

DRAFT

Title I, Part A

Summary of Current Law and Proposed Changes Senator Jeff Bingaman

Reference: Compilation, pages 16-44.

Section 1003 Reservation and Allocation for School Improvement

Current Law: Section authorizes the State to reserve one-half of 1 percent of the funds allocated to the State for local educational agency grants, migrant education and neglected and delinquent youth to carry out its duties in sections 1116 and 1117. Those sections require the State to review LEA progress and institute corrective action against failing LEAs. The State also is required to provide technical assistance and other forms of assistance to Title I schools and school districts. Congress also may allocate additional sums for this purpose under section 1002(f).

Proposed Changes:

- (1) Allow States to reserve 2.5% of funds received under part A (local educational grants) in fiscal years 2001 and 2002 and 3.5% for fiscal years 2003 through 2005 to carry out its responsibilities under section 1116 and 1117 (see changes to 1116 and 1117 below).
- (2) Of the amounts reserved, the SEA must allocate at least 70% directly to LEAs, giving first priority to agencies with schools identified for corrective action and second priority to LEAs with schools identified for school improvement. In both cases, LEAs must use the funds to improve the performance of the schools identified for corrective action or improvement.

Section 1111. State Plans

Current Law: This section outlines the requirements for State plans under Title I. The section includes a requirement that States set goals for adequate yearly progress ("AYP") for student performance and establish yearly assessments. The section sets out requirements for AYP and assessments.

Proposed Changes:

Adequate Yearly Progress:

- (1) Add a requirement that states judge academic progress using disaggregated student

performance data in determining adequate yearly progress. States would be required to communicate to recipients the specific improvements that must be made in achieving state performance standards by three important subgroups of students--poor, LEP and disabled. This will prevent the practice of masking the achievement gap with data based on average student performance.

(2) Require states to ensure that all students meet or exceed their state's proficient level of performance within ten years.

H.R. 2 includes disaggregation for AYP by race, ethnicity, income status, gender and disability status and sets a ten-year time-frame for proficiency. Texas and North Carolina have already incorporated disaggregated data and goals into their accountability programs, leading to significant improvements in student achievement for all students.

Assessments:

(1) Section 1111(a)(3)(F)(iii) requires that a student's first language be used for assessment if it is the language most likely to yield accurate and reliable information on what students know, *when assessment in that language is practicable*. Proposed change would add a subparagraph requiring the use of assessments written in Spanish for the assessment of Spanish-speaking students with limited English language proficiency, if Spanish-language assessments are more appropriate for those students *without* practicability language (Spanish assessments should be available in all States).

(2) Require that LEAs make available to the public a report identifying the number of students excluded from assessments, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, income status and LEP status.

Rewards Program:

Add language indicating that State plans should provide for rewarding schools that have made progress by exceeding their AYP goals for two consecutive years or make progress in closing the achievement gap and provide for technical assistance, professional development and other capacity-building resources for schools and LEAs identified as in need of improvement.

H.R. 2 contains similar provision.

Penalties:

Proposed language would require the Secretary to withhold administrative funds if a State fails to put an accountability system in place. During the first year, the Secretary would withhold the amounts allocated above the amount allocated for administrative purposes the year before. In subsequent years, the Secretary must withhold at least one fifth of the total funds allocated for administrative purposes.

H.R. 2 contains similar provision. States should have standards, assessments and accountability systems in place. They have had 5 years to put them in place.

Section 1116 Assessment and Local Education Agency and School Improvement

This section outlines the local and State education agencies' responsibilities for ensuring that schools receiving Title I funds make adequate progress. The section outlines when a school should be identified as being in need of improvement, how the LEA should respond to this need and corrective actions that LEAs should implement if a school does not improve within a given time frame. The section also outlines when a LEA should be identified by the State as being in need of improvement, how the State and LEA should respond and the corrective actions that SEAs should implement if a LEA does not improve within a given time frame.

Proposed Changes:

I. School Improvement (1116(c)):

Identification Process for Schools in Need of Improvement:

- (1) Incorporate definition of adequate yearly progress established in section 1111. Plan must include goals for each of the groups of students identified in the disaggregated data outlined in section 1111 -- low income, LEP and disabled students.
- (2) School plans must identify research-based strategy or model for school improvement and identify the evaluation-based evidence supporting the strategy or model.
- (3) Incorporate parental notification requirement when a school has been notified as being in need of improvement.
- (4) Improvement plans must be made public.

