



News Release

CONGRESSMAN

Chaka Fattah

Second District, Pennsylvania



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Fattah to Address Project GRAD Training As It Prepares to Expand in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA PA – Congressman Chaka Fattah (D-PA), a leading Congressional supporter of nationally-successful Project GRAD for economically disadvantaged students, will address educators preparing to expand the GRAD model across Philadelphia.

Fattah will deliver the keynote in a three-day training program at the United Way Building, 7 Benjamin Franklin Parkway between 17th and 18th Streets, on Friday January 16, at 9 a.m. COVERAGE IS INVITED.

“Project GRAD engages young people in our public schools at an early age to motivate them and create a rigorous college-bound culture. It works with students in low-income households where high school graduation and higher education are often considered out of reach,” said Fattah.

“I have been pleased in the Congress to advocate for increased funding for Project GRAD through the years and to recruit the dedicated educators in this national reform effort to expand their program into Philadelphia,” Fattah said.

Fattah is the architect of GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), which has directed more than \$2 billion to college readiness of low-income students since its enactment in 1998.

Fattah cited Project GRAD (Graduating Really Achieves Dreams) as one of the inspirations for GEAR UP.

Fattah spearheaded the drive that earmarked \$20 million for Project GRAD in FY05. Overall GRAD has received over \$50 million in federal funding, primarily through GEAR UP, and is in line for another \$30 million in FY09.

Fattah is leading an effort in the House Appropriations Committee, of which he is a member, to devote \$500 million of the economic stimulus package for programs authorized under the Higher Education Opportunity Act, including GEAR UP, Project GRAD and TRIO, another college-support effort he has championed.

Project GRAD has served 1,200 students over the past two years at Sayre High School and its feeder schools in Southwest Philadelphia. Now with a major partnership seeded by a two-year \$4 million Pennsylvania College Access Challenge Grant, Project GRAD seeks to expand to South Philadelphia, Strawberry Mansion and Vaux High Schools and their feeder schools in the city, as well as to three other low-income Pennsylvania high schools.

Fattah said the rigorous training underway this week is preparation for Project GRAD expanding in Philadelphia. He and his staff have visited Project GRAD programs in Houston and Atlanta, recruited the program to Philadelphia, and the Congressman has addressed GRAD alumni and college scholarship recipients at a gathering in New York.

“I have met with these young people and they are doing remarkably well,” Fattah said. “Project GRAD has dramatically improved their life chances. Its expansion is a valuable tool as we prepare our underserved youth for the real jobs and real challenges of our troubled economy.”

The new partnership involves the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) and Project GRAD USA, operated by a nonprofit based in Houston, Texas, where it was founded, and drawing funding from public, private and foundation sources.

Project GRAD serves 121,000 students in 205 schools nationwide. It provides personalized academic strategies in literacy and mathematics, identification and tutoring to fill specific knowledge gaps, development of College Readiness Centers, parent workshops and home visits to families of 8th and 9th graders, college scholarship aid and other services.

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