

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 614

To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to create a demonstration project to fund additional secondary school counselors in troubled title I schools to reduce the dropout rate.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 28, 2021

Ms. SÁNCHEZ (for herself and Mrs. HAYES) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to create a demonstration project to fund additional secondary school counselors in troubled title I schools to reduce the dropout rate.

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 “Put School Counselors
5 Where They’re Needed Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FOR ADDITIONAL SEC-**
2 **ONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELORS.**

3 Part D of title I of the Elementary and Secondary
4 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6421 et seq.) is amend-
5 ed by adding at the end the following:

6 **“Subpart 4—Demonstration Project for Additional**
7 **Secondary School Counselors**

8 **“SEC. 1441. FINDINGS.**

9 “The Congress finds the following:

10 “(1) Nationally, only 85 percent of students
11 graduate from high school with a regular high school
12 diploma.

13 “(2) Every school year, 523,000 American high
14 school students drop out without earning a high
15 school diploma or an alternative credential.

16 “(3) Only about 67 percent of American stu-
17 dents with limited English proficiency graduated on
18 time from high school.

19 “(4) Only about 79 percent of Black students,
20 81 percent of Hispanic students, and 74 percent of
21 American Indian/Alaska Native students graduate
22 on time from high school with a regular diploma,
23 compared to 89 percent of White students and 92
24 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander students.

1 “(5) Only about 67 percent of American stu-
2 dents with disabilities graduated on time from high
3 school.

4 “(6) High school is the final transition into
5 adulthood and the world of work as students begin
6 defining their independence and forging their own
7 pathways. As our next generation of leaders, our
8 youth, are deciding their futures, they are faced with
9 many challenges, including peer pressure and bul-
10 lying, high-stakes testing, the challenges of college
11 admissions, the scholarship and financial aid appli-
12 cation process, and entrance into an ever more com-
13 petitive job market. Students need guidance and
14 skills to help them navigate these complex decisions,
15 which have serious and life changing consequences.

16 “(7) School counseling programs are essential
17 for students to achieve optimal personal growth, ac-
18 quire positive social skills and values, set appropriate
19 career goals, and realize full academic potential to
20 become productive, contributing members of the
21 world community.

22 “(8) Professional secondary school counselors
23 are highly qualified educators with a mental health
24 perspective who understand and respond to the chal-

1 lenges presented by today’s diverse student popu-
2 lation.

3 “(9) The professional secondary school coun-
4 selor holds a master’s degree or higher in school
5 counseling (or the substantial equivalent), and is
6 certified or licensed by the State in which the coun-
7 selor works.

8 “(10) Professional secondary school counselors
9 are integral to the total educational program. They
10 provide proactive leadership that engages all stake-
11 holders in the delivery of programs and services to
12 help the student achieve success in school. Profes-
13 sional secondary school counselors align and work
14 with the school’s mission to support the academic
15 achievement of all students as they prepare for the
16 ever-changing world of the 21st century.

17 “(11) Professional secondary school counselors’
18 opportunities to assist students are often hindered
19 by extraordinarily high student-to-counselor ratios.
20 Currently, the average student-to-counselor ratio in
21 America’s public schools is 430 to 1. The American
22 School Counselor Association, the American Coun-
23 seling Association, and the National Association for
24 College Admissions Counseling all recommend a
25 ratio of one school counselor to 250 students and a

1 lower ratio for counselors working primarily with
2 students at risk.

3 **“SEC. 1442. DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.**

4 “(a) IN GENERAL.—From amounts made available to
5 carry out this subpart, the Secretary shall carry out a
6 demonstration project under which the Secretary makes
7 grants on a competitive basis to secondary schools that
8 receive funds under this title and have a four-year ad-
9 justed cohort graduation rate of 60 percent or lower.

10 “(b) GRANTS.—A grant under this subpart shall be
11 for a period of 4 years and may be used—

12 “(1) to provide additional school counselors
13 during that period; and

14 “(2) to provide additional resources (such as
15 professional development expenses or travel expenses
16 for home visits, and any services and materials re-
17 ferred to in subsection (d)) and to pay overhead ex-
18 penses.