H.R. 2 contains similar provisions. Under current law, schools may develop school improvement plans without setting measurable improvement goals. Increased specificity in plans will be more likely to lead to meaningful change for students. H.R. 2 also requires school improvement plans be public.

Professional Development: Language in section 1116 (c)(3) requires professional development for staff in schools identified as being in need of improvement. Proposed language modifies existing language to incorporate requirement that the professional development serve to "address the professional needs of the instructional staff by increasing the content knowledge of teachers and building their capacity to align classroom instruction with challenging content standards and to bring all students to proficient or advanced levels of performance."

LEA Corrective Action: Modify corrective action to:

(1) Change the list of corrective actions in 1116(c)(5) by:

- Eliminating current options (II) and (III) (interagency collaborative agreements, revocation of authority to operate a schoolwide); and
- Adding (1) “eliminating the use of noncredentialed staff”; (2) “closing the school”; and (3) “instituting and fully implementing a new curriculum, including appropriate professional development for all relevant staff, that is based upon scientifically based research and offers substantial promise of improving educational achievement for low-performing students” as new options.
- Modify current option (V) so that it reads:
(V) “restructuring the school, such as by –
 (A) creating schools within schools or other small learning environments;
 or
 (B) making alternative governance arrangements (such as the creation of a public charter school).

Revised list of corrective actions would be:

- “(i) deferring, reducing, or withholding funds;
- (ii) decreasing decisionmaking authority at the school level;
- (iii) restructuring the school, such as by--
 - (I) creating schools within schools or other small learning environments;
 - or
 - (II) making alternative governance arrangements (such as the creation of a public charter school);
- (iv) reconstituting the school;
- (v) eliminating the use of noncredentialed staff;
- (vi) closing the school;
- (vii) instituting and fully implementing a new curriculum, including appropriate professional development for all relevant staff, that is based upon scientifically based research and offers substantial promise of improving educational achievement for low-performing students;”

(2) Proposed language would require that the LEA take one of the corrective actions which change the school’s administration or governance (iii, iv, v or vi). Current law provides the list as possible actions but does not require that any on the list be taken.

(3) In addition to requiring one of the other corrective actions, proposed language requires that the LEA allow students in schools scheduled for corrective action to transfer to other public schools (which are not in need of improvement). Current law includes the option to allow students to transfer as a possible corrective action, but does not require it. Proposed language limits the amount of Title I funds that may be used for transportation to 5%.

(4) Proposed language indicates that the professional development required when a school is identified as being in need of improvement (1116 (c)(3)) should continue through the corrective action phase.

(5) Current language (1116(c)(5)(C)) allows a one year delay for corrective action if “the failure to make progress can be attributed to extenuating circumstances as determined by the local educational agency.” Proposed language would modify so that a one year delay is only granted if “justified due to exceptional or uncontrollable circumstances such as a natural disaster or a precipitous and unforeseen decline in the financial resources of the local educational agency or school.”

H.R. 2 contains similar provisions, including a requirement that school districts choose at least one of a range of corrective actions. H.R. 2 provides a right to transfer, but it would be available at the identification as in need of improvement stage.

II State Review and Local Educational Agency Improvement (1116(d)):

Plan Revisions (1115(d)(4)): Proposed language requires LEA plans for improvement to:

- Include specific numerical performance goals and targets to ensure that all students, including low income, LEP and disabled students, will be proficient within 10 years;
- Incorporate scientifically-based research strategies that strengthen the core academic program;
- Address the professional development needs of staff;
- Include specific numerical performance goals and targets for each group;
- Provide for parental notification of the reasons for the LEA’s identification and how parents can participate in upgrading the quality of the local educational agency.

State Educational Agency Responsibility (1116(d)(5)):

Proposed language modifies current language so that technical assistance required under subparagraph (B) must be based on scientifically-based research.

