

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 557

To promote Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 25, 2015

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

A BILL

To promote Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs.

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 “Accelerated Learning
5 Act of 2015”.

6 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

7 It is the purpose of this Act—

8 (1) to raise student academic achievement
9 through accelerated learning programs, including
10 Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate
11 programs, by increasing the number of

1 teachers serving high-need schools who are qualified
2 to teach Advanced Placement or International Bac-
3 calaureate courses;

4 (2) to increase the number of students attend-
5 ing high-need schools who enroll and succeed in Ad-
6 vanced Placement or International Baccalaureate
7 courses and Advanced Placement or International
8 Baccalaureate examinations;

9 (3) to support efforts by States and local edu-
10 cational agencies to increase the availability of, and
11 enrollment in, Advanced Placement or International
12 Baccalaureate courses and pre-Advanced Placement
13 or pre-International Baccalaureate courses in high-
14 need schools; and

15 (4) to provide high-quality professional develop-
16 ment for teachers of Advanced Placement or Inter-
17 national Baccalaureate courses and pre-Advanced
18 Placement or pre-International Baccalaureate
19 courses in high-need schools.

20 **SEC. 3. FUNDING DISTRIBUTION RULE.**

21 From amounts appropriated under section 8 for a fis-
22 cal year, the Secretary shall give priority to funding activi-
23 ties under section 4 and shall distribute any remaining
24 funds under section 5.

1 **SEC. 4. ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMINATION FEE PRO-**
2 **GRAM.**

3 (a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—From amounts made
4 available under section 3 for a fiscal year, the Secretary
5 shall award grants to State educational agencies having
6 applications approved under this section to enable the
7 State educational agencies to reimburse low-income stu-
8 dents to cover part or all of the costs of Advanced Place-
9 ment or International Baccalaureate examination fees, if
10 the low-income students—

11 (1) are enrolled in an Advanced Placement or
12 International Baccalaureate course; and

13 (2) plan to take an Advanced Placement or
14 International Baccalaureate examination.

15 (b) AWARD BASIS.—In determining the amount of
16 the grant awarded to a State educational agency under
17 this section for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall consider
18 the number of children eligible to be counted under section
19 1124(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
20 of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6333(c)) in the State in relation to
21 the number of such children so counted in all States.

22 (c) INFORMATION DISSEMINATION.—A State edu-
23 cational agency that is awarded a grant under this section
24 shall make publicly available information regarding the
25 availability of Advanced Placement or International Bac-
26 calaureate examination fee payments under this section,

1 and shall disseminate such information to eligible sec-
2 ondary school students and parents, including through
3 secondary school teachers and counselors.

4 (d) APPLICATIONS.—Each State educational agency
5 desiring to receive a grant under this section shall submit
6 an application to the Secretary at such time, in such man-
7 ner, and accompanied by such information as the Sec-
8 retary may require. At a minimum, each State educational
9 agency application shall—

10 (1) describe the Advanced Placement or Inter-
11 national Baccalaureate examination fees the State
12 educational agency will pay on behalf of low-income
13 students in the State from grant funds awarded
14 under this section;

15 (2) provide an assurance that any grant funds
16 awarded under this section shall be used only to pay
17 for Advanced Placement or International Bacca-
18 laureate examination fees; and

19 (3) contain such information as the Secretary
20 may require to demonstrate that the State edu-
21 cational agency will ensure that a student is eligible
22 for payments authorized under this section, includ-
23 ing ensuring that the student is a low-income stu-
24 dent.

1 (e) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe
2 such regulations as are necessary to carry out this section.

3 (f) REPORT.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Each State educational
5 agency awarded a grant under this section shall,
6 with respect to each Advanced Placement or Inter-
7 national Baccalaureate course subject, annually re-
8 port to the Secretary the following data for the pre-
9 ceding year:

10 (A) The number of students in the State
11 who are taking an Advanced Placement or
12 International Baccalaureate course in such sub-
13 ject.

14 (B) The number of Advanced Placement or
15 International Baccalaureate examinations taken
16 by students in the State who have taken an Ad-
17 vanced Placement or International Baccalaureate
18 course in such subject.

