



Memo in Support

A.8941/S.5616-A (Benedetto/Mayer)

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to tuition assistance program awards for dual or concurrent enrollment coursework

NAF strongly supports A.8941/S.5616 (Benedetto/Mayer) which provides Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) funds to students enrolled in dual or concurrent programs of study.

NAF is a national nonprofit organization that aims to address economic and social disparities by bringing schools and businesses together to better prepare students of all backgrounds and capabilities for college, a career, and future success. For over 40 years, NAF has partnered with high schools in historically under-resourced communities to enhance school systems by implementing NAF academies – small, focused learning communities within traditional public high schools themed around growing industries, including engineering, finance, health sciences, information technology, and hospitality and tourism. NAF currently supports over 113,000 students annually, with 73% of all students identifying as Black/Hispanic and 67% of students coming from low-income backgrounds. In New York State, NAF works with 38 high schools reaching nearly 8,800 students.

Students enrolled in NAF academies are exposed to career paths and opportunities through industry-specific curriculum and work-based learning opportunities. The aim of these experiences is to identify a pathway after high school and ensure students are aware of the steps needed to achieve that pathway – including postsecondary education options such as dual and concurrent enrollment programs. Such programs allow high school students to take college classes, providing both high school and college credit. These programs focus on exposing students to the college experience, expanding educational opportunities, preparing students for career options, and offering a potential start on college credits. Providing financial aid opportunities for these programs will encourage more students to take advantage of dual and concurrent enrollment programs offered to them, setting them on a path to meet their career goals in an effective and cost-effective manner.

NAF fully supports the above legislation that will provide TAP funding to students enrolled in dual and concurrent programs. We believe providing access and opportunity to experience postsecondary education will encourage more high school students to believe that they are college and career ready. It is through exposure to career and educational opportunities that one can build their aspirations, develop future ready skills, and build the social capital connections that are critical in achieving economic mobility and shaping a diverse workforce. Supporting dual and concurrent enrollment programs is one avenue the State can encourage to ensure a prepared and competitive workforce of the future.

For these reasons, NAF supports A.8941/S.5616 (Benedetto/Mayer) and encourages the Legislature to pass this legislation.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Pautz, AVP of Policy & Advocacy at jpautz@naf.org.