



ACCESSeD

Connecting state legislators to policy resources that support higher education access for women and minorities

AccessEd

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THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 Despite Evolution, Goals Remain the Same

The Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) was signed into law on November 8, 1965. The Act was part of a domestic agenda titled “Great Society” created by former President Lyndon B. Johnson. Great Society aimed to eliminate racial injustice and poverty, and allowed for increased spending in areas such as education, medical care, and transportation. President Johnson gave his famous Great Society speech, where the agenda was introduced, at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, on May 22, 1964.

The HEA’s main goal was “to strengthen the educational resources of our colleges and universities and to provide financial assistance for students in postsecondary and higher education.” In order to accomplish this broad goal, scholarships were created and low-interest loans were introduced for students. The Act also provided for the establishment of the National Teacher Corps, which was designed to bring more teachers to areas with high poverty rates. Although the NTC only lasted until 1981, it formed the basis for organizations such as Teach for America.

The HEA was reauthorized in 1968, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1986, 1992, and 1998. One of the most commonly noted amendments to the 1998 reauthorization was the appropriated funding for the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). GEAR UP is responsible for attempting to increase access and success for low-income students in post-secondary education institutions. The grants given through GEAR UP provide academic services to high-poverty students from middle school through high school. GEAR UP also offers scholarships for those students who pursue post-secondary education.

Key elements of the HEA related to minorities were due to expire in 2003. As a result of the pending changes, several minority groups joined together to form the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education. Members included: the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education. The Alliance’s priorities centered around minority access and success, outlining recommendations for how to encourage under-

represented groups to attend post-secondary institutions and how to secure more funding to make that possible. As a result, the House passed a section that would allow for increased funding to higher education institutions and the elimination of the grace period once required for colleges asking for more loans.

Today, the main programs and activities covered by the HEA are categorized as follows: student financial aid; services to help students complete high school and enter and succeed in postsecondary education; aid to institutions; and aid to improve K-12 teacher training at postsecondary institutions. The appropriation legislation funding allocates over \$14 billion for the HEA’s discretionary authorities, where over \$10 billion goes toward Pell Grants. Pell Grants are a large part of the HEA’s reach. These education grants are federally funded and sponsored by the US Department of Education. The grants are typically awarded to those whose financial need is greatest, and this is determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form filled out by post-secondary institution bound students.

The US Senate approved the reauthorization of the HEA on July 24, 2007. The reauthorization addresses the recent student loan scandals by limiting the use of preferred lenders at institutions, and encouraging a national code of conduct for financial aid offices in institutions across the country. The reauthorization will be examined by the House sometime this fall.

The passing of the HEA in 1965 marked the start of increased state legislature involvement in higher education issues. Over the past 42 years, state legislation furthered the broad goals of the HEA and focused on how policymakers can expand educational opportunities for all constituents. The 2007 legislative session saw many successful bills enacted in states around the country. Read on to see what Massachusetts, Nevada, and Indiana are doing to increase higher education access and success.



SUCCESS FOR STATE LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION



Governor Deval Patrick

MASSACHUSETTS

On June 2, 2007, Governor Deval Patrick launched the “Readiness Project: Education as our Competitive Edge”. While speaking at the University of Massachusetts, Boston graduation, Gov. Patrick spoke of his commitment to introducing a new period of reform for education in the state. The anchor of this plan rests on his promise

to guarantee that the Massachusetts educational system will successfully graduate students who are adequately prepared to succeed in tomorrow’s economy. This overarching goal will be reached through the implementation of five key objectives:

- a. Provide every child with the opportunity to enter public school ready to learn;
- b. Provide every student with outstanding and highly-qualified teachers who are respected professionals recruited from among the best and brightest in the Commonwealth;
- c. Provide every student with the support necessary to meet the state’s high standards and expectations;
- d. Provide the support and infrastructure needed to ensure the opportunity for every student to have an accessible, affordable and globally competitive higher education; and,
- e. Provide an education system that enables every student to transition successfully from high school to higher education, to the workforce ready to succeed and to be a productive, engaged and contributing citizen.

