

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3369

To establish an Office of Rural Education Policy in the Department of Education, make other modifications to Federal law to improve rural schools, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 29, 2015

Mr. LOEBSACK introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish an Office of Rural Education Policy in the Department of Education, make other modifications to Federal law to improve rural schools, 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 “Restructuring Under-
5 utilized Resources for Advancing Learning Act” or the
6 “RURAL Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Rural schools have unique challenges and
4 benefits.

5 (2) More than 33 percent of regular elementary
6 and secondary public schools nationwide are in loca-
7 tions classified as rural. As of the 2010–2011 school
8 year, more than 20 percent of public school students
9 were enrolled in rural school districts.

10 (3) In rural areas of the United States,
11 6,100,000 children live in poverty.

12 (4) Among children living in rural areas, 24
13 percent live in poverty, compared to 20 percent
14 among nonrural children.

15 (5) Rural schools have fewer financial resources
16 than non-rural schools, largely as a result of dimin-
17 ished local property tax bases and inequitable dis-
18 tributions of State funds.

19 (6) There is a substantial pay gap for teachers
20 and administrators in rural school districts. Rural
21 teachers and administrators in the U.S. earn about
22 \$10,000 less than their counterparts in nonrural
23 schools.

24 (7) Rural schools have difficulty recruiting and
25 retaining teachers. A recent survey of rural school
26 superintendents suggests low salaries combined with

1 social and geographic isolation are the primary fac-
2 tors responsible for difficulties recruiting and retain-
3 ing teachers.

4 (8) Digital learning technology holds the prom-
5 ise of transforming rural education by removing bar-
6 riers of distance and increasing school capacity.

7 (9) While many large urban local education
8 agencies are at the forefront of implementing new
9 digital learning innovations, it is often harder for
10 smaller and more rural local education agencies to
11 access these tools. Smaller local education agencies
12 with less capacity may also find it more difficult to
13 provide the training needed to effectively implement
14 new digital learning technologies.

15 (10) Low literacy rates among parents in poor
16 rural communities affect the early language develop-
17 ment and educational aspirations of children.

18 (11) Investing in after-school programs helps
19 children in rural communities break out of the cycle
20 of poverty and creates opportunities for at-risk
21 youth.

22 (12) In areas in which resources are limited,
23 after-school programs are often the only source of
24 supplemental enrichment in literacy, nutrition edu-

1 cation, technology, and preparation for college and
2 entrance exams.

3 (13) Children attending rural schools have the
4 lowest median per-student funding for after-school
5 programs under the 21st Century Community
6 Learning Center Program under part B of title IV
7 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of
8 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7171 et seq.), as compared to chil-
9 dren attending urban and suburban schools.

10 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

11 (1) to establish an Office of Rural Education
12 Policy in the Department of Education;

13 (2) to provide input to the Secretary of Edu-
14 cation regarding the impact of proposed changes in
15 law, regulations, policies, rules, and budgets on rural
16 schools and communities;

17 (3) to provide a tax incentive to individuals
18 teaching in elementary and secondary schools lo-
19 cated in rural or high unemployment areas and to
20 individuals who achieve certification from the Na-
21 tional Board for Professional Teaching Standards;

22 (4) to support the expansion of the use of dig-
23 ital learning through competitive grants to partner-
24 ships to implement and evaluate the results of tech-

nology-based learning practices, strategies, tools, or programs at rural schools; and

(5) to enhance after-school programs in rural areas by helping communities establish after-school programs and improve existing programs by overcoming barriers to service.

TITLE I—INCENTIVES TO EDUCATE AMERICAN CHILDREN

SEC. 101. REFUNDABLE TAX CREDIT FOR EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL LEADERS IN ELEMENTARY AND SEC- ONDARY SCHOOLS LOCATED IN HIGH POV- ERTY OR RURAL AREAS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart C of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after section 36B the following new section:

“SEC. 36C. TAX CREDIT FOR EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL LEADERS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS LOCATED IN HIGH POVERTY OR RURAL AREAS.

“(a) ALLOWANCE OF CREDIT.—In the case of an eligible teacher or school leader, there shall be allowed as a credit against the tax imposed by this subtitle for the taxable year an amount equal to the applicable amount

1 for the eligible academic year ending during such taxable
2 year.

