Title II, Teacher Quality Enhancement

HEOA contains a significantly revised Title II that is more targeted to strengthening the clinical components of educator preparation and to ensuring that preparation programs are meeting the needs of the K-12 school system and that preparation programs are preparing candidates to teach all students, including students with special needs, English-language learners, and students in high-need, low-income schools. The accountability provisions within this act are also revamped to assess how well preparation programs are meeting the needs of P-12 schools and students.

Title II, Sec. 200 – Definitions

This section provides the definitions for many of the terms used throughout Title II. It is significantly expanded from the Higher Education Act, which contained three definitions. HEOA contains 23 definitions. Among the definitions to note are:

- **Eligible Partnership** – As in HEA, a partnership must include a high-need local educational agency, a partner institution (higher education institution) and a school or department of arts and sciences within the partner institution. The optional partners include the Governor’s office, state board of education, businesses, and community agencies, among other entities. HEOA expands the required partners to include:
  - a high-need school or consortium of such schools or, as applicable, a high-need early childhood education program; and
  - an SCDE within the partner institution. It is important to note that proven professional development programs within SCDEs can also be part of the partnership.

- **Induction Program** – This is a new definition which requires that induction programs provide support to new teachers for at least the first two years of their teaching. These programs must include, among other elements: teacher mentoring, structured time for collaboration for teachers in the same field, assistance with helping teachers understand how to collect and assess student achievement data, and regular observations and evaluations of new teachers by multiple evaluators.

- **Partner Institutions** – HEA defines “partner institution” in terms of a four-year institution that has a teacher preparation program. HEOA expands the definition to include community colleges that offer dual programs with four-year institutions. Community colleges, however, cannot be the sole “partner institution” participating in a partnership.

- **Teaching Residency Program** – This is a new definition that describes a residency program as a one-year, master’s degree program in which the resident teaches alongside the teacher of record in a K-12 classroom while completing coursework to meet the requirements of the academic degree.

- **Teaching Skills** – This is a new definition that partially defines these skills as the ability of a teacher to increase student learning, convey academic subject matter, teach higher-order thinking and communication skills, communicate with parents, manage a classroom, and provide differentiated teaching to classrooms with diverse learning needs.
Title II, Sec. 201-204 – Teacher Quality Partnership Grants

Authorization levels: $300 million for FY 2009 and such sums for FY 2010 and 2011

HEOA consolidates the three former grant streams in the Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant program of HEA into a partnership grant program. HEOA maintains the five-year grant period, but partnerships must now match 100% of the amount of the grant in cash or in kind (rather than 50% as required in HEA). Grants can be used to strengthen the preservice preparation of teachers at the graduate and undergraduate level. There are two required uses of grant funds and two optional uses:

Required:
- To strengthen the clinical components of preservice teacher preparation at the baccalaureate level
- To develop preservice teacher residency programs at the graduate level

Optional:
- To prepare school leaders for rural K-12 schools
- To develop digital education content to strengthen preservice preparation

Summary of the four “Use of Grant Funds”

- Partnership Grants for Pre-Baccalaureate Preparation of Teachers – These funds are intended to support institutions in preparing highly qualified teachers and early childhood educators. These preparation programs are expected to use scientifically based practices and research to guide the curriculum and clinical experiences that will result in teachers who know and are able to use empirically based practices to teach and assess student learning. Partnerships receiving grants under this use of funds must also have or develop at least a one-year clinical component for teacher candidates. There is a new focus in Title II on early childhood educators, preparing teachers to teach English-language learners, and preparing teachers to teach students with special needs. In this particular grant stream, institutions must prepare teacher candidates in the principles of universal design for learning, and, if the partnership is focusing on early childhood education, the grant must include initiatives to increase compensation for early childhood educators obtaining degrees. There are several reforms required of institutions that use Teacher Quality Partnership Grants for this purpose including:
  - Developing evaluation tools to assess teacher candidate and new teacher teaching skills;
  - Ensuring that candidates are prepared in and can implement research-based teaching practices;
  - Ensuring that candidates can provide differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners;
  - Ensuring that all candidates are prepared in content areas to meet the highly qualified teacher requirements;
  - Developing an induction program; and
  - Aligning the preparation programs admissions requirements and priorities with that of the high-need local educational agency in the eligible partnership.

These grants must also include components that focus on teacher recruitment strategies and preparing candidates in literacy teaching skills.
• **Teaching Residency Programs** – Partnerships can use grants to develop one-year teaching residency programs at the master’s degree level. These programs provide rigorous graduate coursework and intensive clinical experiences to residents. Residents would work beside mentor teachers who are designated so based on their teacher effectiveness. Individuals who would be eligible for the program would include recent college graduates and professionals with strong content knowledge and a demonstration of professional accomplishments. Residents would be paid a living stipend/salary and would agree to serve as a full-time teacher in a high-need field in a high-need school in the “eligible partnership” for at least three academic years after completing the residency program.

• **Partnership Grants for the Development of Leadership Programs** – Partnerships can also use grants under this section to develop school leader preparation programs for rural K-12 schools. “School leaders” include superintendents, principals, early childhood education directors, and individuals who may serve in many capacities including that of school leader. Partnerships using funds for this purpose must ensure that school leaders are prepared in the following and other ways:
  
  o to understand and assess data related to school performance;
  o to provide school climates conducive to teacher professional development, high student achievement, and increased parental and community engagement; and
  o to manage school resources.

Partnerships must provide at least one year of clinical experiences for this program as well as an induction program for school leaders. Eligible candidates for this program would include recent college graduates, mid-career professionals, current teachers, or a school leader intending to become a superintendent.

• **Partnership with Digital Education Content Development** – “Eligible partnerships” under this grant would partner with entities that develop digital education content to strengthen preservice teacher preparation.

**Accountability and Evaluation of Partnership Grants**

“Eligible partnerships” receiving grants under the teacher quality partnership program must develop evaluation plans. HEOA greatly expands the required components of the evaluation plans while maintaining many of the components found in HEA such as teacher retention data for at least the first three years of the teachers’ careers, data on the number of teacher trained to use technology in the classroom, and data on the percentage of teachers prepared in academic subject areas. “Eligible partnerships” now, though, have more flexibility in determining how they will assess teacher effectiveness, whereas in HEA this was measured by teacher pass rates on certification and licensure exams. HEOA has also refocused the required components on tracking and disaggregating (based on subject area, school level, race/ethnicity) data on the number of HQT’s prepared by the partnership and hired by the LEA in the partnership.