An unprecedented part of the plan includes a proposal to provide free two-year college education to as many students as possible, where academic eligibility would be a factor in selection.

“We in the Commonwealth know education transforms lives. It can lift the spirit of one student and raise the hopes of an entire generation. It can lead them to their dreams, teach them to work harder, reach further, and do better for themselves, their families, and their community.” – Governor Deval Patrick (MA)

NEVADA

The Nevada state Senate passed Senate Bill 239 in 2007, which created a P-16 Advisory Council to coordinate education from elementary school through higher education. The legislation gives oversight and management control of higher education to the Nevada Board of Regents, who is to work jointly with the State Board and the Executive Branch of

State Government to develop the public agenda for the advancement of education in Nevada. The Bill emphasizes the importance and impact of education on the future of the State, its economy, and the general welfare of its residents.

The Council is required to meet at least once per quarter and its main task is to address the methods necessary to ensure successful transitions for students between each of the educational levels. The Council is also charged with working to increase enrollment in teacher education programs within the Nevada System of Higher Education. The Bill went into effect on July 1, 2007. The legislation was sponsored by the Senate Committee on Human Resources and Education, whose Vice-Chair, Senator Barbara Cegavske, is a member of Women In Government.



Senator Barbara Cegavske

INDIANA

Indiana successfully introduced and passed legislation this year regarding faculty and student diversity in higher education. House Bill 1256 created diversity committees at all state higher education institutions. The committees’ primary purpose is to (1) review and recommend employment policies concerning diversity; (2) review faculty and administration personnel complaints concerning diversity; (3) make recommendations to promote and maintain cultural diversity

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**Last School Year
More Than 1,200
Legislators Spoke With
Students In Schools Across The Country**



BACK TO SCHOOL TOP STATES

State	Percentage of Legislature Participating
Massachusetts	100%
Utah	80
California	52
Hawaii	51
Nebraska	51
Arizona	50
Mississippi	48
Alaska	42
New Jersey	42
Virginia	40
New Mexico	38
Rhode Island	33
Oklahoma	32
Iowa	28
Louisiana	27
South Dakota	24
Kentucky	24
Indiana	24

**Most Recent Data from National Conference of State Legislatures America’s Back to School Program

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AWARENESS GROWS

One of the major barriers to college access is the growing concern over high school dropout rates. After all, the high school diploma is the first step to reaching postsecondary education. Some states are beginning to revamp their Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs at the high school level, as a solution to keep students interested and focused on graduating from high school, and prepared for success after that. In the past, there was often a stigma associated with “Vocational Education”, as though it was inferior to the more traditional “College Preparatory” classes. However, the newly designed CTE courses cover much more than construction and cosmetology.

The Maryland Public Schools’ Division of Career Education and Adult Learning incorporates specialties such as visual arts, informatics, logistics and inventory control, health services, and print and broadcast journalism. The Division operates based on the concept of career clusters and encourages students to find subject areas of interest to them. This expansion of course offerings keeps students interested and coming to school through graduation.

Schools who have implemented CTE programs are experiencing lower dropout rates and higher rates of graduates going on to postsecondary education. The ultimate goal of the Division is to increase access to postsecondary education and to better prepare their students for the changing needs of today and tomorrow’s workforce.

In most cases, states need additional funding to alter their existing programs and include a more attractive CTE model. California is a state that has been extremely successful in passing legislation to increase funding to school



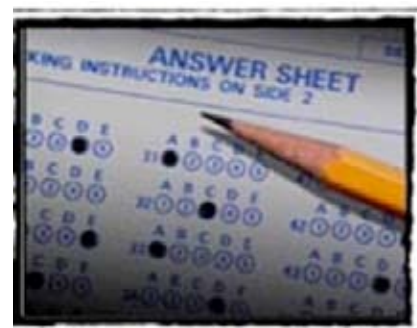
districts who want to expand their curriculum through the addition of Career Technical Education to course offerings.

