

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1868

To provide for a rural education development initiative, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 19, 1999

Mr. JOHN (for himself, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. SHOWS, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. PHELPS, Mr. BOYD, Mr. TURNER, Mr. FROST, Mrs. CLAYTON, Mr. HILL of Indiana, Mrs. THURMAN, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon, Mr. BERRY, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. GORDON, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky, Mr. BISHOP, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. BOUCHER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To provide for a rural education development initiative, 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Rural Education De-
5 velopment Initiative for the 21st Century Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

2 The purpose of this Act is to provide rural school stu-
3 dents in the United States with increased learning oppor-
4 tunities.

5 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

6 Congress makes the following findings:

7 (1) While there are rural education initiatives
8 identified at the State and local level, no Federal
9 education policy focuses on the specific needs of
10 rural school districts and schools, especially those
11 that serve poor students.

12 (2) Under Federal law, there is no consistent
13 definition for rural schools, rural school districts, or
14 rural local educational agencies.

15 (3) The National Center for Educational Statis-
16 tics (NCES) reports that 46 percent of our Nation's
17 public schools serve rural areas.

18 (4) A critical problem for rural school districts
19 involves the hiring and retention of qualified admin-
20 istrators and certified teachers (especially in science
21 and mathematics). Consequently, teachers in rural
22 schools are almost twice as likely to provide instruc-
23 tion in 3 or more subjects than teachers in urban
24 schools. Rural schools also face other tough chal-
25 lenges, such as shrinking local tax bases, high trans-

1 portation costs, aging buildings, limited course offer-
2 ings, and limited resources.

3 (5) Data from the National Assessment of Edu-
4 cational Progress (NAEP) consistently show large
5 gaps between the achievement of students in high-
6 poverty schools and those in other schools. High-pov-
7 erty schools will face special challenges in preparing
8 their students to reach high standards of perform-
9 ance on State and national assessments.

10 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

11 In this Act:

12 (1) ELEMENTARY SCHOOL; LOCAL EDU-
13 CATIONAL AGENCY; SECONDARY SCHOOL; STATE
14 EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The terms “elementary
15 school”, “local educational agency”, “secondary
16 school”, and “State educational agency” have the
17 meanings given the terms in section 14101 of the
18 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
19 (20 U.S.C. 8801).

20 (2) ELIGIBLE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—
21 The term “eligible local educational agency” means
22 a local educational agency that serves—

23 (A) a school-age population, 20 percent or
24 more of whom are from families with incomes
25 below the poverty line; and

1 (B)(i) a school district that is located in a
2 rural locality; or

3 (ii) a school-age population of 800 or
4 fewer.

5 (3) METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA.—The
6 term “metropolitan statistical area” includes the
7 area defined as such by the Secretary of Commerce.

8 (4) POVERTY LINE.—The term “poverty line”
9 means the poverty line (as defined by the Office of
10 Management and Budget, and revised annually in
11 accordance with section 673(2) of the Community
12 Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2))) ap-
13 plicable to a family of the size involved.

14 (5) RURAL LOCALITY.—The term “rural local-
15 ity” means a locality that is not within a metropoli-
16 tan statistical area.

17 (6) SCHOOL-AGE POPULATION.—The term
18 “school-age population” means the number of stu-
19 dents aged 5 through 17.

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

22 (8) SPECIALLY QUALIFIED AGENCY.—The term
23 “specially qualified agency” means an eligible local
24 educational agency, located in a State that does not
25 participate in a program under this Act in a fiscal

1 year, that may apply directly to the Secretary for a
2 grant in such year in accordance with section
3 5(b)(3).

4 **SEC. 5. PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.**

5 (a) RESERVATIONS.—From amounts appropriated
6 under section 9 for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall re-
7 serve 0.5 percent to make awards to elementary or sec-
8 ondary schools operated or supported by the Bureau of
9 Indian Affairs to carry out the purpose of this Act.

10 (b) GRANTS TO STATES.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts appropriated
12 under section 9 that are not reserved under sub-
13 section (a), the Secretary shall award grants to
14 State educational agencies that have applications ap-
15 proved under section 7 to enable the State edu-
16 cational agencies to award grants to eligible local
17 educational agencies or schools described in section
18 6(b)(2) for local authorized activities described in
19 subsection (c).

20 (2) FORMULA.—The Secretary shall allot to
21 each State educational agency an amount that bears
22 the same relation to the amount of funds appro-
23 priated under section 9 that are not reserved under
24 subsection (a) as the number of students served by
25 eligible local educational agencies in the State bears

1 to the number of all students served by eligible local
2 educational agencies in all States.