3 “(b) APPLICABLE AMOUNT.—For purposes of this
4 section—

5 “(1) TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS
6 OR SCHOOLS WITH HIGH POVERTY.—

7 “(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an eligi-
8 ble teacher who performs services in a public
9 kindergarten or a public elementary or sec-
10 ondary school described in subparagraph (B)
11 during the eligible academic year, the applicable
12 amount is \$1,000.

13 “(B) SCHOOL DESCRIBED.—A public kin-
14 dergarten or a public elementary or secondary
15 school is described in this subparagraph if—

16 “(i) at least 75 percent of the stu-
17 dents attending such kindergarten or
18 school receive free or reduced-cost lunches
19 under the school lunch program established
20 under the Richard B. Russell National
21 School Lunch Act, or

22 “(ii) such kindergarten or school is
23 designated with a school locale code of 32,
24 33, 41, 42, or 43, as determined by the
25 Secretary of Education.

1 “(2) CERTIFIED TEACHERS.—In the case of an
2 eligible teacher who is described in paragraph (1)
3 and who is certified by the National Board for Pro-
4 fessional Teaching Standards for the eligible aca-
5 demic year, paragraph (1)(A) shall be applied by
6 substituting ‘\$2,000’ for ‘\$1,000’.

7 “(3) ELIGIBLE SCHOOL LEADERS IN SCHOOLS
8 IN RURAL AREAS.—In the case of an eligible school
9 leader who serves in a public kindergarten or a pub-
10 lic elementary or secondary school described in para-
11 graph (1)(B)(ii), paragraph (1)(A) shall be applied
12 by substituting ‘\$2,000’ for ‘\$1,000’.

13 “(c) ELIGIBLE TEACHER.—For purposes of this sec-
14 tion, the term ‘eligible teacher’ means, for any eligible aca-
15 demic year, an individual who is a kindergarten through
16 grade 12 classroom teacher or instructor in a public kin-
17 dergarten or a public elementary or secondary school on
18 a full-time basis for such eligible academic year.

19 “(d) ELIGIBLE SCHOOL LEADER.—For purposes of
20 this section, the term ‘eligible school leader’ means, for
21 any eligible academic year, an individual who, on a full-
22 time basis for such eligible academic year, is a kinder-
23 garten through grade 12 principal or assistant principal
24 in a public kindergarten or a public elementary or is a

1 school superintendent or other administrator employed by
 2 a local educational agency.

3 “(e) ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of
 4 this section—

5 “(1) ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS;
 6 LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The terms ‘elemen-
 7 tary school’, ‘secondary school’, and ‘local edu-
 8 cational agency’ have the respective meanings given
 9 such terms by section 9101 of the Elementary and
 10 Secondary Education Act of 1965.

11 “(2) ELIGIBLE ACADEMIC YEAR.—The term ‘el-
 12 igible academic year’ means any academic year end-
 13 ing in a taxable year beginning after December 31,
 14 2015.”.

15 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

16 (1) Paragraph (2) of section 1324(b) of title
 17 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting “,
 18 36C” after “36B”.

19 (2) The table of sections for subpart C of part
 20 IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Rev-
 21 enue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after the
 22 item relating to section 36B the following new item:

“Sec. 36C. Tax credit for educators and school leaders in elementary and sec-
 ondary schools located in high poverty or rural areas.”.

1 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
2 this section shall apply to academic years ending in tax-
3 able years beginning after December 31, 2015.

4 **TITLE II—OFFICE OF RURAL**
5 **EDUCATION POLICY**

6 **SEC. 201. ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF RURAL EDU-**
7 **CATION POLICY.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Title II of the Department of
9 Education Organization Act (20 U.S.C. 3411 et seq.) is
10 amended by adding at the end the following:

11 **“SEC. 221. OFFICE OF RURAL EDUCATION POLICY.**

12 “(a) IN GENERAL.—There shall be, in the Office of
13 Elementary and Secondary Education of the Department,
14 an Office of Rural Education Policy (referred to in this
15 section as the ‘Office’).

16 “(b) DIRECTOR; DUTIES.—

17 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Office shall be headed
18 by a Director, who shall advise the Secretary on the
19 characteristics and needs of rural schools and the ef-
20 fects of current policies and proposed statutory, reg-
21 ulatory, administrative, and budgetary changes on
22 State educational agencies, and local educational
23 agencies, that serve schools with a locale code of 32,
24 33, 41, 42, or 43, as determined by the Secretary.

