

**§ 1862q. Informal STEM education****(a) Grants**

The Director of the National Science Foundation, through the Directorate for Education and Human Resources, shall continue to award competitive, merit-reviewed grants to support—

- (1) research and development of innovative out-of-school STEM learning and emerging STEM learning environments in order to improve STEM learning outcomes and engagement in STEM;
- (2) research that advances the field of informal STEM education; and
- (3) a national partnership of institutions involved in informal STEM learning.

**(b) Uses of funds**

Activities supported by grants under this section may encompass a single STEM discipline, multiple STEM disciplines, or integrative STEM initiatives and shall include—

- (1) research and development that improves our understanding of learning and engagement in informal environments, including the role of informal environments in broadening participation in STEM;
- (2) design and testing of innovative STEM learning models, programs, and other resources for informal learning environments to improve STEM learning outcomes and increase engagement for K–12 students, K–12 teachers, and the general public, including design and testing of the scalability of models, programs, and other resources;
- (3) fostering on-going partnerships between institutions involved in informal STEM learning, institutions of higher education, and education research centers; and
- (4) developing, and making available informal STEM education activities and educational materials.

(Pub. L. 114–59, §3, Oct. 7, 2015, 129 Stat. 540; Pub. L. 114–329, title III, §311, Jan. 6, 2017, 130 Stat. 3013.)

## CODIFICATION

Section was enacted as part of the STEM Education Act of 2015, and not as part of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950 which comprises this chapter.

## AMENDMENTS

2017—Subsec. (a)(3). Pub. L. 114–329, §311(a), added par. (3).

Subsec. (b)(3), (4). Pub. L. 114–329, §311(b), added pars. (3) and (4).

**§ 1862r. Research in disabilities education****(a) Program**

Nothing in this section and section 1862r–1 of this title alters the National Science Foundation’s Research in Disabilities Education program for fundamental and implementation research about learners (of all ages) with disabilities, including dyslexia, in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The National Science Foundation shall continue to encourage efforts to understand and address disability-based differences in STEM education and workforce participation, including differences for dyslexic learners.

**(b) Line item**

The Director of the National Science Foundation shall include the amount requested for the Research in Disabilities Education program in the Foundation’s annual congressional budget justification.

(Pub. L. 114–124, §3, Feb. 18, 2016, 130 Stat. 120.)

## CODIFICATION

Section was enacted as part of the Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia Act or READ Act, and not as part of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950 which comprises this chapter.

## FINDINGS

Pub. L. 114–124, §2, Feb. 18, 2016, 130 Stat. 120, provided that: “The Congress finds the following:

“(1) As many as 1 out of 6, or 8,500,000, American school children may have dyslexia.

“(2) Since 1975, dyslexia has been included in the list of qualifying learning disabilities under the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 [see Short Title of 1975 Amendment note set out under section 1400 of Title 20, Education] and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.]”

**§ 1862r–1. Dyslexia****(a) In general**

Consistent with subsection (c), the National Science Foundation shall support multi-directorate, merit-reviewed, and competitively awarded research on the science of specific learning disability, including dyslexia, such as research on the early identification of children and students with dyslexia, professional development for teachers and administrators of students with dyslexia, curricula and educational tools needed for children with dyslexia, and implementation and scaling of successful models of dyslexia intervention. Research supported under this subsection shall be conducted with the goal of practical application.

**(b) Awards**

To promote development of early career researchers, in awarding funds under subsection (a) the National Science Foundation shall prioritize applications for funding submitted by early career researchers.

**(c) Coordination**

To prevent unnecessary duplication of research, activities under this this section and section 1862r of this title shall be coordinated with similar activities supported by other Federal agencies, including research funded by the Institute of Education Sciences and the National Institutes of Health.

**(d) Funding**

The National Science Foundation shall devote not less than \$5,000,000 to research described in subsection (a), which shall include not less than \$2,500,000 for research on the science of dyslexia, for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021, subject to the availability of appropriations, to come from amounts made available for the Research and Related Activities account or the Education and Human Resources Directorate under subsection (e). This section shall be carried out using funds otherwise appropriated by law after February 18, 2016.

