

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE) today introduced a bill to authorize funding for Full-Service Community Schools (H.R. 2207), which are public schools that coordinate multiple educational and social service programs with community-based organizations and public/private partnerships.

“I learned about the potential of Full-Service Community Schools from my late wife Judy who was dedicated to improving the quality of early education programs. Full Service Community Schools improve the coordination, delivery, effectiveness, and efficiency of services to children and families. They ensure the best use of resources and they help strengthen communities. Full Service Community Schools are a 21st-Century way of educating America’s children,” Representative Hoyer said.

“Full-Service Community Schools are more than just after-school programs,” said Senator Nelson. “Their objective is to close the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students and to foster community involvement in school improvement efforts.”

The legislation will provide grant funding to local organizations and state collaboratives. The local groups must be comprised of a school district and community-based organizations, non-profit organizations or other public/private entities with a plan to coordinate multiple services including education and social services. The state collaboratives must be comprised of a combination of the state education agency and two other related government or non-profit agencies.

“In 2000, Maryland established Judy Centers, which, in bundling early care and education, health, and family support services in high-need areas, have proven instrumental in promoting school readiness. The Full-Service Community Schools Act of 2005, introduced by Congressman Hoyer and Senator Nelson, will give communities across the nation the resources to replicate the tremendous success we’ve had in Maryland,” said Dr. Nancy Grasmick, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools.

Nelson and Hoyer’s bill authorizes \$200 million for Fiscal Year 2006 and similar amounts through 2010. Local grants receive 75% of funds, state programs receive 20% with 5% used for technical assistance and evaluation.

Maryland Full-Service Community Schools Information

The Full-Service Community Schools Act (H.R. 2207) builds on the success of Maryland's Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Family Education Centers, or "Judy Centers", which are early education centers for young children. Judy Centers are named after Congressman Hoyer's late wife and educator Judith P. Hoyer. There are currently 24 Judy Centers across the state of Maryland, which have worked with about 8,000 children in 21 counties.

Judy Centers are unique because they promote school readiness through collaboration among community-based agencies and organizations located within each Judy Center. This integrated approach includes early childhood care and education as well as family support and health programs whose services are conveniently provided within or near school buildings.

Last year, Hoyer and Grasmick released the results of the Judith P. Hoyer Early Care and Education Enhancement Program Evaluation, a study that measured results after the first two years of operation at 13 Judy Centers. The evaluation found that Judy Centers increase access to high-quality programs and services for low-income and special needs children; that they improve school readiness and minimize any "achievement gap" at the start of first grade; and that they are high quality centers; 92% of all early care and education programs at the Judy Centers completed state or national program accreditation.

The evaluation specifically stated that "quality early learning experiences contribute to the healthy development and future well-being of Maryland's children. Participation in a quality early care and education program has been shown to enhance cognitive development and socialization of children and improve performance on indicators of school readiness. Consequently, it is critical for states to ensure availability of quality programs that assist families in preparing children to be ready for school and subsequent lifetime opportunities.

"Collectively, Judy Centers have accomplished their goal to improve access to programs and services for children from birth through age five. The number of children ages birth through three enrolled in Judy Center programs increased by 25 percent, and the number of children enrolled in Kindergarten programs increased by 22 percent during the 2002-2003 school year," the report added.

The following organizations have sent letters of support to Congressman Hoyer for his introduction of the "Full-Service Community Schools Act:"

Alliance for Children and Families

American Association of School Administrators

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Communities In Schools

National Assembly of School-Based Health Care Organizations

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of Secondary School Principals

National Clearinghouse on Education Facilities

National Community Education Association

National League of Cities

Public Education Network

The Children's Aid Society

The Forum for Youth Investment

The National Service-Learning Partnership

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