Governor Schwarzenegger began the positive steps in 2005 when he signed a bill authorizing an additional \$20 million for the use of creating ITE programs in middle schools, high schools, and community colleges. His focus was to strengthen partnerships among these groups and industry.

For additional information on Maryland’s Division of Career Education and Adult Learning, please visit:
<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/careertech/>

For additional information on California’s State Legislature and Career Technical Education, please visit:
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/iel/>

Women In Government’s Access to Higher Education Policy Research Center is dedicated to identifying policy issues, gathering research data and information, and providing a centralized clearinghouse for state legislators on ways to increase access to higher education for women and minorities.



2007 SAT SCORE DATA RELEASED BY THE COLLEGE BOARD SAT Averages by Racial and Ethnic Group, 2007

Group	Critical Reading Score	1-Year Change (Reading)	10-Year Change (Reading)	Math Score	1-Year Change (Math)	10-Year Change (Math)	Writing Score	1-Year Change (Writing)
American Indian	487	0	+12	494	0	+19	473	-1
Asian	514	+4	+18	578	0	+18	513	+1
Black	433	-1	-1	429	0	+6	425	-3
Mexican American	455	+1	+4	466	+1	+8	450	-2
Puerto Rican	459	0	+5	454	-2	+7	447	-1
Other Hispanic	459	+1	-7	463	0	-5	450	0
White	527	0	+1	534	-2	+8	518	-1
Other	497	+3	-15	512	-1	-2	493	0
All	502	-1	-3	515	-3	+4	494	-3



Representative Vernon Smith

among faculty members of state educational institutions; and (4) make recommendations to promote recruitment and retention of minority students. The legislation also requires each commission to submit a report to their board of trustees annually.

Key elements of this bill include not only the recruitment of diverse populations, but also the importance of retaining the diversity long-term. Representative Vernon Smith was the author of the legislation and Senator Teresa Lubbers was a co-sponsor. The bill was signed by the President Pro Temp on April 29, 2007. The first universities who will participate in the enactment of this legislation will be Indiana University, Purdue University, Indiana State University, Ball State University, Ivy Tech Community College, University of Southern Indiana and Vincennes University.

“The university setting is often a student’s first glimpse into the real world,” Smith said. “We need to be assured that within these settings, students who may not have been exposed to an ethnically and culturally diverse atmosphere see distinc-



Senator Teresa Lubbers

tions not only in the student body, but in a university’s faculty as well.”

“The state also seems to be having problems with the recruitment and retention of minority students and teachers,” Smith continued. “This bill will force our universities to address this problem, because they will be required to submit an annual report to their board of trustees.”

Research shows that diversity enhances the student experience in the classroom and the Higher Education Research Center at WIG is committed to furthering the diversity initiative for postsecondary institutions. Through the efforts of advocates and policymakers, such as those in Massachusetts, Nevada, and Indiana, we believe that we can work to increase access to higher education for women and minorities and help promote their success once they reach this goal.

For more information on state legislation regarding higher education access and success, please contact WIG’s Higher Education Research Center at highered@womeningovernment.org or 1.888.333.0164.

IMPORTANCE OF ALLIANCES IN FURTHERING HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS AND SUCCESS

As seen throughout history, policymakers take notice when groups band together to try and make changes in education. Here at WIG, we believe in the power of alliances and have made it a goal over the coming year to continue to cultivate relationships with groups we have already met, as well as forge new relationships with others. One of our most recent meetings involved *Excelencia in Education*, an information source on improving Latino student success. *Excelencia* works to disseminate pertinent knowledge about what it takes to help Latino students succeed in education. They hope their research reaches both policy makers and those in institutional practice. To learn more about *Excelencia in Education*, please visit www.edexcelencia.org



Excelencia’s next event is their **Examples of Excelencia Celebración and Symposium** in Los Angeles, California on Tuesday, October 9th and Wednesday, October 10th. The event’s theme is “Translating College Access into Success for Latino Students”. More information and registration information is available on their website.

Women In Government is a national 501(c)(3), non-profit, bi-partisan organization of women state legislators providing leadership opportunities, networking, expert forums, and educational resources to address and resolve complex public policy issues.

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