

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5317

To enable schools serving grades 6 through 12 that are located in rural areas or that serve Native American students to remodel or build new facilities to provide STEM classrooms and laboratories and support high-speed internet, to establish a program to support the modernization, renovation, or repair of career and technical education facilities, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 6, 2026

Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Mr. PADILLA) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To enable schools serving grades 6 through 12 that are located in rural areas or that serve Native American students to remodel or build new facilities to provide STEM classrooms and laboratories and support high-speed internet, to establish a program to support the modernization, renovation, or repair of career and technical education facilities, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Inspiring New STEM
3 Professionals by Investing in Renovation of Education
4 Spaces Act” or the “INSPIRES Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 Congress finds the following:

7 (1) Technological advancement has increased
8 the types of jobs available now and for the foresee-
9 able future. According to the Bureau of Labor Sta-
10 tistics, through 2034, employers will be looking to
11 fill an estimated 870,000 openings for the top 10 oc-
12 cupations in the collective fields of science, tech-
13 nology, engineering, and mathematics (referred to in
14 this section as “STEM”). STEM jobs pay well;
15 STEM workers earn an average of \$55,580 per year
16 more than non-STEM workers. However, projections
17 suggest that the United States won’t have enough
18 skilled workers to fill STEM jobs.

19 (2) STEM skills and knowledge are now re-
20 quired in a wide range of occupations, including
21 many that are not traditionally considered to be
22 science or engineering-related, such as sustainable
23 agriculture, management of natural resources, and
24 health care.

25 (3) Because of the growing use of STEM skills
26 across all job sectors, the distinction between a

1 “rural” as compared to an “urban” job is blurring.
2 For instance, renewable energy development and bio-
3 based product manufacturing employ workers in a
4 variety of areas of the United States. Known as the
5 “new collar” economy, the phenomenal growth in job
6 opportunities for those who are prepared will also
7 support the growth of communities: places to raise
8 families and invest in the future.

9 (4) Good STEM experiences in middle school
10 will lead to positive attitudes toward and expecta-
11 tions of STEM experiences in high school. In the
12 middle grades, students begin to demonstrate formal
13 logical operations (critical thinking). Further, middle
14 school students have been shown to be highly suscep-
15 tible to developing opinions about their competence
16 and interest in STEM learning.

17 (5) Providing students with additional time in
18 after school and summer STEM programs allows
19 students opportunities to engage in hands-on learn-
20 ing that sparks interest in STEM fields and careers.
21 Students who engage in well-designed laboratory ex-
22 periences develop problem-solving and critical-think-
23 ing skills, and gain exposure to reactions, materials,
24 and equipment in a lab setting. Sustained invest-
25 ments in hands-on experiences help inspire students

1 to further their education and prepare them for
2 high-technology careers by fostering skills sought by
3 potential employers. Hands-on experiences signifi-
4 cantly advance learning at all levels of science edu-
5 cation when appropriately designed and guided by
6 qualified educators, in a safe learning environment
7 that is student-centered and curriculum-driven. The
8 classroom should contain enough resources, space,
9 and storage to permit long-term multidisciplinary
10 projects, individual and small-group learning, and
11 inquiry and project-based learning.

12 (6) The United States has unique trust and
13 treaty obligations to provide comprehensive quality
14 educational opportunities to American Indians, Alas-
15 ka Natives, and Native Hawaiians and support Na-
16 tive-serving schools. However, many Native Amer-
17 ican students do not have equitable access to STEM
18 educational opportunities. Surveys suggest that
19 fewer than half of all American Indian and Alaska
20 Native public high school students have access to a
21 full range of mathematics and science courses. Addi-
22 tionally, schools serving Native students frequently
23 dismissed and devalued traditional STEM knowl-
24 edge, discouraging Native student engagement in
25 STEM areas. As a result, Native Americans receive

1 only 0.5 percent of STEM undergraduate degrees
2 and account for only 0.3 percent of the United
3 States engineering workforce.

4 (7) To meet the challenge of educating youth to
5 fulfill the demand for STEM workers, public schools
6 in the United States must be equipped to educate all
7 youth in STEM skills, especially youth who are un-
8 derserved or socially disadvantaged.

9 (8) The median age of United States schools is
10 49 years. 54 percent of school buildings in the
11 United States need significant repairs or upgrades,
12 including clean and safe classrooms and laboratory
13 spaces, up-to-date technology, and broadband. More-
14 over, the condition of school facilities has a measur-
15 able effect on student achievement.

