



# **Higher Education Opportunity Act Reauthorization**

**P.L.110-315**

## **Summary of Selected Provisions for Individuals with Exceptionalities and the Professionals who Work on their Behalf**

### **Executive Summary**

**August 2008**

# Introduction

## **HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY ACT REAUTHORIZATION: PROVISIONS FOR IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH GIFTS AND TALENTS**

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) authorizes the federal government's major student-aid programs and other important postsecondary education initiatives. The last comprehensive revision of the HEOA was completed in 1998. That authorization of the Act expired five years ago, although in the meantime Congress passed intermediate measures to extend HEOA funding provisions without actually reauthorizing the entire Act. Over the last two years, both houses of Congress intensified efforts to significantly overhaul HEOA, resulting in several initiatives to reauthorize the Act, including enactment of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (PL 110-84) in September, 2007. That law includes several measures to make postsecondary education more affordable and accessible, including changes in HEOA's student loan programs.

The final chapter in the HEOA reauthorization took place over the last year, starting with Senate passage of its bill (S. 1642) to reauthorize the remaining HEOA programs in July, 2007 with the House taking similar action on its own HEOA reauthorization bill (HR 4137) in February, 2008. With both houses of Congress committed to enacting HEOA amendments before adjournment of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress in August, the conference committee worked out differences between the two bills over the last few months, with both houses agreeing on a compromise bill, the Higher Education Opportunity Act, on July 31, 2008 and sending it to the President for his signature.

Congress's attention throughout the HEOA reauthorization has been, in large part, on serious and persistent issues in higher education associated with access, affordability, accountability and quality in postsecondary education. In the end, the final bill – nearly 1200 pages in length – revises some existing programs and authorizes many new grant programs (whose funding is uncertain), increases federal oversight in higher education, and calls for more public reporting by institutions of higher education on many aspects of their operations. Among its provisions, the bill incorporates new requirements for greater transparency in college costs, places maintenance of effort requirements on public postsecondary institutions, simplifies the application for federal student financial aid, restricts conflicts of interests in the federal student loan programs, addresses predatory practices by private lenders, and increases grant aid and other programs to enable more low-income students to attend college.

The reauthorization of HEOA contains numerous provisions that CEC and its members have actively advocated for over the years, including but not limited to:

- Provisions to improve the preparation of teachers and school administrators who work in preschool, elementary and secondary education to better meet the unique learning needs of children with exceptionalities. HEOA takes steps to scaffold the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Act through several grant programs to support the preparation of highly qualified teachers who will work in high-need subjects and areas (including special education), in high-need schools, and who will increase academic achievement of children in K-12 education. These programs authorize grants for institutions of higher education -- working in partnership with high-need school districts and other organizations -- to prepare educators to effectively instruct and meet the specific learning needs of diverse learners, including students with disabilities, students with gifts and talents, and students who are limited English proficient.
- Provisions to increase postsecondary education opportunities for students with disabilities by creating new and sustaining existing programs to increase access, recruitment, retention and completion rates for students with disabilities; identify and promote effective transition practices; increase access to instructional materials, and dissemination of best practices related to postsecondary students with disabilities.
- Provisions to call on teacher preparation programs to better integrate technology into their curricula and instruction consistent with the principles of universal design for learning, and to effectively use technology to collect and analyze data on student performance in order to improve student academic achievement.
- Provisions to provide clinical experiences during pre-service training and induction and mentoring programs for new teachers.
- Provisions to address shortages of faculty to prepare the personnel who will educate the next generation of professionals and paraprofessionals serving children with disabilities. This reauthorization has established grants to institutions of higher education to provide fellowships for individuals pursuing doctoral degrees and intending to subsequently train special educators in institutions of higher education.
- Provisions to support loan forgiveness for borrowers under federal student loan programs who work in a broad range of public service fields, including in the provision of educational, related service and other programs that benefit children and youth with disabilities.