Corrective Action 1116(d)(6):

(1) Corrective Action must be taken if no progress has been made after the end of the second year following identification as being in need of improvement. Current law requires corrective action at the end of the fourth year.

(2) Proposed language deletes (VII) joint plan between the State and LEA as an option.

(3) Requires the SEA to take at least one of the corrective actions listed in 1116(d)(6)(B) (as modified by (2) above).

(4) Current law allows for due process and a hearing before corrective action can be taken. Proposed language incorporates a 45 day deadline for the hearing.

(5) Current law allows for a one year delay before implementing corrective action. Proposed language would only allow delay if justified "by exceptional or uncontrollable circumstances such as a natural disaster or a precipitous and unforeseen decline in the financial resources of the LEA."

Section 1117 State Assistance for School Support and Improvement

Current Law: Requires States to develop a statewide system of support to help Title I LEAs and schools to meet the State's content standards and student performance standards. Encourages States to work with comprehensive regional technical assistance centers and educational regional laboratories. Requires States to create school support teams to provide information and assistance to schoolwide programs. Provides for an awards program for distinguished schools and distinguished teachers.

Proposed Changes:

(1) SEA must establish a statewide system of intensive and sustained support and improvement for Title I LEAs and schools, giving first priority to schools and LEAs subject to corrective action and second priority to schools and LEAs in need of improvement. Current law does not prioritize these schools/LEAs.

(2) Current law identifies who can participate on a school support team. Proposed language ensures that individuals who are "knowledgeable about scientifically based research and practice" be included.

- (3) Proposed language indicates that funds can be used by LEAs or States to implement research-based comprehensive school reform models.
- (4) Proposed language requires States to set up a rewards program for schools that have made progress in closing achievement gaps or exceeded their adequate yearly progress goals.

OTHER PROPOSALS RELATED TO ACCOUNTABILITY

Report Card Requirement

Require every school/LEA receiving federal funds to provide parents with a report card for their child's school with the following information:

- (1) Student performance data disaggregated in the same manner as results are disaggregated under section 1111 of ESEA;
- (2) Attendance and graduation rates;
- (3) Professional qualifications of the school's teachers, including the number of teachers teaching out of field and the number of teachers with emergency certification;
- (4) average class size in the school;
- (5) school safety, including incidents of violence and drug and alcohol abuse and gun possession;
- (6) parental involvement as measured by section 1118(b) of ESEA;
- (7) annual dropout rate as calculated by the National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data;
- (8) student access to technology, including number of computers per school and classroom and number connected to the internet.

Report cards would be available on a district's website and sent home with each student.

S. 1252 and H.R. 2 contain provisions for requiring this type of report card. Although 36 states do some kind of annual reporting, only 26 make all school report card information available on their web sites and only 13 require that such report cards be sent home. In addition, many do not contain key information that parents most want.

Teacher Quality: Require every school receiving Title I funds to have fully qualified teachers within 4 years of enactment of the ESEA amendments. In the meantime, title I funds could not be used to hire unqualified teachers and districts must seek an equitable distribution of the fully qualified teachers in the district. All teachers in schools receiving Title I funds must be qualified by possessing necessary teaching skills and by demonstrating mastery in the subjects that they teach.

Elementary School Teachers must: (1) have State certification; (2) hold a bachelor's degree; and (3) demonstrate subject matter knowledge, teaching knowledge and teaching skills required to teach effectively in reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, science and other elements of a liberal arts education.

Secondary School Teachers must: (1) have state certification; (2) hold a bachelor's degree; and (3) demonstrate a high level of competence in all subject areas in which they teach.

Demonstration of competence may be achieved by: (1) a high level of performance on a rigorous academic subject area test; (2) completion of an academic major (or equal number of courses); or (3) in the case of mid-career professionals, a high level of performance in relevant subject areas through employment experience.

Teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards would be considered fully qualified. Parents would be notified if their child's teacher is not taught by a qualified teacher.

Schools that fail to comply would be subject to corrective action and States could lose their administrative funding.

H.R. 2 included similar provisions for all schools. Senator Bingaman's bill, S. 1603, places the requirement on Title I schools. It is the schools and classrooms with the neediest children who often have the greatest number of unqualified teachers. Good teachers are so important that almost half of the achievement gap between minority and white students would be erased if minority children had access to the same quality of teachers. During a time when we are demanding increased levels of performance for our schools and our children, we also must set high standards for all our teachers, including those instructing students who will have the greatest hurdles to overcome in the learning process.

