

**NAEYC SUMMARY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR/PROGRAM
PROVISIONS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2008
PUBLIC LAW 110-315**

The Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) had not been reauthorized for many years. In August 2008, Congress sent to the President the Higher Education Opportunity Act, the reauthorization of HEA which the president signed.

The Higher Education Act provides financial assistance for postsecondary education, grants to improve teacher quality, and resources for institutions. Title II of the Act has been dedicated to K-12 teacher quality preparation, recruitment and retention, with a particular focus in this reauthorization on helping institutions of higher education produce teachers who will meet the No Child Left Behind definition of “highly qualified teacher.” This reauthorization is notable for the inclusion of early childhood educators and early childhood education programs in the Teacher Quality Partnership grants and in the student loan forgiveness programs.

Congress recognized that early childhood educators and the requirements for degrees for early childhood educators are more varied than public school K-12 teacher certification. With that in mind, the Act does allow Title II Teacher Quality Partnerships to include early childhood education programs, and if included, to use grant funds not only to improve preparation and mentoring of new early childhood educators but also to use grant funds for compensation initiatives for early childhood educators who earn an associate or baccalaureate degree.

There are many defined terms under the Act that are important. Generally, “early childhood education programs” refers to licensed or regulated child care, Early Head Start and Head Start, state prekindergarten, Part C and section 619 preschool programs. “Early childhood educators” are teachers working directly with children in the classroom.

Public policy movement often is incremental. While the early childhood educators are not the focus of much of the Act, they are given a new recognition and support.

TITLE II – TEACHER QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Congress collapsed 3 teacher quality programs (state grants, teacher quality partnerships, and teacher recruitment) into a single teacher quality partnership grant program. Applicants are Partnerships.

Eligible Partnership –*An entity that **MUST include*** –

- a **high need local educational agency**,
- a high need school or consortium of such schools in the agency, **OR as applicable an early childhood education program**
- a partner institution
- school, department or program of education within partner institution and
- school or department of arts and sciences within the partner institution

It **MAY** include the following: governor, state department of education, state board of education, state agency for higher education, a business, a public or private nonprofit educational organization, an educational service agency, a teacher organization, a high performing school district or consortia of such districts (resource to the partnership), charter school, school or department of psychology and human development within partner institution, school or department of the partner institution with comparable expertise in disciplines of teaching, learning, child and adolescent development, entity that runs a program of alternative routes to state teacher certification

Part A Teacher Quality Partnership Grants

Overarching Purposes:

- Improve student achievement
- Improve the quality of preparation and professional development of prospective and new teachers
- Hold higher education institutions accountable for preparing highly qualified teachers
- Recruiting highly qualified individuals into teaching, including from other professions

Authorizes \$300 million in fiscal year 2009 for Part A and “such sums” thereafter

Partnership Grants – Term, Selection, Match/Waiver, Administrative

Competitive grants are made to partnerships – amount of each grant will vary

Eligibility – Partnerships as defined by the Act

Application to the Secretary; Peer review panel evaluates applications and makes recommendations to the Secretary for approval/disapproval

Priority to partnerships that

- include an IHE whose teacher preparation program has rigorous student selection process
- broad base partnerships involving business and community organizations or partnerships to create equitable geographic distribution of grants among urban and rural areas

Using non-Federal resources, the partnership must provide a 1:1 (100%) match for the grant which may be in cash or in kind: HOWEVER, Secretary may waive all or part of the match for any fiscal year for a partnership if the Secretary determines that the match would result in serious hardship or inability to carry out the application's activities

A partnership may not use more than 2% of these grant funds for administration of the grant

Grant is awarded for a 5-year period

Partnership can receive only one grant during a 5 year period EXCEPT a member of the partnership that can demonstrate need can enter into another partnership with new members and receive a grant with those other partner members before the 5 year grant has finished

Partnership Application to the Secretary

Partnership must submit an application that contains

- Needs assessment of the partners regarding preparation, training, professional development and retention of general and special education teachers, principals and as applicable early childhood educators (says "as applicable" because not every partnership is required to include early childhood)

Uses of the Grants Funds

Partnerships that receive this grant must use it to improve an undergraduate teacher preparation program, a teaching residency program for master's level, or a combination. Funds may also be used for a leadership development program.

Pre-Baccalaureate Preparation

Grants must be used to implement the reforms stated in the Act. Grantees will be held accountable for preparing new or prospective teachers to be "highly qualified" as defined in No Child Left Behind; for teachers to understand and apply empirically based practice and scientifically valid research related to teaching and learning (including instructional techniques, use of technology, positive behavioral interventions and supports). For partnerships that include early childhood education programs, they must prepare educators to be "highly competent" – a definition only in this Act. The rationale is that the No Child Left Behind definition of "high qualified" teacher is much too narrow for the early childhood field at this time (to be "highly qualified", a teacher must have both a Bachelor's degree and a state teacher license). Instead, a highly qualified early childhood educator needs specialized education and knowledge in children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development and learning.