In creating this document, CEC has summarized key provisions within HEOA of special interest to CEC members, and is organized under the following headings:

- Teacher Quality Enhancement
- Accountability in Teacher Education
- Quality Higher Education for Students with Disabilities
- Other Amendments Concerning Education of Students with Disabilities



**HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY ACT REAUTHORIZATION  
COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
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**Teacher Quality Enhancement**

GRANT PROGRAM OR MANDATES	TYPE	CEC POSITION
<p><b>Teacher Quality Partnership Grants</b></p> <p><i>5-year grants to IHE partnerships to improve the quality of pre-service preparation of teachers at the undergraduate and graduate levels and of school administrators to meet the educational needs of all students, including students with disabilities and students with gifts and talents. Partnerships must include IHE college/dept. of education, IHE school of arts and sciences, high-need LEA, and high-need school(s) in that LEA. Other partners are permissible.</i></p>	<b>Revision</b>	Supports
<p><b>Preparing Teachers for Digital Age Learners</b></p> <p><i>3-year grants to consortia to improve the technology-related skills of elementary and secondary teachers in order to (a) improve student learning, assessment and learning management; and (b) help students develop skills to succeed in Higher Education and in the workforce. Consortia must include IHE college/department of education, IHE school of arts and sciences, at least one SEA or LEA, and a private or public entity that can contribute to technology related reforms of teacher preparation programs.</i></p>	<b>New</b>	Supports
<p><b>Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence</b></p> <p><i>Competitive grants to eligible institutions of Higher Education or consortia of institutions for the establishment of centers of excellence in teacher preparation to ensure that current and future teachers are highly qualified. Eligible institutions must have a teacher preparation program and must meet the HEOA criteria as a Hispanic-serving institution, a Tribal college or university, an Alaska Native-serving institution, a predominantly Black institution, and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution, a Native Hawaiian-serving institution, a historically Black college or university, a consortia of such institutions, or one of the above institutions or consortia in partnership with any other IHE.</i></p>	<b>New</b>	Supports
<p><b>Preparing General Education Teachers to Teach Students with Disabilities</b></p> <p><i>5-year Teach to Reach grants to partnerships to improve the preparation of general education teacher candidates to ensure that they possess the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively instruct students with disabilities in their classrooms. Partnerships must include one or more IHE departments/programs that prepare general education teachers, an IHE department or program of special education, an IHE department/program that provides degrees in core academic subjects, and a high-need LEA.</i></p>	<b>New</b>	Supports

<p><b>Adjunct Teacher Corps</b></p> <p><i>Grants to LEAs or an LEA and a public or private educational organization or business to create opportunities for professionals and others with subject matter expertise in math, science, or critical foreign languages to provide that expertise to secondary school students on an adjunct basis.</i></p>	<p><b>New</b></p>	<p>Supports</p>
<p><b>Graduate Fellowships to Prepare Faculty in High-Need Areas at Colleges of Education</b></p> <p><i>Grants to institutions of Higher Education and consortia of institutions to support graduate student fellowships for individuals preparing to work as IHE faculty in the preparation of highly qualified elementary and secondary school teachers in high-need areas. High need areas are designated as math and science teachers, special education teachers, and teachers who instruct students who are limited English proficient.</i></p>	<p><b>New</b></p>	<p>Supports</p>
<p><b>Early Childhood Professional Development and Career Task Force</b></p> <p><i>3-year grants for states to improve the quality of the early childhood education workforce by establishing State Early Childhood Education Professional Development and Career System Task Forces and to support the activities of such task forces.</i></p>	<p><b>New</b></p>	<p>Supports</p>

### Accountability in Teacher Preparation

GRANT PROGRAM OR MANDATES	TYPE	CEC POSITION
<p><b>Accountability for Programs that Prepare Teachers</b></p> <p><i>Revision of current HEOA requirements mandate annual IHE and State report cards on teacher preparation programs and on performance/attainment of students, new data requirements, and a yearly federal report to Congress and the public on teacher qualifications and teacher preparation in the US.</i></p>	<p><b>Revision</b></p>	<p>Supports</p>
<p><b>Teacher Development – Goals and Assurances</b></p> <p><i>Requires that all IHEs with teacher education programs establish annual quantifiable goals to increase the number of teachers trained in shortages areas, including math, science, special education and instruction of students who have limited English proficiency, and provide specific assurances or risk \$27,500 fine.</i></p>	<p><b>New</b></p>	<p>Supports</p>
<p><b>State Functions Related to Performance of Teacher Preparation Programs</b></p> <p><i>Requires that States identify low-performing teacher preparation programs and imposes consequences on such programs (e.g., ineligibility of program for future funding for professional development activities awarded by the US Department of Education). Programs subject to requirement include traditional teacher preparation programs as well as alternative routes to State certification and licensure.</i></p>	<p><b>New</b></p>	<p>Supports</p>

