

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 375

To establish a competitive grant program assisting the development of innovative early learning curricula for low-income children.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 14, 2015

Mr. HIMES (for himself, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, and Ms. ESTY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To establish a competitive grant program assisting the development of innovative early learning curricula for low-income children.

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 “Total Learning Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 The Congress finds as follows:

7 (1) Research conducted by the Census Bureau
8 suggests that 21.8 percent of children under the age
9 of 18 are living in poverty.

1 (2) Research conducted by the Bureau of the
2 Census of the Department of Commerce shows that
3 socioeconomic status and family background charac-
4 teristics are highly correlated with educational out-
5 comes, with a concentration of low-performing
6 schools in low-income and underserved communities.

7 (3) As an example of an innovative early learn-
8 ing curriculum producing tangible results for low-in-
9 come children, an independent evaluation of the
10 Total Learning Curriculum developed by Action for
11 Bridgeport Community Development, Inc., in co-
12 operation with the Dr. Edward Zigler of the Yale
13 Child Study Center and implemented in Bridgeport,
14 Connecticut, has demonstrated that students who re-
15 ceived all the elements of the Total Learning Cur-
16 riculum made an average 2-point gain on the Diag-
17 nostic Reading Assessment (DRA) compared to an
18 average 1.76-point gain on such assessment by those
19 students who did not participate in the Total Learn-
20 ing Curriculum.

21 (4) Such independent evaluation also showed
22 that students who received all elements of Total
23 Learning Curriculum have an average score of 22.35
24 points on the Concept of Print assessment, com-
25 pared to an average score of 20.82 points on such

1 assessment by those students who did not partici-
2 pate in the Total Learning Curriculum.

3 (5) According to the findings of such inde-
4 pendent evaluation, children with low initial DRA
5 scores, high-family risk levels, low parental involve-
6 ment, have special needs, or who are English-lan-
7 guage-learners or participate in extended-day pro-
8 grams, make significant DRA gains after receiving
9 all the elements of the Total Learning Curriculum.

10 **SEC. 3. PURPOSE.**

11 It is the purpose of this Act to promote academic suc-
12 cess for children living in poverty by—

13 (1) improving and promoting school readiness
14 by enhancing the cognitive, social, and emotional de-
15 velopment of children from birth;

16 (2) focusing such enhancements on low-income
17 children who are at the greatest risk of negative
18 educational outcomes; and

19 (3) harnessing the most current develop-
20 mentally appropriate educational methods to im-
21 prove the public education system, including—

22 (A) educational interventions beginning as
23 close to birth as possible;

24 (B) a child-initiated learning process with
25 time for independent inquiry and play;

1 (C) access to wraparound social services,
2 including support for nutrition, housing, and
3 family literacy;

4 (D) professional development for instruc-
5 tional staff, including elementary school teach-
6 ers, paraprofessionals, and pre-school teachers;

7 (E) an extended school day and school
8 year;

9 (F) parent development, which includes
10 providing parents with the knowledge and skills
11 needed to be able to support a child's growth
12 and academic progress;

13 (G) child-to-staff ratios of at least 1 early
14 childhood or elementary educator for every 7
15 children; and

16 (H) an enhanced transition from pre-kin-
17 dergarten to elementary school, so that the cog-
18 nitive and social gains of the pre-kindergarten
19 program are sustained through the remainder
20 of a child's educational career.

21 **SEC. 4. GRANT PROGRAM TO CLOSE THE ACHIEVEMENT**
22 **GAP.**

23 (a) GRANT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—From the
24 amount appropriated under section 10, the Secretary shall
25 award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible partner-

1 ships to implement innovative early learning curricula in
2 early childhood education programs and elementary
3 schools in high-need communities for children from birth
4 through age 9.

5 (b) GRANT PERIOD.—A grant under this section shall
6 be awarded for a 5-year period and may be renewed for
7 an additional 5-year period upon a showing of adequate
8 progress, as determined by the Secretary.

9 (c) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant
10 under this section, an eligible partnership shall submit to
11 the Secretary a grant application at such time and in such
12 manner as the Secretary shall require, and containing the
13 following information:

14 (1) A description of the high-need community
15 to be served by the eligible partnership, including
16 the number and percent of English-language learn-
17 ers that will be served and other demographic and
18 socioeconomic information as the Secretary may re-
19 quest.