1 “(2) ADDITIONAL DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR.—

2 In addition to advising the Secretary with respect to
3 the matters described in paragraph (1), the Director
4 of the Office of Rural Education Policy (referred to
5 in this section as the ‘Director’), through the Office,
6 shall—

7 “(A) establish and maintain a clearing-
8 house for collecting and disseminating informa-
9 tion on—

10 “(i) teacher and principal recruitment
11 and retention at rural elementary schools
12 and rural secondary schools;

13 “(ii) access to, and implementation
14 and use of, technology and distance learn-
15 ing at such schools;

16 “(iii) rigorous coursework delivery
17 through distance learning at such schools;

18 “(iv) student achievement at such
19 schools, including the achievement of low-
20 income and minority students;

21 “(v) innovative approaches in rural
22 education to increase student achievement;

23 “(vi) higher education and career
24 readiness and secondary school completion
25 of students enrolled in such schools;

1 “(vii) access to, and quality of, early
2 childhood development for children located
3 in rural areas;

4 “(viii) access to, or partnerships with,
5 community-based organizations in rural
6 areas;

7 “(ix) the availability of professional
8 development opportunities for rural teach-
9 ers and principals;

10 “(x) the availability of Federal and
11 other grants and assistance that are spe-
12 cifically geared or applicable to rural
13 schools; and

14 “(xi) the financing of such schools;

15 “(B) identify innovative research and dem-
16 onstration projects on topics of importance to
17 rural elementary schools and rural secondary
18 schools, including gaps in such research, and
19 recommend such topics for study by the Insti-
20 tute of Education Sciences and other research
21 agencies;

22 “(C) coordinate the activities within the
23 Department that relate to rural education;

24 “(D) provide information to the Secretary
25 and others in the Department with respect to

1 the activities of other Federal departments and
2 agencies that relate to rural education, includ-
3 ing activities relating to rural housing, rural ag-
4 ricultural services, rural transportation, rural
5 economic development, rural career and tech-
6 nical training, rural health care, rural disability
7 services, and rural mental health;

8 “(E) coordinate with the Bureau of Indian
9 Education, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the
10 Department of the Interior, and the schools ad-
11 ministered by such agencies regarding rural
12 education;

13 “(F) provide, directly or through grants,
14 cooperative agreements, or contracts, technical
15 assistance and other activities as necessary to
16 support activities related to improving edu-
17 cation in rural areas; and

18 “(G) produce an annual report on the con-
19 dition of rural education that is delivered to the
20 members of the Education and the Workforce
21 Committee of the House of Representatives and
22 the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
23 Committee of the Senate and published on the
24 Department’s Web site.

1 “(c) IMPACT ANALYSES OF RULES AND REGULA-
2 TIONS ON RURAL SCHOOLS.—

3 “(1) PROPOSED RULEMAKING.—Whenever the
4 Secretary publishes a general notice of proposed
5 rulemaking for any rule or regulation that may have
6 a significant impact on State educational agencies or
7 local educational agencies serving schools with a lo-
8 cale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43, as determined by
9 the Secretary, the Secretary (acting through the Di-
10 rector) shall prepare and make available for public
11 comment an initial regulatory impact analysis. Such
12 analysis shall describe the impact of the proposed
13 rule or regulation on such State educational agencies
14 and local educational agencies and shall set forth,
15 with respect to such agencies, the matters required
16 under section 603 of title 5, United States Code, to
17 be set forth with respect to small entities. The initial
18 regulatory impact analysis (or a summary) shall be
19 published in the Federal Register at the time of the
20 publication of general notice of proposed rulemaking
21 for the rule or regulation.

22 “(2) FINAL RULE.—Whenever the Secretary
23 promulgates a final version of a rule or regulation
24 with respect to which an initial regulatory impact
25 analysis is required by paragraph (1), the Secretary

1 (acting through the Director) shall prepare a final
2 regulatory impact analysis with respect to the final
3 version of such rule or regulation. Such analysis
4 shall set forth, with respect to State educational
5 agencies and local educational agencies serving
6 schools with a locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43,
7 as determined by the Secretary, the matters required
8 under section 604 of title 5, United States Code, to
9 be set forth with respect to small entities. The Sec-
10 retary shall make copies of the final regulatory im-
11 pact analysis available to the public and shall pub-
12 lish, in the Federal Register at the time of publica-
13 tion of the final version of the rule or regulation, a
14 statement describing how a member of the public
15 may obtain a copy of such analysis.

