accelerated Learning Incentive Program Grants, and explicit allowable use of Title I funds for such programs. See the attached appendix which provides details on the House and Senate provisions on dual enrollment.

Thus, we urge you to include as much of the bipartisan Senate provisions in the final conference agreement.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Castro
CREEED Chairman

Cc:

Senator John Cornyn

Senator Ted Cruz

Rep. Beto O'Rourke

Rep. Will Hurd

Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Provisions in House and Senate ESEA bills

The current version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, does not contain any provisions specifically relating to dual enrollment or early college programs.

Both the House- and Senate-passed versions of the ESEA reauthorization however, contain several provisions to promote and encourage dual enrollment. The Senate version has more comprehensive and detailed provisions than the House.

HR 5, the House-passed version of the ESEA reauthorization, contains the following provisions:

1. *Sec. 1112, Local Educational Agency (LEA) plans required under Title I (Aid To Local Educational Agencies)*

Among the elements each LEA plan must describe is:

“...if appropriate, how the local educational agency will use funds under this subpart to support dual enrollment programs, early college high schools, and Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate programs;”

2. *Sec. 2123, local use of funds under Title II Part A —Supporting Effective Instruction*
These are formula grants from State Educational Agencies (SEA) to LEAs. Among the allowable uses of funds is “...professional development on teaching dual credit, dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate postsecondary-level courses to secondary school students...”

3. *Sec. 2222, local authorized activities under Title II, Part B—Teacher And School Leader Flexible Grant*

These are competitive grants from SEAs to “eligible entities”. One of the allowable uses of funds is “...recruiting and training teachers to teach dual credit, dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate postsecondary-level courses to secondary school students;”

4. *Sec. 3204, Local Competitive Grant Program under Title III, Part B—Local Academic Flexible Grant*

These are competitive grants from SEAs to “eligible entities”. Recipients of funds must use funds for one or more projects from three categories. One of those three is: “Activities designed to support students, such as academic subject specific programs including computer science and other science, technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), engineering, and mathematics programs, arts education, civic education, and adjunct teacher, extended-learning-time, and dual enrollment programs, and parent engagement...”

5. *Sec. 3205. Awards To Nongovernmental Entities To Improve Academic Achievement*

Under this proposed new program, SEAs would award competitive grants to “nongovernmental entities, including public or private organizations, community-based or faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, and business entities for a program or project to increase the academic achievement and student engagement of public school students attending public elementary or secondary schools (or both)...”

While it does not specifically mention dual enrollment, the type of programs that could be funded are fairly open-ended and could include dual enrollment.

S. 1177, the Senate-passed version of the ESEA reauthorization, contains the following provisions:

1. *Sec. 1111. State Plans*

One of the required elements of the required Title I State accountability system is that the plan “annually measures and reports” on “not less than one other valid and reliable indicator of school quality, student success, or student supports... which may include measures of—

...student access to or success in advanced coursework or educational programs or opportunities, which may include participation and performance in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment, and early college high school programs;”

2. *Sec. 1111. State Plans*

Each State Title I plan must also describe

“how the State educational agency will demonstrate a coordinated plan to seamlessly transition students from secondary school into postsecondary education or careers without remediation, including a description of the specific transition activities that the State educational agency will carry out, such as providing students with access to early college high school or dual or concurrent enrollment opportunities;”

3. *Sec. 1111(d). State Report Cards*

Among the items required to be included on State report cards under Title I is

“...the number and percentage of students enrolled in rigorous coursework to earn postsecondary credit while still in high school, such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses and examinations, and dual or concurrent enrollment and early college high schools;”

4. *Sec. 1112. Local Educational Agency Plans*

Among the required elements of LEA Title I plans is

“...a description of the specific transition activities the local educational agency will take, such as providing students with access to early college high school or dual or concurrent enrollment opportunities that enable students during high school to earn postsecondary credit or an industry-recognized credential that meets any quality standards required by the State or utilizing comprehensive career counseling to identify student interests and skills;”

5. *Sec. 1113. Eligible School Attendance Areas; Schoolwide Programs; Targeted Assistance Programs.*

Title I schools operating a schoolwide program (under current law a school must have at least 40% of its students in poverty to operate such a program) must have a

“comprehensive plan” that “includes a description of” how its strategies will

“address the needs of all children in the school, but particularly the needs of those at risk of not meeting the challenging State academic standards, which may include—

“preparation for and awareness of opportunities for postsecondary education and the workforce, including career and technical education programs, which may include

broadening secondary school students' access to coursework to earn postsecondary credit while still in high school, such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses and examinations, and dual or concurrent enrollment and early college high schools;

6. *Sec. 1113(e) - Use for Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs.*

This section explicitly allows LEAs that are operating programs in high schools to use their Title I funds:

“(A) to carry out—

“(i) dual or concurrent enrollment programs for high school students, through which the students are enrolled in the high school and in postsecondary courses at an institution of higher education; or

“(ii) programs that allow a student to continue in a dual or concurrent enrollment program at a high school for the school year following the student's completion of grade 12; or

“(B) to provide training for teachers, and joint professional development for teachers in collaboration with career and technical educators and educators from institutions of higher education where appropriate, for the purpose of integrating rigorous academics in dual or concurrent enrollment programs.