Pre-Baccalaureate Partnerships must use the grants for all of the following Reforms:

- Teacher preparation curriculum that improves, evaluates, and assess how well all prospective and new teachers develop teaching skills;
- Empirically based practice and scientifically valid research where applicable about teaching and learning so that all prospective teachers and early childhood educators to –
 - understand research based practices in the classroom, have knowledge of student learning methods,
 - have the skills to analyze student academic achievement data and other measures of student learning to improve instruction,
 - have skills and understanding of effective instructional strategies across all applicable content areas so that educators can meet the learning needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners, gifted and talented children, students with low literacy levels, and as applicable children in early childhood education programs, and can differentiate instruction
 - can participate in a IEP team and
 - can use effective strategies for reading instruction
- Collaboration with departments, programs and units to a partner institution outside of the teacher preparation program so teachers have training in academic content areas and teaching so they can become “highly qualified”
- Develop/implement induction programs for teachers
- Develop/implement admission goals and priorities aligned with hiring goals of the high need local educational agency that is a member of the partnership
- Implement program and curriculum changes so that prospective teachers have the content knowledge, preparation, and degree to teach AP and International Baccalaurete courses
- Clinical experiences and supervision for prospective teachers and early childhood educators in high need schools, including mentoring programs of teachers/educators
- Induction programs for new teachers (K-12) and mentoring of early childhood educators (note: not expanding the role of school districts to include community based in their new teacher induction programs and so requiring mentoring of early childhood educators as option)
- Recruitment of qualified individuals to become teachers with focus on recruiting from under-represented populations, teaching in rural and teacher shortage areas, and shifting from other career to teaching

Partnership also must develop a **preservice clinical education program for teachers and as applicable early childhood educators** that is offered over the course of teacher preparation and closely aligned with the course work (and may be a 5th year teacher preparation program) to

- Incorporate year long opportunities for enrichment, including clinical learning in classrooms in high need schools in the partnership district; closely supervised interaction between teachers and faculty, experienced teachers, principals, and school leaders at early childhood programs, elementary or secondary schools

- Integrate pedagogy and classroom practice for effective teaching in academic content areas
- Provide high quality teacher mentoring
- When feasible, be offered in the same school district in which teachers will work
- As applicable, prepare teachers to meet unique needs of teaching in rural or urban areas
- Provide support and training for individuals who serve as mentors including release time, for faculty to receive course workload credit and compensation for time teacher, a stipend which may include a bonus, differential incentive

Partnerships that focus on early childhood educator preparation will implement initiatives that increase compensation for early childhood educators who attain associate or baccalaureate degrees in early childhood education

Partnership will create an induction program for new teachers and **for early childhood provide mentoring or coaching for new educators**

Partnership will develop and use effective mechanisms, including alternative routes to teacher certification, for the partnership to recruit individuals to become high quality teachers

Partnership will strengthen the literacy teaching skills of prospective and new elementary and secondary teachers

Leadership Programs

Partnership must prepare individuals enrolled in or preparing to enroll in school leadership programs for careers as superintendents, principals, **as applicable directors of early childhood education programs**, or other school leaders.

Partnership will promote strong leadership skills for school leaders to create and maintain data-drive professional learning communities, create a conducive environment for professional development, understanding of teaching and assessment skills to drive teacher and student learning, managing resources and school time, engaging parents, community members, and businesses to improve student achievement, and understand how students learn and develop.

Develop a preservice clinical program to develop leadership skills. Create an induction program for new leaders, recruit qualified individuals to become leaders. Individuals must be enrolled in/preparing to enroll in an institution of higher education and be a recent graduate, midcareer professional moving to teaching, a current teacher who wants to be a school leader or school leader interested in becoming a superintendent.

Teaching Residency Programs

Applies to K-12 teachers at the master's level for high need schools

Partnership Evaluation

When submitting the application, the partnership will include an evaluation plan with measurable performance objectives that include teacher retention in the first 3 years of teaching, improved pass rates and scaled scores for initial state certification or licensure, percentage of highly qualified teachers hired by the high need district, teachers in high need subjects that are hired, as applicable percentage of early childhood education program classes in the geographic area served that are taught by highly competent early childhood educators, and as applicable, percentage of teachers trained to integrate technology into the curricula

TITLE VIII -- GRANTS TO STATES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS

- New program authorized in HEAO – will need appropriation
- Competitive grant to states
- States would establish State Advisory Councils on early childhood professional development and career systems to pull together all of the different stakeholders to create a coherent system based on gaps, areas needed to scale up, barriers to helping improve quality of individuals knowledge, education, skills and retention in child care, Head Start, and other early childhood programs.
- State Advisory Council would give its recommendations to governor and the State early learning council (see Head Start bill)
- Requires them to look at certain areas of a system such as core competencies, articulation agreements, assistance in getting higher education and professional development, mentoring/coaching new teachers and directors, linkages in a career lattice between roles, competencies and compensation, improving the quality of higher education degree programs for early childhood education teachers, quality assurances so that programs know they are paying for high quality professional development
- Provides opportunity for public input into the state plan and an evaluation of the efforts and their impact that will give better data on the status of early childhood education professionals, professional development, training, retention, and higher education

TITLE IV -- STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION – LOAN FORGIVENESS

Loan forgiveness for certain occupations has been a part of the HEA for several years. In terms of educators, it has focused on K-12 teachers in public schools. A federal loan forgiveness program for child care workers had not been funded for several years.

The reconciliation bill of 2007 expanded the list of eligible persons for forgiveness of the **Direct Loan program**. The list of “public service jobs” included individuals working in a nonprofit organization, early childhood educators in public schools, and “public child care.” The phrase “public child care” was not defined in the Act and too broad. It could be read to exclude teachers in family child care and for-profit centers because they aren’t “public” or nonprofit. The HEOA amends the list to include individuals working in “early childhood education (including licensed or regulated child care, Head Start, and State funded prekindergarten)”.

Until now, loan forgiveness under the **Perkins Loan program** has been available to Head Start and early intervention teachers but not to other early childhood educators. The HEOA expands eligibility to include Head Start, prekindergarten or child care program licensed or regulated by the Act.

HEOA also expands loan forgiveness under the **Federal Family Education Loan** to early childhood educators.

Student loans are funded through mandatory federal funding. The loan forgiveness is discretionary funding.