

Promoting Readiness in Education to Prevent Additional Remediation and Expense (PREPARE) Act (S. 1516.)

Sponsored by U.S. Senator Doug Jones (D-AL)

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The nation's high school graduation rate is at an all-time high of 84.6 percent for the Class of 2017.¹ Yet many of these graduates are unprepared for college. More than one-third of all first-year college students take some type of remedial course work and for historically underserved students, this number can be much higher. At 4-year public colleges, two-thirds of African American students and over one-half of Latinx students require remedial course work.² While remedial education strives to help students attain the skills they need to succeed in college, it also can deter completion by adding to the cost and time necessary to earn a degree. The Promoting Readiness in Education to Prevent Additional Remediation and Expense (PREPARE) Act aims to address this issue by more closely aligning high school education with the expectations of postsecondary education.

Grants to States

The PREPARE Act authorizes grants to states to align high school and postsecondary education. States receiving grants are required, among other things, to

- align high school graduation requirements with entrance requirements for credit-bearing course work in state institutions of higher education;
- develop statewide standards for placement in remedial college course work based on multiple measures;
- develop statewide articulation agreements between high schools and public institutions of higher education ("vertical" alignment); and
- develop statewide articulation agreements among public institutions of higher education in the state ("horizontal" alignment).

Subgrants to Eligible Entities

States must reserve at least 80 percent of PREPARE Act funds to make competitive subgrants to eligible entities that consist of a partnership between at least one local education agency (LEA) and an institution of higher education or higher education system operating in the same state as the LEA. Eligible entities that include a high-need LEA, an LEA that serves a high-need high school, or a high-need institution of higher education, among other things, receive priority consideration.

Activities to Improve High School Education to Prevent the Need for Remedial Education

Each eligible entity that receives a PREPARE Act subgrant shall identify high school students likely to require postsecondary remediation. These entities then shall develop and implement activities that improve high school education to prevent the need for remedial education at the postsecondary level, such as

- advanced course work,
- summer bridge programs,
- enhanced advising or counseling activities, and
- other evidence-based services as described by the eligible entity.

Activities to Strengthen Remedial Education at the Postsecondary Level

Each eligible entity that receives a PREPARE Act subgrant shall develop and implement activities that strengthen remedial education at the postsecondary level, such as

- corequisite courses,
- technology-enhanced diagnostics and delivery of remedial education,
- faculty professional development,
- practices to teach self-regulated learning,
- enhanced advising or counseling activities, and
- other evidence-based services as described by the eligible entity.

Program Evaluation and Funding

The secretary of education, in partnership with the director of the institute of education sciences, shall contract with a third-party to evaluate the activities implemented under the PREPARE Act. The evaluation will include information, disaggregated by student subgroup, on the number and percentage of students entering, persisting, and completing postsecondary education and the number and percentage of students who enroll in and complete remedial education. The PREPARE Act authorizes such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020 and each of the five succeeding fiscal years.



Endnotes

- 1 Information on the national high school graduation rate for School Year 2016–17, the most recent year available, obtained from U.S. Department of Education Common Core of Data, https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR_RE_and_characteristics_2016-17.asp (accessed April 1, 2019).
- 2 X. Chen, *Remedial Coursetaking at U.S. Public 2- and 4-Year Institutions: Scope, Experiences, and Outcomes* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2016), <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016405.pdf>.

The **Alliance for Excellent Education** (All4Ed) is a Washington, DC–based national policy, practice, and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all students, particularly those underperforming and those historically underserved, graduate from high school ready for success in college, work, and citizenship. all4ed.org

Education Reform Now (ERN) is a non-profit think tank and advocacy group that generates new ideas, promotes proven practices, and supports a durable network of champions advocates across policymaking and political arenas who strive to expand what works and change what is broken in the public education system, particularly for students of color and those from low-income families. edreformnow.org