20 (2) An assessment of the need for such a grant
21 in the high-need community, including—

22 (A) the number of low-income families; and

23 (B) the number of and percent of elemen-
24 tary school children performing below grade
25 level for reading and math on State assess-

1 ments described in section 1111(b)(3) of the
2 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of
3 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(3)).

4 (3) A detailed description of a plan to carry out
5 the implementation of the innovative early learning
6 curriculum in the high-need community, including—

7 (A) how children and families will be se-
8 lected to participate, taking into account the
9 need for continuity and stability for all partici-
10 pating children and families;

11 (B) how the implementation will coordinate
12 and build on, and will not supplant or dupli-
13 cate, professional development activities avail-
14 able to the staff of the innovative early learning
15 curriculum in the high-need community;

16 (C) how the implementation will train in-
17 structional staff in the innovative early learning
18 curriculum to provide developmentally appro-
19 priate school-readiness services that are based
20 on the best available child development and
21 education research;

22 (D) how the implementation will train in-
23 structional staff in the innovative early learning
24 curriculum to meet the diverse educational
25 needs of children in the high-need community,

1 including children who have limited English
2 proficiency, children with disabilities, or chil-
3 dren with other special needs; and

4 (E) how the implementation will train in-
5 structional staff in the innovative early learning
6 curriculum to identify and prevent behavioral
7 problems in children or working with children
8 identified as or suspected to be victims of
9 abuse.

10 (4) A description of the plan for continuing the
11 innovative early learning curriculum after the end of
12 the grant period.

13 (5) The proposed allocation and use of grant
14 funds to implement the innovative early learning
15 curriculum in the high-need community.

16 (6) A description of the roles and responsibil-
17 ities of the eligible partnership in implementing the
18 innovative early learning curriculum in the high-need
19 community.

20 (7) An assurance, if applicable, that the eligible
21 partnership will provide appropriate professional de-
22 velopment to volunteers working directly with young
23 children, as well as to paid staff.

24 (d) USE OF GRANT FUNDS.—

1 (1) REQUIRED USES.—A grant awarded under
2 this Act shall be used to cover costs associated with
3 implementing the innovative early learning cur-
4 rriculum, including—

5 (A) costs for extended school hours and
6 days;

7 (B) costs associated with professional de-
8 velopment, staff compensation, and retention;

9 (C) costs for all comprehensive child and
10 family support services; and

11 (D) for any other activities needed to fulfill
12 the purpose of this Act, as the Secretary deems
13 appropriate.

14 (2) PERMISSIBLE USES.—Not more 5 percent
15 of a grant awarded under this Act may be used to
16 pay the administrative costs (including supplies, of-
17 fice and classroom space, supervision, mentoring,
18 and transportation stipends as necessary and appro-
19 priate) related to the implementation of the innova-
20 tive early learning curriculum.

21 (e) DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS.—In awarding grants
22 under this Act, the Secretary shall—

23 (1) award the first 5 grants to eligible partner-
24 ships from 5 different States; and

1 (2) award not less than 1 grant to an applicant
2 serving—

3 (A) a school operated by the Bureau of In-
4 dian Affairs;

5 (B) a tribal educational agency; or

6 (C) a high-need community located in a
7 rural area.

8 (f) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall give priority to
9 an eligible partnership that—

10 (1) proposes to use the grant funds to carry out
11 the innovative early learning curriculum in areas
12 served by local educational agencies with a higher
13 percentage of students from low-income families and
14 English-language learners not meeting the proficient
15 level of achievement on State assessments described
16 in section 1111(b)(3) of the Elementary and Sec-
17 ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
18 6311(b)(3)) in comparison to other grant applicants;
19 and

20 (2) demonstrates the availability of local infra-
21 structure in the high-need community to be served
22 by such eligible partnership to implement the inno-
23 vative early learning curriculum, including the avail-
24 ability of—

1 (A) public elementary schools serving a
2 high percentage of students from low-income
3 families; and

4 (B) public or non-profit social service pro-
5 viders, including providers of health-related
6 services or early childhood education services.