16 (9) For all of these reasons, the future work-
17 force of the United States needs safe, clean, well-
18 equipped school facilities where all students can
19 reach their full potential and learn the knowledge
20 and skills that place them on a secure pathway to
21 enhance the capacity of the United States to com-
22 pete globally.

23 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

24 In this Act:

1 (1) CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.—The
 2 term “career and technical education” has the
 3 meaning given the term in section 3 of the Carl D.
 4 Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of
 5 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302).

6 (2) COMMUNITY COLLEGE.—The term “commu-
 7 nity college” means a public institution of higher
 8 education at which the predominant degree awarded
 9 to students is an associate’s degree, including a 2-
 10 year Tribal College or University as defined in sec-
 11 tion 316(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965
 12 (20 U.S.C. 1059c(b)) and a public 2-year State in-
 13 stitution of higher education.

14 (3) EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY.—The
 15 term “educational service agency” has the meaning
 16 given the term in section 8101 of the Elementary
 17 and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
 18 7801).

19 (4) ELIGIBLE AGENCY.—The term “eligible
 20 agency” means a local educational agency, a consor-
 21 tium of local educational agencies, or an educational
 22 service agency.

23 (5) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
 24 ty” means—

25 (A) an eligible institution;

- 1 (B) a community college;
- 2 (C) a local educational agency or consor-
- 3 tium of local educational agencies;
- 4 (D) an educational service agency;
- 5 (E) a Tribal educational agency;
- 6 (F) an Indian Tribe;
- 7 (G) a Tribal organization; or
- 8 (H) another entity determined appropriate
- 9 by the Secretary.

10 (6) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION.—The term “eligi-

11 ble institution” means any of the following:

12 (A) An Alaska Native-serving institution or

13 a Native Hawaiian-serving institution (as such

14 terms are defined in section 317(b) of the

15 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.

16 1059d(b))), a Native American-serving, non-

17 tribal institution (as defined in section 319(b)

18 of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1059f(b))), or an Asian

19 American and Native American Pacific Is-

20 lander-serving institution (as defined in section

21 320(b) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1059g(b))).

22 (B) A Tribal College or University, as de-

23 fined in section 316(b) of such Act (20 U.S.C.

24 1059c(b)).

1 (C) An 1890 Institution, as defined in sec-
 2 tion 2 of the Agricultural Research, Extension,
 3 and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C.
 4 7601).

5 (D) A 1994 Institution, as defined in sec-
 6 tion 2 of such Act (7 U.S.C. 7601).

7 (E) A Hispanic-serving agricultural college
 8 or university, as defined in section 1404 of the
 9 National Agricultural Research, Extension, and
 10 Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103).

11 (F) A minority-serving institution, which
 12 shall be defined as an eligible institution under
 13 section 371(a) of the Higher Education Act of
 14 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067q(a)).

15 (7) ELIGIBLE SCHOOL.—The term “eligible
 16 school” means—

17 (A) a public school that—

18 (i) serves students in any of grades 6
 19 through 12; and

20 (ii)(I) is located—

21 (aa) in a rural area, as defined in
 22 section 25.503 of title 7, Code of Fed-
 23 eral Regulations, or any successor
 24 regulation;

25 (bb) on or near trust land;

1 (cc) on or near a substantially
 2 underserved trust area, as defined in
 3 section 306F(a) of the Rural Elec-
 4 trification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C.
 5 936f(a)); or

6 (dd) in an eligible community, as
 7 defined in section 1456(a) of the Safe
 8 Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–
 9 16(a)); or

10 (II) is determined by an Indian Tribe
 11 or Tribal organization to serve Native
 12 American students; or

13 (B) a Bureau-funded school, as defined in
 14 section 1141 of the Education Amendments of
 15 1978 (25 U.S.C. 2021).

16 (8) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe”
 17 has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the
 18 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance
 19 Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

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

24 (10) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term
 25 “local educational agency” has the meaning given

1 the term in section 8101 of the Elementary and Sec-
2 ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

3 (11) NATIVE AMERICAN.—The term “Native
4 American” has the meaning given the term in sec-
5 tion 102 of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42
6 U.S.C. 3002).

7 (12) PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP.—The
8 term “public-private partnership” means a partner-
9 ship—

10 (A) between a State or an eligible agency
11 and a private entity (which may be a nonprofit
12 organization, business, or other nongovern-
13 mental entity); and

14 (B) through which the private entity will
15 provide some or all of the required match under
16 section 4(e).