16 “(3) REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS.—If
17 a regulatory flexibility analysis is required by chap-
18 ter 6 of title 5, United States Code, for a rule or
19 regulation to which this subsection applies, such
20 analysis shall specifically address the impact of the
21 rule or regulation on State educational agencies and
22 local educational agencies serving schools with a lo-
23 cale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43, as determined by
24 the Secretary.”.

1 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 221(c) of the De-
2 partment of Education Organization Act, as added by sub-
3 section (a), shall apply to regulations proposed more than
4 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

5 **TITLE III—ASSISTANCE TO**
6 **RURAL SCHOOLS FOR IMPLE-**
7 **MENTING AND EVALUATING**
8 **DIGITAL LEARNING**

9 **SEC. 301. PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.**

10 (a) GRANTS TO ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIPS.—From
11 the amounts appropriated to carry out this title, the Sec-
12 retary of Education is authorized to award grants, on a
13 competitive basis, to eligible partnerships to carry out the
14 activities described in section 304.

15 (b) DURATION OF GRANT.—A grant under subsection
16 (a) shall be awarded for not less than a 3-year and not
17 longer than a 5-year period.

18 (c) FISCAL AGENT.—If an eligible partnership re-
19 ceives a grant under this title, a school partner in the part-
20 nership shall serve as the fiscal agent for the partnership.

21 **SEC. 302. APPLICATION.**

22 An eligible partnership desiring a grant under this
23 title shall submit an application to the Secretary at such
24 time, in such manner, and containing such information as

1 the Secretary may require, which shall include the fol-
2 lowing:

3 (1) A description of the eligible partnership, in-
4 cluding the name of each of the partners and their
5 respective roles and responsibilities.

6 (2) A description of the technology-based learn-
7 ing practice, tool, strategy, or course that the eligi-
8 ble partnership proposes to develop or implement
9 using the grant funds.

10 (3) An assurance that all teachers of record
11 hold the relevant license and are otherwise qualified
12 to implement any technology-based practice, tool,
13 strategy, or course using the grant funds.

14 (4) An assurance that all students in a class or
15 school implementing a practice, tool, strategy or
16 course using the grant funds will have access to any
17 equipment necessary to participate on a full and eq-
18 uitable basis.

19 (5) An assurance that the proposed uses of
20 smartphones, laptops, tablets, or other devices sus-
21 ceptible to inappropriate use have the informed con-
22 sent of parents or guardians and are not incon-
23 sistent with any policies of the local educational
24 agency on the use of such devices.

1 (6) Information relevant to the selection criteria
2 under section 303(c).

3 (7) A description of the evaluation to be under-
4 taken by the eligible partnership, including—

5 (A) how the school partner and the evalua-
6 tion partner will work together to implement
7 the practice, tool, strategy, or course in such a
8 way that permits the use of a rigorous, inde-
9 pendent evaluation design that meets the stand-
10 ards of the What Works Clearinghouse of the
11 Institute of Education Sciences; and

12 (B) a description of the evaluation design
13 that meets such standards, which will be used
14 to measure any significant effects on the out-
15 comes described in paragraphs (1) through (3)
16 of section 305(a).

17 (8) An estimate of the number of students to
18 be reached through the grant and evidence of its ca-
19 pacity to reach the proposed number of students
20 during the course of the grant.

21 (9) Any other information the Secretary may
22 require.

23 **SEC. 303. APPLICATION REVIEW AND AWARD BASIS.**

24 (a) PEER REVIEW.—The Secretary shall use a peer
25 review process to review applications for grants under this

1 title. The Secretary shall appoint individuals to the peer
2 review process who have relevant expertise in digital learn-
3 ing, research and evaluation, standards quality and align-
4 ment, and rural education.

5 (b) AWARD BASIS.—In awarding grants under this
6 title, the Secretary shall ensure, to the extent practicable,
7 diversity in the type of activities funded under the grants.