LEAs using Title I funds for a dual or concurrent program “may use such funds for any of the costs associated with such program, including the costs of—

“(A) tuition and fees, books, and required instructional materials for such program; and

“(B) transportation to and from such program.”

7. *Sec. 2101. Formula Grants To States under Part A—Fund For The Improvement Of Teaching And Learning*

Among the allowable State activities is

“Developing, or assisting local educational agencies in developing, strategies that provide teachers, principals, and other school leaders with the skills, credentials, or certifications needed to educate all students in postsecondary education coursework through early college high school or dual or concurrent enrollment courses or programs.”

8. *Sec. 2102. Subgrants To Local Educational Agencies*

In order to receive a grant under Title II, an LEA must “periodically conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of the local educational agency and of all [its] schools... to determine the schools with the most acute staffing needs related to... ensuring that low-income and minority students have access to... a high-quality instructional program (such as opportunities for high-quality postsecondary education coursework through an early college high school or a dual or concurrent enrollment program);”

“providing training to support the identification of students who are gifted and talented, including high-ability students who have not been formally identified for gifted education services, and implementing instructional practices that support the education of such students, such as... dual or concurrent enrollment in secondary school and postsecondary education...”

9. *Sec. 2105. National Activities of Demonstrated Effectiveness.*

This provides funds to the Secretary of Education to award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities for the purposes of (among other activities)—
“providing teachers, principals, and other school leaders with professional development activities that enhance or enable the provision of postsecondary coursework **through dual or concurrent enrollment and early college high school settings** across a local educational agency.”

10. *Title II, Part E—Improving Science, Technology, Engineering, And Mathematics Instruction and Student Achievement*

These are competitive grants from SEAs to LEAs. Among the allowable uses of funds is “broaden the access of secondary school students to **early college high school or dual or concurrent enrollment courses** in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics subjects, including providing professional development to teachers and leaders related to this work.”

11. *Title II, Part E—Accelerated Learning; Sec. 5505. Accelerated Learning Incentive Program Grants.* Under this program the Secretary of Education awards competitive grants to “eligible entities”.

Funds may be used for

“(1) high-quality teacher professional development, in order to expand the pool of teachers in the participating State, local educational agency, or high-need school who are qualified to teach accelerated learning courses, **dual or concurrent enrollment programs, and early college high school courses**, including through innovative models such as online academies and training institutes;

“(2) high-quality teacher and counselor professional development to prepare students for success in accelerated learning courses, **dual or concurrent enrollment programs, and early college high school courses**;

“(3) coordination and articulation between grade levels to prepare students to enroll and succeed in accelerated learning courses, **dual or concurrent enrollment programs, and early college high school courses**;

“(4) the purchase of instructional materials for accelerated learning courses, **dual or concurrent enrollment programs, and early college high school courses**;

“(5) activities to increase the availability of, and participation in, online accelerated learning courses, **dual or concurrent enrollment programs, and early college high school courses**;

“(6) carrying out the requirements of subsection (g) [collecting and reporting requirement]; or

“(7) in the case of an eligible entity described in subsection (b)(1), awarding subgrants to local educational agencies to enable the local educational agencies to carry out authorized activities described in paragraphs (1) through (6).”

12. *Title V, Part G—Innovative Technology Expands Children’s Horizons (I-TECH)*

One of the purposes of this proposed new program is “to ensure that students have increased access to **online dual or concurrent enrollment opportunities**, career and technical courses, and programs leading to a recognized postsecondary credential...”

13. Sec. 9101. Definitions

This includes new definitions of:

“(17) **DUAL OR CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT**.— The term ‘dual or concurrent enrollment’ means a course or program provided by an institution of higher education through which a student who has not graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma is able to earn postsecondary credit.

(19) **EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL**.—The term ‘early college high school’ means a formal partnership between at least one local educational agency and at least one institution of higher education that allows participants to simultaneously complete requirements toward earning a regular high school diploma and earn not less than 12 transferable credits as part of an organized course of study toward a postsecondary degree or credential at no cost to the participant or participant’s family.”

14. Sec. 10102, Title X, Part A—*Education For Homeless Children And Youth*

Ensures that “homeless children and youths who meet the relevant eligibility criteria have access to magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, **dual or concurrent enrollment opportunities, early college high school**, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs, if such programs are available at the State or local levels;”

15. Title X, Part C—*American Dream Accounts*

This is a proposed new program (included in S. 1777 but would not be part of ESEA). It authorizes a pilot program within the Department of Education to award grants to support innovative and comprehensive partnerships that assist low-income students in preparation for a college education. It encourages partnerships among schools, colleges, non-profits and businesses to develop secure, Web-based student accounts that contain information about academic preparedness, financial literacy, and high-impact mentoring and would be tied to a college savings account.

In awarding grants Secretary shall give priority to applications from LEAs or SEAs that “provide opportunities for participating students described in subsection (b)(1) [not less than 30 low-income public school students who” are attending a grade not higher than 9th grade] to participate in a **dual or concurrent enrollment program or early college high school program** at no cost to the student or the student’s family;”