3 (3) DIRECT AWARDS TO SPECIALLY QUALIFIED
4 AGENCIES.—

5 (A) NONPARTICIPATING STATE.—If a
6 State educational agency elects not to partici-
7 pate in the program under this Act or does not
8 have an application approved under section 7, a
9 specially qualified agency in such State desiring
10 a grant under this Act shall apply directly to
11 the Secretary to receive an award under this
12 Act.

13 (B) DIRECT AWARDS TO SPECIALLY
14 QUALIFIED AGENCIES.—The Secretary may
15 award, on a competitive basis, the amount the
16 State educational agency is eligible to receive
17 under paragraph (2) directly to specially quali-
18 fied agencies in the State.

19 (c) LOCAL ACTIVITIES.—Grant funds awarded to
20 local educational agencies or made available to schools
21 under this Act shall be used for—

22 (1) educational technology, including software
23 and hardware;

24 (2) professional development;

25 (3) technical assistance;

1 (4) teacher recruitment and retention;

2 (5) parental involvement activities; or

3 (6) academic enrichment programs.

4 **SEC. 6. STATE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.**

5 (a) AWARD BASIS.—A State educational agency shall
6 award grants to eligible local educational agencies or pro-
7 vide assistance to schools described in subsection (b)(2)—

8 (1) on a competitive basis; or

9 (2) according to a formula based on the number
10 of students served by the eligible local educational
11 agencies or schools (as appropriate) in the State, as
12 determined by the State.

13 (b) FIRST YEAR.—For the first year that a State
14 educational agency receives a grant under this Act, the
15 State educational agency—

16 (1) shall use not less than 90 percent of the
17 grant funds to award grants to eligible local edu-
18 cational agencies in the State;

19 (2) shall use not more than 9 percent of the
20 grant funds to provide assistance to schools located
21 in a noneligible local educational agency if the
22 school—

23 (A) is located in a rural community that
24 has a population of 2,500 or less, or a rural

1 community with a population density of less
2 than 1,000 people per square mile; and

3 (B) serves a school-age population, 20 per-
4 cent or more of whom are from families with in-
5 comes below the poverty line; and

6 (3) may use not more than 1 percent for State
7 activities and administrative costs related to the pro-
8 gram.

9 (c) SUCCEEDING YEARS.—For the second and each
10 succeeding year that a State educational agency receives
11 a grant under this Act, the State educational agency—

12 (1) shall use not less than 90 percent of the
13 grant funds to award grants to eligible local edu-
14 cational agencies in the State;

15 (2) shall use not more than 9.5 percent of the
16 grant funds to provide assistance to a school de-
17 scribed in subsection (b)(2); and

18 (3) may use not more than 0.5 percent of the
19 grant funds for State activities and administrative
20 costs related to the program.

21 **SEC. 7. APPLICATIONS.**

22 Each State educational agency and specially qualified
23 agency desiring a grant under this Act shall submit an
24 application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner,
25 and accompanied by such information as the Secretary

1 may require. Such application shall include specific meas-
2 urable goals and objectives to be achieved which may in-
3 clude specific educational goals and objectives relating to
4 increased student academic achievement, decreased stu-
5 dent drop-out rates, or such other factors that the State
6 educational agency or specially qualified agency may
7 choose to measure.

8 **SEC. 8. REPORTS.**

9 (a) STATE REPORTS.—Each State educational agen-
10 cy that receives a grant under this Act shall provide an
11 annual report to the Secretary. The report shall
12 describe—

13 (1) the method the State educational agency
14 used to award grants to eligible local educational
15 agencies and to provide assistance to schools under
16 this Act;

17 (2) how local educational agencies and schools
18 used funds provided under this Act; and

19 (3) the degree to which progress has been made
20 toward meeting the goals and objectives described in
21 the application submitted under section 7.

22 (b) SPECIALLY QUALIFIED AGENCY REPORT.—Each
23 specially qualified agency that receives a grant under this
24 Act shall provide an annual report to the Secretary. Such
25 report shall describe—

1 (1) how such agency uses funds provided under
2 this Act; and

3 (2) the degree to which progress has been made
4 toward meeting the goals and objectives described in
5 the application submitted under section 5(b)(3)(A).

6 (c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary shall pre-
7 pare and submit to Congress an annual report. The report
8 shall describe—

9 (1) the methods the State educational agency
10 used to award grants to eligible local educational
11 agencies and to provide assistance to schools under
12 this Act;

13 (2) how eligible local educational agencies and
14 schools used funds provided under this Act; and

15 (3) progress made in meeting specific measur-
16 able educational goals and objectives.

17 **SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

18 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
19 this Act \$300,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2000
20 through 2004.

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