17 (13) QUALIFIED STEM EDUCATION FACILITY
18 PROJECT.—The term “qualified STEM education fa-
19 cility project” means—

20 (A) the modernization, renovation, or re-
21 pair of facilities to provide STEM classrooms or
22 laboratories (including instrumentation and
23 major laboratory equipment) and updates re-
24 lated to student and faculty health and safety,
25 which may include—

1 (i) improving the energy efficiency of
2 a facility;

3 (ii) improving the cost-effectiveness of
4 a facility in delivering quality education;

5 (iii) improving student, faculty, and
6 staff health and safety at a facility;

7 (iv) improving, installing, or upgrad-
8 ing educational technology infrastructure;

9 (v) retrofitting an existing building for
10 career and technical education purposes; or

11 (vi) a one-time repair of serviceable
12 equipment at a facility, or replacement of
13 equipment at a facility that is at the end
14 of its serviceable lifespan, that will be used
15 to further educational outcomes;

16 (B) building new facilities to provide
17 STEM classrooms or laboratories; or

18 (C) supporting the establishment and
19 maintenance of high-speed internet for a STEM
20 classroom or laboratory.

21 (14) QUALIFIED CTE FACILITY PROJECT.—The
22 term “qualified CTE facility project”—

23 (A) means the modernization, renovation,
24 or repair of a facility that will be used to im-
25 prove the quality and availability of STEM or

1 career and technical education instruction to
2 students, and that may include—

3 (i) improving the energy efficiency of
4 the facility;

5 (ii) improving the cost-effectiveness of
6 the facility in delivering quality education;

7 (iii) improving student, faculty, and
8 staff health and safety at the facility;

9 (iv) improving, installing, or upgrad-
10 ing educational technology infrastructure;

11 (v) retrofitting an existing building for
12 career and technical education purposes; or

13 (vi) a one-time repair of serviceable
14 equipment at the facility, or replacement of
15 equipment at the facility that is at the end
16 of its serviceable lifespan, that will be used
17 to further educational outcomes; and

18 (B) does not include new construction or
19 the payment of routine maintenance costs.

20 (15) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary”
21 means the Secretary of Education.

22 (16) STEM.—The term “STEM”—

23 (A) means the fields of science, technology,
24 engineering, and mathematics, and related
25 fields (including computer science); and

1 (B) includes culturally based or traditional
2 knowledge fields in science, technology, engi-
3 neering, or mathematics.

4 (17) TRIBAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The
5 term “Tribal educational agency” has the meaning
6 given the term “tribal educational agency” in section
7 6132(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
8 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7452(b)).

9 (18) TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.—The term “Trib-
10 al organization” has the meaning given the term
11 “tribal organization” in section 658P of the Child
12 Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42
13 U.S.C. 9858n).

14 (19) TRUST LAND.—The term “trust land” has
15 the meaning given the term in section 3765 of title
16 38, United States Code.

17 **SEC. 4. STEM EDUCATION FACILITIES GRANTS.**

18 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary shall
19 carry out a program to improve STEM education facilities
20 by awarding grants, through allotments under subsection
21 (b), to States to enable the States to award subgrants to
22 eligible agencies or Tribal educational agencies to carry
23 out qualified STEM education facility projects at eligible
24 schools.

1 (b) ALLOTMENTS AND USE OF FUNDS FOR
2 STATES.—

3 (1) ALLOTMENTS.—From amounts appro-
4 priated to carry out this section for each fiscal year
5 and not reserved under subsection (g), the Secretary
6 shall allot to each State that has an application ap-
7 proved under this section an amount that bears the
8 same relationship as the number of schools in the
9 State that are rural schools designated with a locale
10 code of 41, 42, or 43, as determined by the Sec-
11 retary, bears to the number of all such schools in the
12 United States and on trust lands for that fiscal year.

13 (2) USE OF FUNDS.—

14 (A) RESERVATION OF FUNDS FOR QUALI-
15 FIED STEM EDUCATION FACILITY PROJECTS AT
16 SCHOOLS SERVING NATIVE AMERICANS.—From
17 amounts provided to a State under paragraph
18 (1), each State with 1 or more eligible schools
19 described in item (bb) or (cc) of subclause (I),
20 or subclause (II), of section 3(7)(A)(ii) shall re-
21 serve not less than 10 percent of the State's al-
22 lotment for qualified STEM education facility
23 projects at such eligible schools.