Proposed language also would provide grants to assist States and LEAs to provide necessary education and training to teachers who do not meet the necessary qualifications. Funds could be used by States or LEAs to set up programs of continuing education. Tuition scholarships also could be given directly to teachers in exchange for a commitment to teach in a Title I school for at least 3 years. Funds also could be used to give financial incentives, such as signing bonuses, to fully qualified teachers.

Grant funds also could be used to increase teacher mobility by providing alternative means of certification for highly qualified individuals with college degrees, including mid-career professionals and former military personnel, support programs that increase the portability of teachers' pensions, certification and years of experience so that qualified teachers can have greater mobility and districts can fill unmet needs for qualified teachers more easily, and match State or local funds provided to teachers seeking certification from the National Board for Professional Standards. These provisions may be incorporated in Title II.

S. 1676: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Senator Jeff Bingaman

PURPOSE. This bill sets more rigorous standards for States and LEAs receiving Title I funds. This bill would improve the current accountability provisions in Title I. The bill seeks to ensure that all schools receiving Title I funding achieve realistic goals for student achievement and that all students reach those goals, narrowing existing achievement gaps.

SUMMARY. Recipients will be required to set goals for student achievement which will result in all students (in Title I schools) passing state tests at a "proficiency" standard within 10 years of reauthorization. The bill also requires States, LEAs and schools to focus on elimination of the achievement gap between LEP & low-income students and other students.

Adequate Yearly Progress: Further define "adequate yearly progress" in current law. Requires progress to be continuous and substantial enough so that all students will meet the state's proficient or advanced levels within ten years. Also requires separate improvement requirements for economically disadvantaged, disabled and LEP students.

State Plans: Adds language to Title I provisions to require States to describe in their state plans the multiple elements of an acceptable Title I accountability system – statewide, effective in improving achievement including all students (in particular poor and LEP students), alignment of standards and assessments, same systems for all schools and LEAs, substantial and continuous improvement, public understanding and reporting, identification of and help to failing schools and LEAs, identification and rewarding of successful schools and LEAs, mandatory corrective actions, aimed at getting all groups to state standards within ten year period. Most significant change in this section is reporting to parents when school is identified for improvement.

School Plans for Improvement: Language requiring schools in need of improvement to notify parents. Schools must also identify use of proven strategies and models in their plans for improvement.

Corrective Action: Modifies corrective action section so that schools failing to meet standards must take one of three actions affecting personnel and/or management of the schools: (1) decreasing decisionmaking authority at the school level; (2) reconstituting the school staff; or (3) eliminating the use of noncredentialed staff. Students in failing schools also would have a right to transfer to a school which is not failing.

Assessments: Spanish-speaking LEP students would be able to take tests in Spanish if that language is more appropriate for assessing their achievement than English.

S. 1603: QUALITY TEACHERS FOR ALL ACT
Senator Jeff Bingaman

PURPOSE. This Act would ensure that teachers in Title I classrooms possess the subject matter knowledge, teaching knowledge and teaching skills necessary to work effectively in our nation's classrooms. Far too many schools in America allow classrooms to be led by teachers with insufficient training and qualifications to teach. Unfortunately, it is the schools and classrooms with the neediest children who often have the greatest number of unqualified teachers. Good teachers are so important that almost half of the achievement gap between minority and white students would be erased if minority children had access to the same quality of teachers. During a time when we are demanding increased levels of performance for our schools and our children, we also must set high standards for all our teachers, including those instructing students who will have the greatest hurdles to overcome in the learning process.

SUMMARY. The bill would provide parents a right to know the qualifications of their child's teacher, set standards of accountability for teacher qualifications in Title I schools and provide support for teacher training programs and State-initiated efforts to achieve increased mobility for teachers.

Parents Right to Know: The bill will empower parents by giving them the right to know the qualifications of their child's teacher.

Fully qualified teacher in every Title I classroom: All teachers in schools receiving Title I funds must be qualified by possessing necessary teaching skills and by demonstrating mastery in the subjects that they teach.