19 (C) The number of students in the State
20 scoring at each level on Advanced Placement or
21 International Baccalaureate examinations in
22 that subject, disaggregated by race, ethnicity,
23 sex, English proficiency status, and socio-
24 economic status.

1 (D) Demographic information regarding
2 students in the State taking Advanced Place-
3 ment or International Baccalaureate courses
4 and Advanced Placement or International Bac-
5 calaureate examinations in that subject,
6 disaggregated by race, ethnicity, sex, English
7 proficiency status, and socioeconomic status.

8 (2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary
9 shall annually compile the information received from
10 each State educational agency under paragraph (1)
11 and report to the authorizing committees of Con-
12 gress regarding the information.

13 (g) BIA AS SEA.—For purposes of this section, the
14 Bureau of Indian Affairs shall be treated as a State edu-
15 cational agency.

16 **SEC. 5. ADVANCED PLACEMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM**
17 **GRANTS.**

18 (a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts made avail-
20 able under section 3 for a fiscal year, the Secretary
21 shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible
22 entities to enable such entities to carry out the au-
23 thorized activities described in subsection (e).

24 (2) DURATION, RENEWAL, AND PAYMENTS.—

1 (A) DURATION.—The Secretary shall
 2 award a grant under this section for a period
 3 of not more than 3 years.

4 (B) RENEWAL.—The Secretary may renew
 5 a grant awarded under this section for an addi-
 6 tional period of not more than 2 years, if an eli-
 7 gible entity—

8 (i) is achieving the objectives of the
 9 grant; and

10 (ii) has shown improvement against
 11 baseline data on the performance measures
 12 described in subparagraphs (A) through
 13 (E) of subsection (g)(1).

14 (C) PAYMENTS.—The Secretary shall
 15 make grant payments under this section on an
 16 annual basis.

17 (b) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term
 18 “eligible entity” means—

- 19 (1) a State educational agency;
 20 (2) a local educational agency; or
 21 (3) a partnership consisting of—

22 (A) a national, regional, or statewide non-
 23 profit organization, with expertise and experi-
 24 ence in providing Advanced Placement or Inter-
 25 national Baccalaureate course services; and

1 (B) a State educational agency or local
2 educational agency.

3 (c) APPLICATION.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible entity desiring
5 a grant under this section shall submit an applica-
6 tion to the Secretary at such time, in such manner,
7 and accompanied by such information as the Sec-
8 retary may require.

9 (2) CONTENTS.—The application shall, at a
10 minimum, include a description of—

11 (A) the goals and objectives for the project
12 supported by the grant under this section, in-
13 cluding—

14 (i) increasing the number of teachers
15 serving high-need schools who are qualified
16 to teach Advanced Placement or Inter-
17 national Baccalaureate courses;

18 (ii) increasing the number of Ad-
19 vanced Placement or International Bacca-
20 laureate courses that are offered at high-
21 need schools; and

22 (iii) increasing the number of students
23 attending a high-need school, particularly
24 low-income students, who enroll and suc-
25 ceed in—

1 (I) Advanced Placement or Inter-
2 national Baccalaureate courses; and

3 (II) if offered by the school, pre-
4 Advanced Placement or pre-Inter-
5 national Baccalaureate courses;

6 (B) how the eligible entity will ensure that
7 students have access to courses, including pre-
8 Advanced Placement or pre-International Bac-
9 calaureate courses, that will prepare students to
10 enroll and succeed in Advanced Placement or
11 International Baccalaureate courses;

12 (C) how the eligible entity will provide pro-
13 fessional development for teachers that will fur-
14 ther the goals and objectives of the grant
15 project;

16 (D) how the eligible entity will ensure that
17 teachers serving high-need schools are qualified
18 to teach Advanced Placement or International
19 Baccalaureate courses;

20 (E) how the eligible entity will provide for
21 the involvement of business and community or-
22 ganizations and other entities, including institu-
23 tions of higher education, in carrying out the
24 activities described in subsection (e);

1 (F) how the eligible entity will use funds
2 received under this section; and

3 (G) how the eligible entity will evaluate the
4 success of the grant project.

