

Family Engagement in Education Act of 2013

(S.1291/H.R. 2662)

Introduced by: Senator Jack Reed (RI), Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (RI), Senator Chris Coons (DE), Representative Glenn “GT” Thompson (PA), Representative Carolyn McCarthy (NY)

Research demonstrates that family engagement in a child’s education increases student achievement, improves attendance, and reduces dropout rates. The Family Engagement in Education Act of 2013 seeks to target capacity-building and technical assistance for effective family engagement strategies where it’s needed most while encouraging state and school district flexibility to identify programming that works best for individual communities. The proposed language is intended to inform comprehensive reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) – No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

The Family Engagement in Education Act will:

✓ **Target Federal Resources While Promoting State and Local Decision-Making**

While current statute provides structure for family-school partnership at the local level, the only state-based infrastructure to assist with implementation of this provision, the Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC) program, was defunded in Fiscal Year 2011. This has left school districts without access to the expertise needed to ensure appropriate use of federal resources and effective family engagement strategies. This legislation aims to:

- Utilize a small portion of Title I administrative funds (.3 percent) to systemically embed family engagement at the school, Local Educational Agency (LEA), and State Educational Agency (SEA) levels.
- Allow each SEA to use discretion over its family engagement funding to re-establish a state-based infrastructure for capacity-building and technical assistance, localized capacity-building for high-need school districts, and internal SEA capacity-building. Required activities would depend on the size of the state.
- Allow for qualifying LEAs to reserve two percent of their Title I-A allocations to implement family-school partnership strategies, with increased flexibility to implement results-driven district-level programming.

✓ **Promote State-Based Infrastructure for Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance in Family Engagement in Education**

Each state will utilize a portion, as determined by the SEA, of its family engagement funding to establish a Statewide Family Engagement Center through a competitive process, as designed by the SEA.

✓ **Provides Localized Services to High-Need School Communities to Promote Student Achievement and School Improvement**

Any state with an annual Title I-A allocation greater than 60 million dollars will use a portion, to be determined by the SEA, of its family engagement funding to establish at least one Local Family Engagement Center through competitive process, to serve the highest-need areas of the state, as determined by the SEA. Increased localized assistance will enable individual schools and school districts to implement culturally competent programs and services designed to promote familial engagement in student learning and school governance best suited to address the needs of the local community.

✓ **Prioritizes Family Engagement as Key Academic Support and Driver of School Improvement**

Current law requires LEAs to partner on family engagement, but provides no research-based best practices on how to do so. The Family Engagement in Education Act strengthens language of Title I, section 1118 to promote family engagement with research-based principles of practice that drive individual student success and school improvement. Improvements to section 1118 seek to remedy this omission, maintain local flexibility to identify and implement what works, and promote responsible use of federal dollars to meet statutory intent.

Endorsed by:

National PTA
American School Counselor Association
Campaign for Youth Justice
National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
National Center for Family Literacy
National Family, School, and Community Engagement Working Group
National Indian Education Association (NIEA)
Parents as Teachers
School Social Work Association of America
TESOL International Association
United Way Worldwide
Alabama PTA
Alaska PTA
Arkansas PTA
Arizona PTA
California State PTA
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West Virginia PTA
Wyoming State PTA

For additional information or to cosponsor the Family Engagement in Education Act, contact:

Moira Lenehan-Razzuri
Senator Jack Reed (D-RI)
moira_lenehan@reed.senate.gov
4-4642

Matthew Brennan
Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-PA/5)
matthew.brennan@mail.house.gov
5-5121

Steven Ettannani
Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY/4)
steven.ettannani@mail.house.gov
5-5516