Elementary School Teachers must: (1) have State certification; (2) hold a bachelor's degree; and (3) demonstrate subject matter knowledge, teaching knowledge and teaching skills required to teach effectively in reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, science and other elements of a liberal arts education.

Secondary School Teachers must: (1) have state certification; (2) hold a bachelor's degree; and (3) demonstrate a high level of competence in all subject areas in which they teach.

Demonstration of competence may be achieved by: (1) a high level of performance on a rigorous academic subject area test; (2) completion of an academic major (or equal number of courses); or (3) in the case of mid-career professionals, a high level of performance in relevant subject areas through employment experience.

Teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards would be considered fully qualified.

Teacher Empowerment Provisions:

Financial Support for Teacher Training and Compensation: The bill will provide grants to assist States and LEAs to provide necessary education and training to teachers who do not meet the necessary qualifications.

- Funds could be used by States or LEAs to set up programs of continuing education. Tuition scholarships also could be given directly to teachers in exchange for a

commitment to teach in a Title I school for at least 3 years.

- Funds also could be used to give financial incentives, such as signing bonuses, to fully qualified teachers.

Increased Portability Efforts: Grant funds would be provided to:

- Support State efforts to provide alternative means of certification for highly qualified individuals with college degrees, including mid-career professionals and former military personnel;
- Support programs that increase the portability of teachers' pensions, certification and years of experience so that qualified teachers can have greater mobility and districts can fill unmet needs for qualified teachers more easily.
- Match State or local funds provided to teachers seeking certification from the National Board for Professional Standards.

Authorization: \$50,000,000 for FY2000 and such sums as necessary for each subsequent year.

S. 1674: SMALL SAFE SCHOOLS ACT

Senator Jeff Bingaman

PURPOSE. This Act provides support for the development of smaller learning communities within large schools and encourages the construction of smaller school facilities. Research demonstrates that small schools outperform large schools on every measure of school success.

School Security: Issues of school safety can be effectively addressed by creating smaller schools or smaller learning communities within larger schools. Based on studies of high school violence, researchers conclude that the first step in ending school violence must be to break through the impersonal atmosphere of large high schools by creating smaller communities of learning within larger structures, where teachers and students can come to know each other well.

Improved Learning: Smaller school size promotes learning. Small school size improves students grades and test scores. This impact is even greater for ethnic minority and low income students. Small institutional size has been found to be the second most important factor -- after high socioeconomic status -- in creating positive educational outcomes.

Cost Effective: Small schools can be created cost effectively. Larger schools can be more expensive because their sheer size requires more administrative support. More importantly, additional bureaucracy translates into less flexibility and innovation. In addition, because small schools have higher graduation rates, costs per graduate are lower than costs per graduate in large schools.

SUMMARY. The Act would establish three programs designed to promote and support smaller schools and smaller learning communities within large schools.

Smaller Learning Community Grants: Schools or LEAs could apply for funds to help develop smaller learning communities within larger schools.

Technical Assistance: The bill authorizes the Secretary to provide technical assistance to LEAs and schools seeking to create smaller learning communities.

Construction/Renovations: The bill would provide funding for construction and renovation of schools designed to accommodate no more than 350 students in an elementary school, 400 students in a middle school, and 800 students in a high school.

Authorization: \$56,500,000 for FY2000 and such sums as necessary for each subsequent year. \$5,000,000 for smaller learning community grants; \$1,500,000 for technical assistance, and \$50,000,000 for construction/renovation grants.

S. 1604: THE TECHNOLOGY FOR TEACHING ACT
Senator Bingaman

PURPOSE. The Act provides support for improving teacher training in the use of technology in the classroom and for development of innovative uses of technology in the classroom. Education technology can enlarge the classroom environment in ways that were unimaginable only a decade ago and can empower students to develop as independent thinkers and problem-solvers. Teachers deserve the skills needed to bring these extraordinary resources and opportunities into the classroom. Without these skills, America's teachers will find it increasingly difficult to meet the rising international standards of educational excellence. We also must provide for research and development, as well as evaluation of existing uses of technology, in order to ensure that the most effective education-related technology is in place in our nation's schools. We must close the digital divide by making technology available to all students, during the school day and outside the school day.