5 (d) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this sec-
6 tion, the Secretary shall give priority to applications from
7 eligible entities that—

8 (1) are part of a statewide or districtwide strat-
9 egy, as applicable, for increasing the availability of
10 Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate
11 courses, and pre-Advanced Placement or pre-Inter-
12 national Baccalaureate courses, in high-need schools;

13 (2) demonstrate a focus on increasing the avail-
14 ability of Advanced Placement or International Bac-
15 calaureate courses in the core academic subjects;
16 and

17 (3) propose to carry out activities that target
18 high-need schools.

19 (e) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible entity that re-
21 ceives a grant under this section shall use the grant
22 funds to carry out activities designed to increase—

23 (A) the number of qualified teachers serv-
24 ing high-need schools who are teaching Ad-

1 vanded Placement or International Bacca-
2 laureate courses; and

3 (B) the number of students attending
4 high-need schools who enroll in, and succeed in
5 the examinations for, such courses, including
6 through reimbursing low-income students at-
7 tending high-need schools for part or all of the
8 cost of Advanced Placement or International
9 Baccalaureate examination fees.

10 (2) ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES.—In addition to
11 the activities described in paragraph (1), an eligible
12 entity that receives a grant under this section may
13 use grant funds for—

14 (A) high-quality teacher professional devel-
15 opment, in order to expand the pool of teachers
16 in the participating State, local educational
17 agency, or high-need school who are qualified to
18 teach Advanced Placement or International
19 Baccalaureate courses, including through inno-
20 vative models such as online academies and
21 training institutes;

22 (B) pre-Advanced Placement or pre-Inter-
23 national Baccalaureate teacher and counselor
24 high-quality professional development in sec-
25 ondary school to prepare students for success in

1 Advanced Placement or International Bacca-
2 laureate courses, and in institutions of higher
3 education;

4 (C) coordination and articulation between
5 grade levels to prepare students to enroll and
6 succeed in Advanced Placement or International
7 Baccalaureate courses;

8 (D) the purchase of instructional materials
9 for Advanced Placement or International Bac-
10 calaureate courses;

11 (E) activities to increase the availability of,
12 and participation in, online Advanced Place-
13 ment or International Baccalaureate courses;

14 (F) carrying out the requirements of sub-
15 section (g); and

16 (G) in the case of an eligible entity de-
17 scribed in subsection (b)(1), awarding sub-
18 grants to local educational agencies to enable
19 the local educational agencies to carry out au-
20 thorized activities described in subparagraphs
21 (A) through (F).

22 (f) CONTRACTS.—An eligible entity that is awarded
23 a grant to provide online Advanced Placement or Inter-
24 national Baccalaureate courses under this section may
25 enter into a contract with an organization to provide the

1 online Advanced Placement or International Bacca-
2 laureate courses, including contracting for necessary sup-
3 port services.

4 (g) COLLECTING AND REPORTING REQUIRE-
5 MENTS.—

6 (1) REPORT.—Each eligible entity receiving a
7 grant under this section shall collect and report to
8 the Secretary annually such data regarding the re-
9 sults of the grant as the Secretary may reasonably
10 require, including—

11 (A) the number of students served by the
12 eligible entity enrolling in Advanced Placement
13 or International Baccalaureate courses and pre-
14 Advanced Placement or pre-International Bac-
15 calaureate courses, disaggregated by grade level
16 of the student, and the grades received by such
17 students in the courses;

18 (B) the number of students taking an Ad-
19 vanced Placement or International Bacca-
20 laureate examination and the distribution of
21 scores on those examinations, disaggregated by
22 the grade level of the student at the time of ex-
23 amination;

24 (C) the number of teachers who are cur-
25 rently, as of the date of the report, receiving

1 training to teach Advanced Placement or Inter-
2 national Baccalaureate courses and will teach
3 such courses in the next school year;

4 (D) the number of teachers becoming
5 qualified to teach Advanced Placement or Inter-
6 national Baccalaureate courses; and

7 (E) the number of qualified teachers who
8 are teaching Advanced Placement or Inter-
9 national Baccalaureate courses in high-need
10 schools served by the eligible entity.