24 (B) USE OF FUNDS FOR QUALIFIED STEM
25 EDUCATION FACILITY PROJECTS.—A State re-

1 ceiving an allotment under paragraph (1) shall,
2 use the amount of such allotment remaining
3 after any reservation required under subpara-
4 graph (A) to award subgrants to eligible agen-
5 cies or Tribal educational agencies to carry out
6 qualified STEM education facility projects at
7 eligible schools.

8 (c) APPLICATION.—

9 (1) GRANT APPLICATION FOR STATES.—A State
10 that desires to receive an allotment under this sec-
11 tion shall submit an application to the Secretary at
12 such time, in such manner, and containing such in-
13 formation as the Secretary may require. Such infor-
14 mation shall include, at a minimum—

15 (A) a description of the process that the
16 State will use in selecting and awarding sub-
17 grants to eligible agencies and, if applicable,
18 Tribal educational agencies;

19 (B) an assurance that such process will
20 meet the requirements described in paragraph
21 (2);

22 (C) an assurance that in awarding sub-
23 grants to eligible agencies, the State will give
24 priority to eligible agencies that are part of a
25 public-private partnership; and

1 (D) if the State has formed a public-private
2 partnership, a description of that partnership,
3 including how the private entity partner
4 will contribute to the required match under sub-
5 section (e)(1).

6 (2) SUBGRANT APPLICATION.—A State that re-
7 ceives an allotment under this section shall require
8 an eligible agency or Tribal educational agency that
9 desires a subgrant to submit an application that
10 contains, at a minimum, the following information:

11 (A) A detailed description of each qualified
12 STEM education facility project that the eligi-
13 ble agency or Tribal educational agency will
14 carry out with subgrant funds.

15 (B) A description of the need for each such
16 qualified STEM education facility project.

17 (C) A description of how the eligible agen-
18 cy or Tribal educational agency will ensure that
19 each qualified STEM education facility project
20 will be adequately maintained.

21 (D) An identification of the eligible schools
22 that will benefit from the qualified STEM edu-
23 cation facility projects supported under the
24 subgrant.

1 (E) A description of how the facilities or
2 internet supported by a qualified STEM edu-
3 cation facility project will be used to provide
4 educational services in STEM during the school
5 day and the summer, and in after school pro-
6 grams.

7 (F) If the eligible agency or Tribal edu-
8 cational agency has formed a public-private
9 partnership, a description of that partnership,
10 including how the private entity partner will
11 contribute to the required match under sub-
12 section (e)(2).

13 (d) ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS.—The Secretary
14 shall encourage, but not require, States receiving allot-
15 ments under subsection (b)(1) to ensure that the mod-
16 ernization, renovation, repair, or building supported by the
17 qualified STEM education facility project meets Leader-
18 ship in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) build-
19 ing rating standards, Energy Star standards, Collabo-
20 rative for High Performance Schools (CHPS) criteria (or
21 successor criteria), Green Building Initiative environ-
22 mental design and rating standards (Green Globes), the
23 Living Building Challenge certification standards, or
24 equivalent standards adopted by entities with jurisdiction
25 over or related to the States.

1 (e) MATCHING FUNDS.—

2 (1) STATES.—A State that receives a grant
3 under this section shall provide, from non-Federal
4 sources, an amount equal to 25 percent of the
5 amount of the State's allotment under subsection
6 (b)(1) to carry out activities supported by the grant.

7 (2) ELIGIBLE AGENCIES.—An eligible agency
8 that receives a subgrant under subsection (b)(2)(B)
9 shall provide, from non-Federal sources, an amount
10 equal to 10 percent of the amount of the subgrant
11 to carry out activities supported by the subgrant.

12 (3) TYPE OF MATCH.—A matching requirement
13 under this subsection may be provided in cash or in-
14 kind.

15 (4) WAIVER AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may
16 waive the requirement under this subsection for a
17 State if the Secretary determines that the State will
18 be unable to satisfy the matching requirement.

19 (f) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Funds made
20 available under this section shall be used to supplement,
21 and not supplant, other Federal and State funds available
22 to carry out the activities supported under this section.

23 (g) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE
24 COSTS.—The Secretary may reserve not more than 3 per-
25 cent of funds appropriated to carry out this section for

1 the administrative costs of this section and to provide
 2 technical assistance to States, eligible agencies, and Tribal
 3 educational agencies concerning best practices in carrying
 4 out qualified STEM education facility projects.

5 (h) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than 1
 6 year after funds are appropriated to carry out this section,
 7 and every 2 years thereafter, the Secretary shall prepare
 8 and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a
 9 report on the effect of the qualified STEM education facil-
 10 ity projects supported under this section on improving aca-
 11 demic achievement.