SUMMARY. The bill would provide federal support to: (1) provide training to teachers to assist them to integrate technology into their classrooms; (2) evaluate the role of technology in the classroom; (3) stimulate the development and use of innovative technologies to assist students to achieve high academic standards; and (4) narrow the "digital divide" by providing high-need communities and students with greater access to technology.

Teacher Training. The Act would establish two programs, administered by the Office of Education Technology in the Office of the Deputy Secretary of Education, to make competitive grants to State Departments of Education. One program would promote the inclusion of education technology in the initial undergraduate preparation of new teachers; the other would focus on ongoing professional development of current teachers.

The Need for Partnerships. Four entities determine the use of technology by K-12 teachers: (1) colleges and universities that train new teachers and pursue education research; (2) State Departments of Education that set and enforce licensing standards for new teachers; (3) local educational agencies that hire teachers and provide for their ongoing professional development; and (4) the private sector that develops and markets education technology. This Act promotes partnership, active cooperation, and collaboration among these entities and supports their joint efforts to improve education through the best use of technology.

State Grant Programs for Pre-service Teachers. Schools of education that train new teachers would be eligible to apply to State Departments of Education for grants to improve their programs in education technology. Grant support would require and enable schools of education to work in collaboration with local K-12 school districts and the education technology private sector. Through these partnership activities, schools of education would improve and expand the ways in which they prepare future teachers to use technology in the classroom.

State Grant Programs for In-service Teachers. Local K-12 Education Agencies (LEAs) would be eligible to apply to State Departments of Education for grants to improve their professional development programs in education technology. In applying for grants, LEAs would be required to develop consortia that include one or more schools of education, education technology companies, and other partners able to help improve their professional development programs. These consortia would provide LEAs and teachers with access to the latest education research and the most current education technology available. The results of these partnership activities would be new and innovative programs for teacher professional development.

- Each State would be allocated an amount from each program based on its total and Title I student populations. States would apply for their allocations and would receive either an implementation grant of 3-5 years duration or planning funds that would be used to lay the foundation for more competitive applications to be submitted the following year. Cost sharing would be required from non-Federal partners.

Authorization: \$80,000,000 for FY2000 (\$40,000,000 for each grant program) and such sums as necessary for each subsequent year.

National Evaluation. The bill would require the Secretary of Education to evaluate existing and anticipated future uses of educational technology. The Secretary may conduct long-term controlled studies on the effectiveness of the uses of educational technology; convene experts to identify uses of technology that hold the greatest promise for improving teaching and learning and to identify barriers to the commercial development of effective, high-quality, cost-competitive educational technology and software. The Secretary could use up to 4 percent of the funds appropriated for Title III (Ed Tech Title of ESEA) activities for research and evaluation.

Development and Innovation Project. The bill would provide for grants to stimulate the development of innovative technology applications. The Secretary would award competitive grants to consortia of public and private entities developing innovative models of effective use of educational technology, including the development of distance learning networks, software (including software deliverable through the Internet), and online learning resources. For example, grants could be awarded to projects seeking to develop web-based instruction to provide access to challenging content such as Advanced Placement courses.

Narrowing the Digital Divide. The bill would target existing technology grants and the new grant funds authorized by this bill to high-poverty, low-performing schools. The bill also supports the development and expansion of community technology centers to serve disadvantaged residents of high-poverty communities. The centers would provide access to technology and training for community members of all ages.

S. 1675: NATIONAL DROPOUT PREVENTION ACT

Senator Jeff Bingaman

PURPOSE. While much progress has been made in encouraging more students to complete high school, the nation remains far from its goal of a 90 percent graduation rate for students by 2000. In fact, none of the states with large and diverse student populations has yet come close to this goal, and dropout rates approaching 50 percent are commonplace in some of the most disadvantaged communities during the period from ninth grade to senior year. In addition to widespread misconceptions about why so many students drop out of school and lack of familiarity with proven dropout prevention programs, one of the main factors contributing to the lack of progress in this area is that there is currently no concerted federal effort to provide or coordinate effective and proven dropout prevention programs for at-risk children. In fact, there is currently no federal agency or office that is responsible for the multitude of programs that include dropout prevention as a component. The National Dropout Prevention Act is designed to address the findings of the National Hispanic Dropout Project, a group of nationally recognized experts assembled during 1996-97 to help find solutions to the high dropout rate among Hispanic and other at-risk students. Initiated at the request of Senator Bingaman, the Hispanic Dropout Project has found that widespread misunderstandings of the underlying causes of dropouts, combined with a lack of familiarity with effective programs, has prevented increased school completion for some groups.