11 (2) REPORTING OF DATA.—Each eligible entity
12 receiving a grant under this section shall report the
13 data required under paragraph (1)—

14 (A) disaggregated by subject area;

15 (B) in the case of student data,
16 disaggregated in the same manner as informa-
17 tion is disaggregated under section
18 1111(b)(2)(C)(v) of the Elementary and Sec-
19 ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
20 6311(b)(2)(C)(v)); and

21 (C) in a manner that allows for an assess-
22 ment of the effectiveness of the grant program.

23 (h) EVALUATION.—The Secretary, acting through
24 the Director of the Institute of Education Sciences, shall,
25 in consultation with the relevant program office at the De-

1 partment, evaluate the implementation and impact of the
2 activities supported under this section, including progress
3 as measured by the performance measures established
4 under subparagraphs (A) through (E) of subsection
5 (g)(1).

6 (i) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding paragraph
8 (3), each eligible entity that receives a grant under
9 this section shall provide toward the cost of the ac-
10 tivities assisted under the grant, from non-Federal
11 sources, an amount equal to 100 percent of the
12 amount of the grant, except that an eligible entity
13 that is a high-need local educational agency, as de-
14 termined by the Secretary, shall provide an amount
15 equal to not more than 50 percent of the amount of
16 the grant.

17 (2) MATCHING FUNDS.—The eligible entity may
18 provide the matching funds described in paragraph
19 (1) in cash or in-kind, fairly evaluated, but may not
20 provide more than 50 percent of the matching funds
21 in-kind. The eligible entity may provide the match-
22 ing funds from State, local, or private sources.

23 (3) WAIVER.—The Secretary may waive all or
24 part of the matching requirement described in para-
25 graph (1) for any fiscal year for an eligible entity if

1 the Secretary determines that applying the matching
 2 requirement to such eligible entity would result in
 3 serious hardship or an inability to carry out the au-
 4 thorized activities described in subsection (e).

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

6 Grant funds provided under this Act shall supple-
 7 ment, and not supplant, other non-Federal funds that are
 8 available to assist low-income students to pay for the cost
 9 of Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate ex-
 10 amination fees or to expand access to Advanced Placement
 11 and pre-Advanced Placement courses or International
 12 Baccalaureate and pre-International Baccalaureate
 13 courses.

14 **SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.**

15 In this Act:

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise pro-
 17 vided, the terms used in this Act have the meanings
 18 given the terms in section 9101 of the Elementary
 19 and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
 20 7801).

21 (2) ADVANCED PLACEMENT OR INTERNATIONAL
 22 BACCALAUREATE COURSE.—The term “Advanced
 23 Placement or International Baccalaureate course”
 24 means—

1 (A) a course of postsecondary-level instruc-
 2 tion provided to middle or secondary school stu-
 3 dents, terminating in an Advanced Placement
 4 or International Baccalaureate examination; or

5 (B) another highly rigorous, evidence-
 6 based, postsecondary preparatory program ter-
 7 minating in—

8 (i) an examination or sequence of
 9 courses that are widely accepted for credit
 10 at institutions of higher education; or

11 (ii) another examination or sequence
 12 of courses approved by the Secretary.

13 (3) ADVANCED PLACEMENT OR INTERNATIONAL
 14 BACCALAUREATE EXAMINATION.—The term “Ad-
 15 vanced Placement or International Baccalaureate ex-
 16 amination” means an Advanced Placement examina-
 17 tion administered by the College Board, an Inter-
 18 national Baccalaureate examination administered by
 19 the International Baccalaureate, or another such ex-
 20 amination approved by the Secretary.

21 (4) HIGH-NEED SCHOOL.—The term “high-need
 22 school” means a secondary school—

23 (A) with a demonstrated need for Ad-
 24 vanced Placement or International Baccalaureate
 25 laurate courses; and

1 (B) that—

2 (i) has a high concentration of low-in-
3 come students; or

4 (ii) is designated with a school locale
5 code of 41, 42, or 43, as determined by the
6 Secretary.

7 (5) LOW-INCOME STUDENT.—The term “low-in-
8 come student” means a student who is eligible for
9 a free or reduced-price lunch under the school lunch
10 program established under the Richard B. Russell
11 National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et
12 seq.).

13 **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

14 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
15 this Act such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year
16 2016 and each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

○