

# DIPLOMA Act

Developing Innovative Partnerships and Learning Opportunities that Motivate Achievement

*Legislation Merging the Full Service Community Schools Act and Keeping PACE Act, and Building on the Promise Neighborhood Initiative*

"There are a set of foundational things we need to do to meet...students' social and emotional needs ...the more we open our school buildings to the community the more we work together, not just with our children but the families, the more we create an environment where the students can maximize their academic potential."

-- Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education

## The Proposal: Strengthen Achievement by Making Schools the Center of Community

Across the country, results demonstrate that when schools become centers of community, student achievement improves. For example, as CEO of Chicago Public Schools, Secretary Duncan's Community Schools Initiative worked to steadily close the achievement gap. Over a 5 year period, the increase in the number of students meeting or exceeding state math standards was 23 percent greater for community schools than for comparison CPS schools, and 66 percent greater for reading.

The DIPLOMA Act draws on this and other successful models to promote a shared, **systemic**, and comprehensive approach to **education through integrating services** and **engaging families and the public**. **As a result, this collaborative framework will build community ownership for change, and strengthen results for children and youth.**

## The Solution: Engage Communities through Local Public-Private Partnerships

The DIPLOMA Act merges the Full Service Community Schools Act and Keeping PACE Act, and builds on the Obama Administration's Promise Neighborhood Initiative. It will help communities meet the challenges influencing student achievement--including factors in and outside the school. States would receive funds by formula, and would then provide competitive grants to local consortia consisting of school districts, community based organizations, local government, service providers, students, parents, and others. These consortia would **engage families and the public in strengthening** student achievement, coordinate existing services, and fill gaps in services ranging from tutoring and extended learning to health care and social supports. An independent evaluation would be conducted to measure results and identify best practices.

## The Impact: Tackle the Barriers that Matter Inside and Outside the School Building to Help Students Meet Rigorous Standards

Research demonstrates that children are more likely to succeed in schools when their comprehensive needs – nutrition, health, a safe and stable home – are met. In fact, a recent study from the Education Testing Service outlined 16 factors influencing achievement; over half of which occur outside the classroom. This bill responds to research by arming local leaders to identify and address the barriers students face in their lives so they can meet rigorous standards in the classroom and reach their full potential.

### Additional specifics follow:

- States would receive funds according to the proportion of Title I funds received by the State. States are charged with:
  - Developing an overarching strategic plan to enhance education and other child/youth outcomes based on a comprehensive results framework;
  - Providing training, technical assistance, and professional development; and
  - Administering competitive grants to local consortia, and holding them accountable for results.
- Local consortia would consist of at least one school district and one external partner organization, with priority given to consortia comprised of a broad array of stakeholders-- school districts, community based organizations, local government, service providers, students, parents, and others or that have demonstrated records of effectiveness. Consortia are charged with:
  - Conducting an assessment of assets and needs, and developing a strategic plan to enhance education and other child/youth outcomes based on a comprehensive results framework;
  - Coordinating and integrating existing funding streams into a continuum of research based services to meet the goals of the results framework;
  - Providing children and youth with an array of opportunities to meet community identified needs and strengthen achievement, from tutoring and dropout prevention programs to health services and increased numbers of specialized instructional support personnel; and
  - Measuring and reporting results.