7 (g) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Each eligible
8 partnership that receives a grant under this section shall
9 submit an annual report to the Secretary on the progress
10 of implementing the innovative early learning curriculum.
11 Such report shall include a description of—

12 (1) the actual service delivery provided through
13 grant funds, including characteristics of the partici-
14 pating students (including descriptive information on
15 the population of children and families served), and
16 how the innovative early learning curriculum was
17 implemented;

18 (2) an estimate of the annual implementation
19 costs of the program;

20 (3) outcomes that are consistent with the pur-
21 pose of the grant program, including—

22 (A) improvements in student achievement;

23 (B) improvements in language skills of
24 children from birth to 3 years of age;

1 (C) improvements in social-emotional out-
2 comes for children at the greatest risk of need-
3 ing behavioral or psychological intervention; and

4 (D) improvements in health for children,
5 including nutrition and access to stable high-
6 quality health services;

7 (4) the types of instruction, materials, and ac-
8 tivities being funded under the grant program; and

9 (5) the effectiveness of any training and ongo-
10 ing professional development provided—

11 (A) to the faculty, administration, and
12 staff of early childhood and elementary edu-
13 cators within the eligible partnership receiving a
14 grant under this Act; and

15 (B) to the broader community of providers
16 of social, emotional, behavioral, and related
17 support to students participating in the pro-
18 gram and to those who train such providers.

19 (h) EVALUATIONS.—

20 (1) INTERIM EVALUATIONS.—From the amount
21 appropriated under section 10, the Secretary may
22 conduct interim evaluations to determine whether
23 each eligible partnership receiving a grant under this
24 Act is making adequate progress as the Secretary
25 considers appropriate. The contents of the annual

1 report submitted to the Secretary under subsection
2 (g) may be used by the Secretary to determine
3 whether an eligible grantee receiving a grant is dem-
4 onstrating adequate progress.

5 (2) FINAL EVALUATION.—Not later than 4
6 years, the Secretary shall report the results of a
7 final evaluation of each innovative early learning
8 curriculum being implemented by an eligible partner-
9 ship receiving a grant under this Act to—

10 (A) determine the effectiveness of such in-
11 novative early learning curriculum; and

12 (B) compare the relative effectiveness of
13 each of the various activities described by sub-
14 section (d)(1) for which grant funds are used.

15 (3) REPORT.—Not sooner than 5 years, and
16 not later than 6 years, after the date of enactment
17 of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress
18 a report containing the findings of the evaluation
19 conducted under paragraph (2), and such rec-
20 ommendations as the Secretary considers appro-
21 priate.

22 **SEC. 5. TRAINING PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.**

23 From the amount appropriated under section 10, the
24 Secretary shall award funds to a public or private non-
25 profit organization with demonstrated expertise in an in-

1 innovative early learning curriculum demonstrating the prin-
2 ciples outlined in section 3, for the purpose of training,
3 and providing technical assistance to, eligible partnerships
4 on implementing the innovative early learning curriculum.

5 **SEC. 6. SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.**

6 Funds made available under this Act shall be used
7 to supplement, not supplant, Federal, State, or local funds
8 that, in the absence of such availability, would have been
9 expended for the activities described in section 4(d).

10 **SEC. 7. FUTURE DESIGNATION STUDY.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide infor-
12 mation about the grant program under this Act to poten-
13 tial grant applicants that may be eligible to receive a grant
14 under this Act based on the latest available data on—

15 (1) the number of residents under the age of 18
16 in an area served by a local educational agency;

17 (2) the percentage of residents with an income
18 below the poverty line in an area served by a local
19 educational agency;

20 (3) the percentage of residents age 18 or older
21 with high school diplomas in an area served by a
22 local educational agency;

23 (4) the percentage of students identified as eli-
24 gible for special education services in an area served
25 by a local educational agency;

1 (5) the youth crime rate in an area served by
2 a local educational agency; and

3 (6) such other criteria as the Secretary con-
4 siders appropriate.

5 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date
6 of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to
7 Congress a list of high-need communities that, pursuant
8 to subsection (a), received information about the grant
9 program under this Act.

10 **SEC. 8. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

11 Nothing in this Act shall be construed to abrogate
12 or alter any valid and existing collective bargaining agree-
13 ment.