12 **SEC. 5. CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FACILITIES**
 13 **IMPROVEMENT.**

14 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—From amounts appro-
 15 priated to carry out this section, the Secretary shall carry
 16 out a program to improve career and technical education
 17 facilities by—

18 (1) awarding grants to eligible entities to enable
 19 the eligible entities to carry out qualified CTE facil-
 20 ity projects;

21 (2) guaranteeing loans made to eligible entities
 22 for qualified CTE facility projects; or

23 (3) making payments of interest on bonds,
 24 loans, or other financial instruments (other than a

1 refinancing) that are issued to eligible entities for
2 qualified CTE facility projects.

3 (b) APPLICATION.—An eligible entity that desires to
4 receive a grant, loan guarantee, or payment of interest
5 under this section shall submit an application to the Sec-
6 retary at such a time, in such manner, and containing
7 such information as the Secretary may require. The appli-
8 cation shall include—

9 (1) a detailed description of the qualified CTE
10 facility project;

11 (2) in the case of a qualified CTE facility
12 project described in section 3(14)(A)(vi), a descrip-
13 tion of the educational outcomes to be furthered by
14 the one-time repair of serviceable equipment or re-
15 placement of equipment;

16 (3) an indication as to whether the eligible enti-
17 ty prefers to receive a grant, loan guarantee, or pay-
18 ment of interest;

19 (4) a description of the need for the qualified
20 CTE facility project;

21 (5) a description of how the eligible entity will
22 ensure that the qualified CTE facility project will be
23 adequately maintained;

24 (6) a description of how the qualified CTE fa-
25 cility project will improve instruction and edu-

1 educational outcomes at the facility, including any op-
2 portunities to integrate project activities within the
3 curriculum of a school or institution;

4 (7) a description of how the facility supported
5 by the qualified CTE facility project will be used for
6 providing educational services in STEM or career
7 and technical education;

8 (8) if the qualified CTE facility project will
9 seek sustainability certifications, then a description
10 of how the modernization, renovation, or repair sup-
11 ported by the qualified CTE facility project meets
12 Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
13 (LEED) building rating standards, Energy Star
14 standards, Collaborative for High Performance
15 Schools (CHPS) criteria (or successor criteria),
16 Green Building Initiative environmental design and
17 rating standards (Green Globes), the Living Build-
18 ing Challenge certification standards, or equivalent
19 standards adopted by entities with jurisdiction over
20 or related to the eligible entity;

21 (9) a description of the fiscal capacity of the el-
22 igible entity;

23 (10) the percentage of students enrolled in the
24 eligible entity or a school or institution served by the

1 eligible entity to be served by the qualified CTE fa-
2 cility project who are from low-income families;

3 (11) in the case of a qualified CTE facility
4 project at a facility that is used by students in a sec-
5 ondary school (as such term is defined in section
6 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education
7 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801)), the secondary school
8 graduation rates;

9 (12) in the case of an eligible entity that has
10 formed a partnership with a private entity (which
11 may include a nonprofit organization, business, or
12 other nongovernmental entity), a description of that
13 partnership, including how the private entity partner
14 will contribute to the qualified CTE facility project;
15 and

16 (13) such additional information and assur-
17 ances as the Secretary may require.

18 (c) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants, guaranteeing
19 loans, or making payments under subsection (a), the Sec-
20 retary shall give priority to eligible entities that have a
21 partnership described in subsection (b)(12).

22 (d) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Funds made
23 available under this section shall be used to supplement,
24 and not supplant, other Federal and State funds available
25 to carry out the activities supported under this section.

1 (e) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE
 2 COSTS.—The Secretary may reserve a total of not more
 3 than 3 percent of funds appropriated to carry out this sec-
 4 tion—

5 (1) for the administrative costs of this section;
 6 and

7 (2) to provide technical assistance to eligible en-
 8 tities concerning best practices in school facility ren-
 9 ovation, repair, and modernization.

10 (f) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than 1
 11 year after funds are appropriated to carry out this section,
 12 and every 2 years thereafter, the Secretary shall prepare
 13 and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a
 14 report on the effect of the qualified CTE facility projects
 15 supported under this section on improving academic
 16 achievement.

17 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

18 There are authorized to be appropriated—

19 (1) to carry out section 4, not less than
 20 \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2027 and each suc-
 21 ceeding fiscal year; and

22 (2) to carry out section 5, not less than
 23 \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2027 and each suc-
 24 ceeding fiscal year.

○