



DEVELOPMENTS IN FEDERAL RURAL EDUCATION POLICY & RESEARCH June 2014

Bills in the US House and Senate

H.R. 4913 Achievement through Technology and Innovation Act of 2014 (ATTAIN Act)
06/19/2014 Referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce

Sponsor: Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard, D – CA

Co-Sponsors: N/A

[Bill Summary](#)

[Bill Text](#)

The ATTAIN Act reauthorizes the Enhancing Education through Technology Act of 2001, providing \$1 billion in funding for personalized learning, education technology, school redesign, and educator training.

It would directly affect schools and students in rural communities by ensuring that subgrants dedicated to Systemic School Redesign through Technology Integration are distributed equally between rural and urban areas of the state. A small portion of the funding is set for use in schools funded or operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

This influx of funding could provide rural LEAs and charters with funding to make better use of existing technology, improve tech literacy among teachers, better use student data to improve instruction and school improvement efforts, and create distance learning opportunities. While access to broadband is increasing in rural communities, support for implementing digital learning initiatives is often lacking.

S. 2452 Strong Start for America's Children Act

06/10/2014 Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 427

Sponsor: Senator Tom Harkin, D – IA

Co- Sponsors: N/A

[Bill Summary to come](#)

[Bill Text](#)

This bill creates a federal-state partnership intended to provide children from low-and moderate-income families access to high-quality pre-kindergarten programs. Each state's application for funding must include descriptions of the technical assistance that will be provided to rural communities in order to address the unique barriers they face when implementing high-quality pre-kindergarten programs.

H.R. 3984 Supporting Early Learning Act

06/13/2014 Referred to the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education

Sponsor: Representative James A. Himes, D – CT

Co-Sponsors: Representative Jared Polis, D – CO, Representative Gerald E. Connolly, D – VA

[Bill Summary](#)

[Bill Text](#)

This bill would create an Early Learning Challenge fund intended to support states in the development and expansion of early childhood education programs. Applications must include descriptions of how states would use grant funds to increase the number and percentage of children from low-income families enrolled in high quality state pre-kindergarten programs, including children from rural and urban areas. It does not specify the amount of funding that states would be required to dedicate to programs in rural areas.

H.R. 4159 America Competes Reauthorization Act of 2014

06/13/2014 Referred to the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training

Sponsor: Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson, D – TX

Co-Sponsors: Representative George Miller, D – CA; Representative Steny Hoyer, D – MD; Representative Zoe Lofgren, D – CA; Representative Daniel Lipinski, D – IL; Representative Donna F. Edwards, D – MD; Representative Frederica S. Wilson, D – FL; Representative Suzanne Bonamici, D – OR; Representative Eric Swalwell, D – CA; Representative Daniel B. Maffei, D – NY; Representative Alan Grayson, D – FL; Representative Joseph P. Kennedy III, D – MA; Representative Scott H. Peters, D – CA; Representative Derek Kilmer, D – WA; Representative Ami Bera, D – CA; Representative Elizabeth H. Esty, D – CT; Representative Marc A. Veasey, D – TX; Representative Julia D. Brownley, D – CA; Representative Mark Taknano, D – CA; Representative Robin L. Kelly, D – IL; Representative Katharine M. Clark, D – MA; Representative Chris Van Hollen, D – MD; Representative Rush Holt, D – NJ, Representative Michael Honda, D – CA

[Bill Summary](#)

[Bill Text](#)

The primary goal of this bill is to support the research and development in education innovation, generally, and in STEM education, specifically. In particular, the legislation could help support rural education in three ways:

First, a portion of the research and development conducted under the grant would focus on systems that support improved STEM program delivery across LEAs/states, including those located in rural areas. This research could be valuable for the many rural schools that struggle with the delivery of advanced math and science classes.

Second, the bill gives priority in the distribution of funding for higher education/workforce training programs to specific groups, including community colleges serving areas with high unemployment rates. Legislative text explicitly references rural areas, but stops short of requiring that subgrants be distributed in rural areas.

Third, the legislation would fund a competitive grant for the development and implementation of advanced manufacturing programs, for which community colleges would be eligible to apply. A portion of this funding would be set aside to support the development of centers that would serve as regional or national clearinghouses for information on advanced manufacturing education materials and methods. Some of these centers would be located in rural areas.

S. 2349 Supporting College Success through Dual Enrollment Act

05/15/2014 Read twice

Referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Sponsor: Senator Bernard Sanders, I – VT

Co-Sponsors: Senator Patrick Leahy, D – VT; Senator Christopher Murphy, D – CT; Senator Tim Kaine, D – VA; Senator Jack Reed, D – RI; Senator Christopher Coons, D – DE; Senator Kristen Gillibrand, D – NY; Senator John Rockefeller IV, D- WV, Senator Mazie Hirono, D - HI

[Bill Summary](#)

[Bill Text](#)

This bill would create a grant program to fund the promotion and implementation of dual credit programs. In order to receive funding, states must ensure that all students enrolled in public high schools (including charter schools) have access to dual enrollment programs. Other eligibility criteria include developing plans to remove barriers to higher education for students in dual enrollment programs (including community college and workforce certification) and addressing the unique challenges faced by students in small communities (such as limited opportunities to participate in on-campus activities). The bill is silent on funding for rural schools, in particular, but the requirement to improve access for students in small communities could help ensure that a portion funding is directed to rural communities.

Funding Opportunities for Rural Schools

Charter Schools Program, Non-State Educational Agencies (Non-SEA) Planning, Program Design, and Initial Implementation Grant

[Charter Schools Program Non-SEA Grant](#)

The Charter Schools Program, intended to increase the number of high quality charter schools by providing funding for planning, program design, and implementation and for evaluation of the effectiveness of charter schools, distributes much of its funding directly to state education agencies (SEAs). Applications are now open to charter school operators in states in which the SEA has not received a CSP grant.

Application deadline: July 11, 2014

Research, Commentary, or Other Developments in Rural Education

Class Dismissed, Forever: Rural Schools Face Closures

[Feature article from NBC News](#)

NBC News published a piece on some of the challenges facing rural communities, schools, and families—including travel time, budgets, and consolidation.

Joint Statement from Rural Education Groups on FCC’s E-Rate Overhaul
[Coverage on EdWeek’s Rural Education Blog](#)

The statement was issued by AASA, the School Superintendents Association; the Association of Educational Service Agencies; the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools; the National Rural Education Association; the National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition; and the Rural School and Community Trust. The statement argues that the FCC’s proposal, “completely dismisses the reality of connectivity in rural communities, focusing on a ‘one-size-fits-all’ model regardless of a school’s enrollment or geographic location.”