

# GREAT Teachers and Principals Act

*Senator Michael F. Bennet*

*Senator Lamar Alexander*

*Senator Barbara Mikulski*

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## Quality Teachers and Principals Matter

Nothing makes a bigger difference to learning than great teaching. And a great principal is critical to supporting great teaching. However, our current system for training and supporting teachers and principals is falling short, especially in high-need schools. We lose nearly half of teachers within their first five years in the profession, and the majority of teachers feel that they were left woefully unprepared to meet the challenges they faced when they enter the classroom.

## Meeting Our Nation's Need for Quality Teachers and Principals

The Growing Excellent Achievement Training Academies (GREAT) Teachers and Principals Act would harness the power of innovation to create new and more effective avenues for preparing great teachers and principals.

This bipartisan bill supports the growth of new kinds of teacher and principal training academies that would receive federal resources directly through participating states. The academies are defined by key characteristics:

- Rigorous selection in admissions to get the best and brightest into the schools where they are needed most;
- Emphasis on clinical instruction in preparing teacher and principal candidates; and
- Graduation tied to improving student academic achievement. Programs that fail to produce great teachers or principals will be not be reauthorized.

In return for accountability, academies will be free from burdensome, input-based regulations that are unrelated to student achievement.

## Emphasis on Results

To prepare our teachers and leaders for success in the classroom, academies will:

- Limit admission to candidates who demonstrate strong potential to be effective teachers or principals, based on prior academic performance or professional experience;
- Provide their candidates with significant hands-on, clinical instruction to prepare them to teach in the classroom and lead great schools;
- Promise to produce a minimum number of effective teachers or principals within a defined period of time, as set forth in each academy's charter;
- Ensure that candidates will graduate from these academies only *after* demonstrating a track record of success in improving student achievement;
- Focus on preparing teachers for success in high-need schools and shortage areas; and
- Survey academy alumni periodically to track the number serving as teachers or principals, or in education.

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## **Voluntary State Participation**

States that choose to participate will establish state authorizers responsible for approving and overseeing these academies. The authorizers will ensure that the academies are held accountable for producing promised results. If the academies do not meet high standards, they will not be reauthorized. A priority will be placed on awarding grants to existing programs with a demonstrated record of success.

## **Evidence**

The evidence that we need to do a better job of preparing teachers and principals is overwhelming.

- Three years of good teaching can mean as much as a 53 percentile-point difference in student academic achievement as compared with ineffective teaching.
- The skill gap is one that disproportionately hurts low-income and minority students. Yet a leading study of 28 educational schools revealed that more than 60 percent of alumni said that they were not adequately prepared for the classroom.