

04/19/2023

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
U.S. Senate
332 Dirksen Building,
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable William M. Cassidy, MD
U.S. Senate
455 Dirksen SOB
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senate HELP Committee Chair Sanders and Ranking Member Cassidy,

On behalf of the nation's 1,038 community colleges, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) thanks you for the opportunity to provide feedback and input on policies that the Committee should consider during the reauthorization of the *Education Sciences Reform Act*.

Community colleges play a unique role in our education system, serving as a bridge along the education continuum between elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education. From educating much of the childcare workforce, to serving most students in dual-enrollment programs, to providing workforce and skills-based credentials to adult learners, community colleges can serve as incubators of best practices. Increasing research in the various roles our institutions play can help broaden the dissemination of data points to improve learning.

Below you can find answers to some of the questions you posed and suggested text-line edits for your consideration as you work on the reauthorization of the law.

8. How could IES bolster partnerships with the full range of partners— including but not limited to educators, school systems, institutions of higher education, including minority-serving institutions, public and private entities, localities and States, researchers, and the Federal government—to more effectively utilize, scale, and commercialize education research to improve teaching and learning?

- Feedback:
 - 70% of all dual enrollment students attend community colleges so it is vital that IES bolsters their partnerships with our institutions at all levels and that representatives are included broadly in some of the boards, committees, and advisor roles outlined throughout the bill.
 - Examples: Title I, Part D, Section 174 Subsections E paragraph 3 [Sec. 174(e)(3)] – state systems or boards of higher education institutions should be included.
 - Title III, Section 302 add “one representative of the community college sector that partners with local education agency.”

- We also recommend that throughout the bill when institutions of higher education are mentioned it would be helpful to replace the current language of “institutions of higher education” with the following language “institutions of higher education, especially those traditionally underrepresented such as community colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); Tribal Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs); and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), such as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).”
 - This will incentivize researchers and grantees to study the way these institutions serve and support historically under-represented student populations and the impact they have on students who have the most to gain from better education.
 - Some areas of the text where this language could be updated include Sec. 114(a)(8), Sec. 116(4)(a)(ii), sec. 189.

12. How could IES improve postsecondary data alignment, review of evidence-based practices and reforms, and utility of research reports and products to provide more transparency around student outcomes related to postsecondary access and completion and interventions that support addressing disparities of such outcomes?

- Feedback:
 - For IES to provide more transparency around student outcomes, it would be helpful to explicitly include completion, success, and best practices as part of its mission in Title I, Part C, Section 151, Subsection B, paragraph 2 [Sec. 151(b)(2)]. We recommend adding the following language “improving student success in post-secondary education and outline best practices for serving post-secondary students that are historically underrepresented such as minority students, low-income students, and non-traditional students.”
 - This data should be disaggregated by institutional sectors and student demographics. It should also include graduation rates, transfer rates, articulation data, and data from the non-credit side in workforce training to wholistically capture education attainment data. Additionally, in Title I, Part C, Section 133 in the subsection titled “disaggregation” include that data should also be disaggregated by institutional sector.

General feedback:

- In Title I, Part B, Section 131 change the language stating, “improve access, and opportunity for postsecondary education.” to “improve access, success, and opportunity for postsecondary education.”
- In Title I, Part C, Section 153, sections A, subsection 1, paragraph K [Sec. 153(a)(1)(K)], amend to “the existence and use of educational technology and access to the Internet by students and teachers in elementary and secondary schools and vocational and postsecondary institutions.”