14 **SEC. 9. DEFINITIONS.**

15 For purposes of this Act:

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—The terms “State edu-
17 cational agency”, “local educational agency”, “high-
18 ly qualified”, and “poverty line” have the meanings
19 given such terms in section 9101 of the Elementary
20 and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
21 7801).

22 (2) ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIP.—The term “eligi-
23 ble partnership” means—

24 (A) a full-service community school; or

1 (B) a partnership between a local edu-
2 cational agency and one of the following:

3 (i) A public or non-profit social service
4 provider, including a provider of health-re-
5 lated services or early childhood education
6 services.

7 (ii) A full-service community school.

8 (3) EXTENDED SCHOOL DAY.—The term “ex-
9 tended school day” means a school day for children
10 from birth to age 9 of not less than 9 hours, except
11 in the case where an eligible partnership cannot ac-
12 commodate a 9-hour day.

13 (4) EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR.—The term “ex-
14 tended school year” means a school year for children
15 from birth to age 9 of not less than 220 calendar
16 days, except in the case where an eligible partner-
17 ship cannot accommodate a 220-calendar-day school
18 year.

19 (5) FULL-SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOL.—The
20 term “full-service community school” means a public
21 school which coordinates educational, developmental,
22 family, health, and other comprehensive services
23 through community-based organizations and public
24 and private partnerships, and provides access to
25 such services to students enrolled in such school,

1 families of such students, and the community where
2 such school is located.

3 (6) HIGH-NEED COMMUNITY.—

4 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “high-need
5 community” means—

6 (i) a political subdivision of a State,
7 or a portion of a political subdivision of a
8 State, in which at least 50 percent of the
9 children are from low-income families; or

10 (ii) a political subdivision of a State
11 that is among the top 10 percent of polit-
12 ical subdivisions of a State having the
13 greatest numbers of such children.

14 (B) DETERMINATION.—In determining
15 which communities qualify as a high-need com-
16 munity under subparagraph (A), the Secretary
17 shall use such data as the Secretary determines
18 are most accurate and appropriate.

19 (7) LOW-INCOME FAMILY.—The term “low-in-
20 come family” means a family with an income below
21 the poverty line for the most recent fiscal year for
22 which satisfactory data are available.

23 (8) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
24 the Secretary of Education.

1 (9) INNOVATIVE EARLY LEARNING CUR-
2 RICULUM.—The term “innovative early learning cur-
3 riculum” means a comprehensive model of early
4 childhood education, including the following prin-
5 ciples as articulated by Dr. Edward Zigler of the
6 Yale Child Study Center, which incorporate—

7 (A) educational interventions beginning as
8 close to birth as possible;

9 (B) a child-initiated learning process with
10 time for independent inquiry and play;

11 (C) access to wraparound social services,
12 including support for nutrition, housing, and
13 family literacy;

14 (D) professional development for instruc-
15 tional staff, including elementary school teach-
16 ers, paraprofessionals, and pre-school teachers;

17 (E) an extended school day and school
18 year;

19 (F) parent development, which includes
20 providing parents with the knowledge and skills
21 needed to be able to support a child’s growth
22 and academic progress;

23 (G) child-to-staff ratios of at least 1 early
24 childhood or elementary educator for every 7
25 children; and

1 (H) an enhanced transition from pre-kin-
2 dergarten to elementary school, so that the cog-
3 nitive and social gains of the pre-kindergarten
4 program are sustained through the remainder
5 of a child’s educational career.

6 (10) WRAPAROUND SOCIAL SERVICES.—The
7 term “wraparound social services” means com-
8 prehensive health and social services provided to a
9 child and the child’s family to supplement the child’s
10 educational needs.

11 **SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-
13 priated to carry out this Act \$50,000,000 for each of the
14 fiscal years 2016 to 2022.

15 (b) RESERVATIONS.—Of the amount appropriated
16 under paragraph (1) for each fiscal year, the Secretary
17 shall reserve—

18 (1) not more than 3 percent for evaluations
19 under section 4(h);

20 (2) between 2 percent and 5 percent for the
21 training program under section 5; and

22 (3) not more than 3 percent to carry out the
23 study in section 7.

○