

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3044

To provide grants to local educational agencies to develop smaller schools.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 7, 1999

Mr. HILL of Indiana (for himself, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. FROST, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. ROEMER, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin, Mr. SANDLIN, Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon, Ms. CARSON, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. LARSON, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. HOEFFEL, Mr. PHELPS, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky, Mr. WU, and Mr. MOORE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To provide grants to local educational agencies to develop smaller schools.

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 “Smaller Schools,
5 Stronger Communities Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. SMALLER SCHOOLS.**

2 Title X of the Elementary and Secondary Education
3 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 8001 et seq.) is amended by add-
4 ing at the end the following new part:

5 **“PART L—SMALLER SCHOOLS**

6 **“SEC. 10995. FINDINGS.**

7 “Congress finds the following:

8 “(1) Since World War II, the conventional wis-
9 dom among educators has been that larger schools
10 are better and accordingly the number of secondary
11 schools in the United States has declined by 70 per-
12 cent, while average school size has grown by 5 times.
13 But over the past few years, educators have begun
14 to question the approach that bigger schools are al-
15 ways better.

16 “(2) The National Association of Secondary
17 School Principals (referred to in this section as the
18 NAASP) recently recommended that the high school
19 of the 21st Century be “much more student-centered
20 and above all much more personalized in programs,
21 support services and intellectual rigor.” The NAASP
22 stated that students take more interest in school
23 when they experience a sense of belonging and that
24 students benefit from a more intimate setting in
25 which their presence is more readily and repeatedly
26 acknowledged.

1 “(3) The NAASP also warns that the “bigness”
2 of high schools shrouds many young people “in a
3 cloak of anonymity” and recommends that high
4 schools should restructure the space and time of
5 high schools so that students are no longer “invisible
6 and melt into their surroundings”. NAASP rec-
7 ommends that high schools change their structure to
8 limit their enrollments to self-operating units of not
9 more than 600 students, either through constructing
10 new buildings or through creating “school-within-
11 school” units. It also suggests changing the relation-
12 ship between teachers and students by reducing the
13 number of class changes students make each day
14 and allowing teachers to have more time with small-
15 er numbers of students.

16 “(4) Research shows that larger school size
17 tends to stratify students into different tracks which
18 are often based on children’s educational and social
19 backgrounds. Larger schools foster inequitable edu-
20 cational outcomes, where there are great differences
21 between the educational achievement of students
22 within the same school.

23 “(5) Research shows that in smaller, more per-
24 sonalized, and less bureaucratic schools, inequities
25 between student achievement are smaller and that

1 students in smaller schools perform better in the
2 core subjects of reading, math, history, and science
3 and are more engaged in their courses. In addition,
4 smaller schools have higher attendance rates and
5 higher participation in school activities.

6 “(6) Research shows that because achievement
7 levels in smaller schools are more equitably distrib-
8 uted, students who come from more disadvantaged
9 economic and educational backgrounds show the
10 greatest achievement gains in smaller schools.

11 **“SEC. 10996. PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.**

12 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary is authorized to
13 provide flexible challenge grants to local educational agen-
14 cies to implement and administer plans to create smaller
15 schools.

16 “(b) CONSIDERATION; ASSURANCE; AND PRIORITY.—
17 The Secretary, in awarding grants under this part to local
18 educational agencies shall—

19 “(1) consider the number of students served
20 and the number, location, and size of the schools
21 which serve such students; and

22 “(2) assure, to the extent practicable, an equi-
23 table distribution of assistance among urban and
24 rural areas of the United States and among urban
25 and rural areas of a State.

1 “(3) give priority to local educational agencies
2 that establish a target number for attendance at—

3 “(A) each high school of not more than
4 600 students or create self-operating academic
5 units within a high school of not more than
6 600; and

7 “(B) each elementary school or middle
8 school of not more than 400 students.

9 “(c) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may award not
10 more than \$2,000,000 to any local educational agency se-
11 lected to receive a grant award under this part.

12 **“SEC. 10997. APPLICATION.**

13 “(a) IN GENERAL.—

14 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A local educational agency
15 wishing to implement smaller school plans shall
16 apply to the Secretary for a flexible challenge grant
17 at such time and in such form as the Secretary may
18 reasonably require.

19 “(2) APPLICATION FORM.—The Secretary shall
20 develop a application that is simple and brief in
21 form.

22 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant
23 under this part, a local educational agency shall submit
24 a 5-year plan that—

1 “(1) calculates the number of students enrolled
2 in each school during the preceding school year di-
3 vided by the number of schools in such agency; and

4 “(2) describes how such agency plans to reduce
5 the size of its schools by creating ‘schools within
6 schools,’ or building new schools to reduce average
7 school sizes.

8 **“SEC. 10998. USES OF FUNDS AND REPORTING.**

9 “(a) USES OF FUNDS.—Funds received under this
10 part may be used—

11 “(1) to hire additional staff;

12 “(2) for planning, feasibility studies, and archi-
13 tectural fees to design or remodel school facilities;
14 and

15 “(3) for any other reasonable expense, but shall
16 not include the costs directly associated with the
17 renovation of existing facilities or the purchase or
18 construction of new facilities.

19 “(b) REPORTING.—Each local educational agency
20 that receives a grant under this part shall report annually
21 to the Secretary regarding how such funds were spent.

22 **“SEC. 10999. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

23 “‘There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
24 this Act \$100,000,000 for fiscal year 2000, \$100,000,000

1 for fiscal year 2001, \$200,000,000 for fiscal year 2002,
2 and \$300,000,000 for fiscal year 2003.”.