## Quality Higher Education Opportunity for Students with Disabilities

GRANT PROGRAM OR MANDATES	TYPE	CEC Position
<p><b>Demonstration Projects to Ensure Students with Disabilities Receive a Quality Higher Education</b></p> <p><i>Provides grants for model demonstration projects to provide technical assistance or professional development for faculty, staff and administrators in institutions of Higher Education in order to provide students with disabilities a quality postsecondary education. Amendments place a new emphasis for these grants on improving the retention of students with disabilities in postsecondary education programs and their rates of program completion, including activities to ensure smooth transition from high school to postsecondary education.</i></p>	Revision	Supports
<p><b>Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities into Higher Education</b></p> <p><i>Grants to create or expand high-quality, inclusive model comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities.</i></p>	New	Supports
<p><b>Advisory Commission on Accessible Instructional Materials in Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities</b></p> <p><i>Establishes a new advisory commission on accessible instructional materials in postsecondary education for students with disabilities to (a) to assess the barriers, systemic issues, and technical solutions available which may affect or improve the timely delivery and quality of accessible instructional materials for postsecondary students, faculty, and staff with print disabilities, and (b) to make recommendations for development of a comprehensive approach to ensure that postsecondary students with print disabilities can access instructional materials in specialized formats in a timely and cost-effective manner.</i></p>	New	Supports
<p><b>Model Demonstration Programs to Support Improved Access to Postsecondary Instructional Materials for Students with Print Disabilities</b></p> <p><i>Grants to encourage the development of systems to improve the development of systems to enhance the quality of postsecondary instructional materials in specialized formats and the timely delivery to postsecondary students, including systems to improve efficiency and reduce duplicative efforts across multiple IHEs.</i></p>	New	Supports
<p><b>National Technical Assistance Center for Information and Technical Support for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities</b></p> <p><i>Establishes a national center to provide information and technical assistance on best and promising practices to students with disabilities, their families and IHEs to improve the postsecondary recruitment, retention, and completion success rates of such students.</i></p>	New	Supports
<p><b>Coordinating Center</b></p> <p><i>Establishes a coordinating center for IHEs that offer inclusive comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs for students with disabilities.</i></p>	New	Supports

## Other HEOA Amendments Concerning the Education of Students with Disabilities

GRANT PROGRAM OR MANDATES	TYPE	CEC Position
<p><b>Federal Family Education Loans</b></p> <p><i>Expands eligibility for loan forgiveness to borrowers in a wider range of public service fields in areas of national need, including personnel serving children in school programs such as speech pathologists, school counselors, physical and occupational therapists, and school administrators.</i></p>	Revision	Supports
<p><b>Federal Direct Student Loans</b></p> <p><i>Expands jobs in public service fields that qualify borrowers for loan forgiveness to include work in public education, early childhood education including Head Start and State funded pre-kindergarten programs, and public service for individuals with disabilities.</i></p>	Revision	Supports
<p><b>Federal Perkins Loans</b></p> <p><i>Clarifies that loan cancellation under this program is available to borrowers who are employed full-time in pre-kindergarten or child care program licensed or regulated by the State; and adds speech pathology provided in Title I schools as a new category of work eligible for loan cancellation.</i></p>	Revision	Supports
<p><b>Study on Teaching Students with Reading Disabilities</b></p> <p><i>Authorizes a study to be carried out by the Center for Education of the National Academies on the quality of teacher education programs in training teachers to meet the needs of students with reading and language processing disabilities, including dyslexia.</i></p>	New	Supports

For more information, contact Deborah A. Ziegler, Associate Executive Director, Policy and Advocacy Services, 703-264-9406 or [debz@cec.sped.org](mailto:debz@cec.sped.org)