SUMMARY. The Act makes lowering the dropout rate a national priority. Efforts to prevent students from dropping out would be coordinated on the nation level by an Office of Dropout Prevention and Program Completion in the Department of Education. Best practices and models for effective dropout programs would be disseminated through a national clearinghouse and schools engaged in dropout prevention efforts would be provided support and recognition for their efforts.

Office of Dropout Prevention: Creates an Office of Dropout Prevention and Program Completion. The Director of the office would report directly to the Secretary. The office would develop, implement and monitor an interagency plan to assess the coordination, use of resources and availability of funding under Federal law that can be used to address school dropout prevention, or middle school or secondary school reentry.

National Clearinghouse: Creates a national clearinghouse on effective school dropout prevention, intervention and reentry programs. Clearinghouse would disseminate research, effective programs, best practices, and federal resources; provide technical assistance regarding securing resources and designing, implementing school dropout prevention.

National Recognition Program: Provides for national recognition program for successful schools.

Grant Program: Funds may be used to pay only the startup and implementation costs of effective, sustainable, coordinated, and whole school dropout prevention programs. Recipients may contract with community-based organizations. Funds may be used to create alternative school programs or smaller learning communities. Each State gets same percentage of total as that received under Title I. State may award grants to schools that have dropout rates which are in the highest 1/3 of all school dropout rates in the State.

Authorization: \$145,000,000 for FY2000 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the four succeeding years.

S. 1704: THE ACCESS TO HIGH STANDARDS ACT
Senator Jeff Bingaman and Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson

PURPOSE. Building on the successful expansion of the Advanced Placement Incentive Program achieved in the last Congress, the Access to High Standards Act is intended to help foster the continued growth of advanced placement programs throughout the nation and to help ensure equal access to these programs for low income students.

Advanced placement programs already provide rigorous academics and valuable college credits at half the high schools in the United States, serving over 1.5 million students last year. Many States that have incentive programs have already shown tremendous success in increasing participation rates, raising achievement scores, and increasing the involvement of low-income and under-served students. Nevertheless, students – particularly low-income students -- continue to be denied or have limited access to this critical program.

SUMMARY. The Access to High Standards Act (a) authorizes a grant program to help states and school districts start or expand their advanced placement programs by providing greater access to advanced placement for low-income students; (b) gives a priority or establishes the allowable use of funds for programs involving advanced placement courses in related education initiatives.

Demonstration Grants. The bill authorizes competitive grants to States and districts seeking to raise academic standards by expanding student access to advanced placement courses, with a focus on serving low-income and under-served student populations. Grant funds may be used for acquisition of needed curriculum and materials, teacher training, student preparation, and other means of increasing student participation and achievement in advanced placement programs. Priority is given to school districts with high concentrations of low-income students and States programs that target schools with high concentrations of low-income students. Priority also is given for applications showing demonstrated need and business and community involvement. Three-year grants require annual reporting for continuation of funding.

Priority in Federal Programs. The bill gives priority in existing federal programs – such as Star Schools and Eisenhower teacher training programs -- to state and local initiatives using the high expectations and measurable results of advanced placement courses as part of their reform efforts. In addition, advanced placement activities would be considered in awarding Javits awards, and education technology grants.

Internet-based On-line Curriculum Pilot Program: The bill authorizes a pilot grant program for States seeking to provide advanced placement courses through Internet-based on-line curriculum to students in rural areas or areas where the lack of available advanced placement teachers make it impossible to provide traditional courses.

Authorization: \$25,000,000 for FY2000 and such sums as necessary for each subsequent year for demonstration grants and \$10,000,000 for on-line curriculum pilot program.