19 “(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
20 gress that a participating school should aim to provide,
21 under subsection (b)(1), one additional counselor per 250
22 students at risk.

23 “(d) SCOPE OF COUNSELING.—The additional school
24 counselors shall identify students who are at risk of not
25 graduating in 4 years and shall provide counseling pri-

1 marily to those students. The counselors may identify such
2 students at any time, but shall strive to identify them be-
3 fore they enter grade 9. Services shall be provided as long
4 as necessary, including to the extent allowable and appro-
5 priate, after the student's cohort graduation date. The
6 counseling provided—

7 “(1) may include a full panoply of services, in-
8 cluding an individual graduation plan and other re-
9 sources, such as appropriate course placement and
10 supplemental services (to include not only supple-
11 mental educational services tutoring if available at
12 the school site, but also other tutoring as necessary,
13 along with supplemental books and materials); and

14 “(2) shall include meetings with each student so
15 identified and with the teachers, tutors, supple-
16 mental educational services providers, and parents of
17 the student, and may also include meetings with
18 other relevant individuals, such as a probation offi-
19 cer, mentor, coach, or employer of the student.

20 “(e) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Funds under
21 this subpart shall be used to supplement, not supplant,
22 funds from non-Federal sources. The additional school
23 counselors provided through funds under this subpart
24 must be in addition to any employees who work in the
25 secondary school guidance or counseling office, such as

1 counselors, college admissions specialists, career develop-
2 ment specialists, guidance information specialists, or any
3 other professional or paraprofessional.

4 “(f) ADDITIONAL GRANT PERIODS.—

5 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A school that receives a
6 grant under this subpart and demonstrates adequate
7 improvement over the period of the grant is eligible
8 to receive a second grant for a second period. If the
9 school again demonstrates adequate improvement
10 over that second period, the school is eligible to re-
11 ceive a third grant for a third period. The third
12 grant shall provide amounts that decrease for each
13 year of the third period and require the school to
14 provide corresponding increases in non-Federal
15 funds.

16 “(2) ADEQUATE IMPROVEMENT.—For purposes
17 of paragraph (1), a school demonstrates adequate
18 improvement over a grant period if the four-year ad-
19 justed cohort graduation rate increases (or is pro-
20 jected to increase) by 10 percent or more over that
21 period.

22 “(g) SELECTION.—The Secretary shall carry out the
23 demonstration project in at least 10 schools. The first five
24 schools selected to participate shall each be from a dif-
25 ferent State.

1 **“SEC. 1443. DEFINITION.**

2 “(a) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this subpart, the
3 term ‘regular high school diploma’ means the standard
4 high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of stu-
5 dents in the State that is fully aligned with State stand-
6 ards, or a higher diploma, and does not include GEDs,
7 certificates of attendance, or any lesser diploma award.

8 “(b) SPECIAL RULE.—For those students who have
9 significant cognitive disabilities and are assessed using an
10 alternate assessment aligned to alternate achievement
11 standards, receipt of a regular high school diploma or
12 State-defined alternate diploma aligned with completion of
13 their entitlement under the Individuals with Disabilities
14 Education Act shall be counted as graduates with a reg-
15 ular high school diploma for the purposes of this Act. No
16 more than 1 percent of students can be counted as grad-
17 uates with a regular high school diploma under this sub-
18 paragraph.

19 **“SEC. 1444. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

20 “There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
21 this subpart \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022
22 through 2024.”.

23 **SEC. 3. CONFORMING AMENDMENT; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

24 (a) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1002(d) of
25 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20

1 U.S.C. 6302(d)) is amended by inserting “(other than
 2 subpart 4)” after “part D,”.

3 (b) TOC.—The table of contents in section 2 of the
 4 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 is
 5 amended by inserting after the item relating to section
 6 1432 the following:

“SUBPART 4—DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FOR ADDITIONAL SECONDARY
 SCHOOL COUNSELORS

“Sec. 1441. Findings.

“Sec. 1442. Demonstration project.

“Sec. 1443. Definition.

“Sec. 1444. Authorization of appropriations.”.

