



January 9, 2008

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy  
Chairman, HELP Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael B. Enzi  
Ranking Member, HELP Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kennedy and Senator Enzi:

We write as advocates for high-quality pre-kindergarten to applaud your efforts to continue working to reauthorize No Child Left Behind (NCLB). We recommend that the committee revise the teacher training and recruitment grants in Title II, Part A, to enhance the training and career opportunities for pre-k teachers. These changes will help states meet the rising demand for teachers to fill positions in the rapidly increasing number of new pre-k and other early education programs.

Toward this end, we recommend that the committee's reauthorization bill incorporate the following changes:

- Include a definition of a “highly competent pre-k teacher” to serve an analogous function to the “highly qualified” teacher definition in the teacher recruitment and retention grants under Title II, Part A. The definition should include a bachelor’s degree and specialization in early childhood education in addition to any certification required by the state pre-k program.
- Explicitly denote that pre-k teachers working in a school-based setting are eligible to receive funds awarded to local education agencies for the purpose of training and recruiting teachers.
- Denote that local education agencies and local partnerships may use funds to provide “high-quality professional development” for pre-k teachers and supply a definition that requires that “high-quality professional development” include a minimum of 15 hours of professional development per teacher annually and prepare teachers to provide for the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of their students.
- Increase the amount of funding available to local partnerships through the formula in section 2113 (20 U.S.C. 6613) in order to provide more resources for community-based pre-k providers and note that Head Start programs, private child care programs, and any other state-licensed entity contracting with a local education agency to provide pre-k would be eligible to receive this funding under the new law.
- Provide that states may use their portion of a grant awarded under this part to create articulation agreements between two- and four-year colleges and universities that will allow credits to be transferred between programs that lead to a bachelor’s or advanced degree in early childhood education.
- Provide that local education agencies and local partnerships may use funding awarded under this part to assist lead teachers, paraprofessionals, and other members of their staff in earning bachelor’s degrees or advanced degrees in early childhood education on a part-time or full-time basis.

Pre-K Now welcomes the opportunities made available for pre-k teachers through S. 1642, the Higher Education Amendments of 2007, and is particularly pleased by the provisions that fully include pre-k teachers in the Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant program authorized in the Higher Education Act. Given that the FY08 appropriation for this program was reduced while funding for the NCLB Title II, Part A, grants was increased in the consolidated appropriations bill, we believe it is especially important for the committee to include pre-k teachers in its reauthorization of NCLB Title II this year.

Thank you for your efforts to provide the best early education for all three and four year olds. Please contact either of us or Federal Policy Fellow Matt Smith ([msmith@preknow.org](mailto:msmith@preknow.org)) if you or your staff have questions about these recommendations. We look forward to continuing to work with you on behalf of high-quality pre-k.

Sincerely,



Libby Doggett, Ph.D.  
Executive Director



Kathy Patterson  
Federal Policy Director

cc: Members, HELP Committee, U.S. Senate