**(e) Authorization**

For each of fiscal years 2016 through 2021, there are authorized out of funds appropriated to the National Science Foundation, \$5,000,000 to carry out the activities described in subsection (a).

(Pub. L. 114-124, § 4, Feb. 18, 2016, 130 Stat. 120.)

## CODIFICATION

Section was enacted as part of the Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia Act or READ Act, and not as part of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950 which comprises this chapter.

## DEFINITION OF SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY

Pub. L. 114-124, § 5, Feb. 18, 2016, 130 Stat. 121, provided that: “In this Act [see Short Title of 2016 Amendment note set out under section 1861 of this title], the term ‘specific learning disability’—

“(1) means a disorder in 1 or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations;

“(2) includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia; and

“(3) does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of intellectual disability, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.”

**§ 1862s. Reaffirmation of merit-based peer review****(a) Sense of Congress**

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) sustained, predictable Federal funding of basic research is essential to United States leadership in science and technology;

(2) the Foundation’s intellectual merit and broader impacts criteria are appropriate for evaluating grant proposals, as concluded by the 2011 National Science Board Task Force on Merit Review;

(3) evaluating proposals on the basis of the Foundation’s intellectual merit and broader impacts criteria should be used to assure that the Foundation’s activities are in the national interest as these reviews can affirm that—

(A) the proposals funded by the Foundation are of high quality and advance scientific knowledge; and

(B) the Foundation’s grants address societal needs through basic research findings or through related activities; and

(4) as evidenced by the Foundation’s contributions to scientific advancement, economic growth, human health, and national security, its peer review and merit review processes have identified and funded scientifically and societally relevant basic research and should be preserved.

**(b) Merit review criteria**

The Foundation shall maintain the intellectual merit and broader impacts criteria, among other specific criteria as appropriate, as the basis for evaluating grant proposals in the merit review process.

**(c) Updates**

If after January 6, 2017, a change is made to the merit-review process, the Director shall sub-

mit a report to the appropriate committees of Congress not later than 30 days after the date of the change.

(Pub. L. 114-329, title I, § 101, Jan. 6, 2017, 130 Stat. 2970.)

## CODIFICATION

Section was enacted as part of the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act, and not as part of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950 which comprises this chapter.

## DEFINITIONS

Pub. L. 114-329, § 2, Jan. 6, 2017, 130 Stat. 2970, provided that: “In this Act [see Short Title of 2017 Amendment note set out under section 1861 of this title and Tables], unless expressly provided otherwise:

“(1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—The term ‘appropriate committees of Congress’ means the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives.

“(2) FEDERAL SCIENCE AGENCY.—The term ‘Federal science agency’ has the meaning given the term in section 103 of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 6623).

“(3) FOUNDATION.—The term ‘Foundation’ means the National Science Foundation.

“(4) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the meaning given the term in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

“(5) NIST.—The term ‘NIST’ means the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

“(6) STEM.—The term ‘STEM’ has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the American [sic] COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 [Pub. L. 111-358] (42 U.S.C. 6621 note).

“(7) STEM EDUCATION.—The term ‘STEM education’ has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the STEM Education Act of 2015 [Pub. L. 114-59] (42 U.S.C. 6621 note).”

**§ 1862s-1. Transparency and accountability****(a) Findings**

(1)<sup>1</sup> building the understanding of and confidence in investments in basic research is essential to public support for sustained, predictable Federal funding;

(2) the Foundation has improved transparency and accountability of the outcomes made through the merit review process, but additional transparency into individual grants is valuable in communicating and assuring the public value of federally funded research; and

(3) the Foundation should commit to transparency and accountability and to clear, consistent public communication regarding the national interest for each Foundation-awarded grant and cooperative agreement.

**(b) Guidance****(1) In general**

The Director of the Foundation shall issue and periodically update, as appropriate, policy guidance for both Foundation staff and other Foundation merit review process participants on the importance of transparency and accountability to the outcomes made through the merit review process.

<sup>1</sup> So in original. Probably should be preceded by introductory text.