8 (c) SELECTION CRITERIA.—In evaluating an eligible
9 partnership’s application for a grant under this title, the
10 Secretary shall consider—

11 (1) the need for the proposed technology-based
12 learning practice, tool, strategy, or course;

13 (2) the quality of the design of the proposed
14 practice, tool, strategy, or course;

15 (3) the strength of the existing research evi-
16 dence with respect to such practice, tool, strategy, or
17 course;

18 (4) the experience of the eligible partnership;
19 and

20 (5) the quality of the evaluation proposed by
21 the eligible partnership.

22 (d) DEDICATED FUNDING FOR FRINGE RURAL, DIS-
23 TANT RURAL, AND REMOTE RURAL SCHOOLS.—Not less
24 than 50 percent of the grant funds awarded under this
25 title shall be awarded to eligible partnerships that provides

1 assurances that the school partners in the eligible partner-
2 ship will ensure that each school to be served by the grant
3 is designated with a school locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42,
4 or 43, as determined by the Secretary.

5 **SEC. 304. USE OF FUNDS.**

6 (a) REQUIRED USE OF FUNDS.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible partnership re-
8 ceiving a grant under this title shall use such funds
9 to implement and evaluate the results of technology-
10 based learning practices, strategies, tools, or courses,
11 including the practices, strategies, tools, or courses
12 identified under paragraphs (2) through (6).

13 (2) TOOLS AND COURSES DESIGNED TO PER-
14 SONALIZE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE.—Tech-
15 nology-based tools and courses identified under this
16 paragraph include the following types of tools and
17 courses designed to personalize the learning experi-
18 ence:

19 (A) Technology-based personalized instruc-
20 tional systems.

21 (B) Adaptive software, games, or tools,
22 that can be used to personalize learning.

23 (C) Computer-based tutoring courses to
24 help struggling students.

1 (D) Games, digital tools, and smartphone
2 or tablet applications to improve students' en-
3 gagement, focus, and time on task.

4 (E) Other tools and courses designed to
5 personalize the learning experience.

6 (3) PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES DESIGNED TO
7 AID AND INFORM INSTRUCTION.—Technology-based
8 practices and strategies identified under this para-
9 graph include the following types of practices and
10 strategies designed to aid and inform instruction:

11 (A) Adaptive software, games, or tools that
12 can be used for the purpose of formative assess-
13 ment.

14 (B) Web resources that provide teachers
15 and their students access to instructional and
16 curricular materials that are—

17 (i) aligned with high-quality stand-
18 ards; and

19 (ii) designed to prepare students for
20 college and a career, such as a repository
21 of primary historical sources for use in his-
22 tory and civics courses or examples of de-
23 velopmentally appropriate science experi-
24 ments.

1 (C) Online professional development oppor-
2 tunities, teacher mentoring opportunities, and
3 professional learning communities.

4 (D) Tools or web resources designed to ad-
5 dress specific instructional problems.

6 (E) Other practices and strategies de-
7 signed to personalize the learning experience.

8 (4) TOOLS, COURSES, AND STRATEGIES DE-
9 SIGNED TO IMPROVE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF STU-
10 DENTS WITH SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.—
11 Technology-based tools, courses, and strategies iden-
12 tified under this paragraph include the following
13 types of tools, courses, and strategies designed to
14 meet the needs of students with specific educational
15 needs:

16 (A) Digital tools specifically designed to
17 meet the needs of students with a particular
18 disability.

19 (B) Online courses that give students who
20 are not on track to graduate or have already
21 dropped out of school the opportunity for accel-
22 erated credit recovery.

23 (C) Language instruction courses, games,
24 or software designed to meet the needs of
25 English language learners.

1 (D) Other tools, courses, and strategies de-
2 signed to personalize the learning experience.

3 (5) TOOLS, COURSES, AND STRATEGIES DE-
4 SIGNED TO HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP 21ST CEN-
5 TURY SKILLS.—Technology-based tools, courses, and
6 strategies identified under this paragraph include
7 peer-to-peer virtual learning opportunities to be used
8 for the purposes of project-based learning, deeper
9 learning, and collaborative learning, and other tools,
10 courses, and strategies designed to help students de-
11 velop 21st century skills, such as the ability to think
12 critically and solve problems, be effective commu-
13 nicators, collaborate with others, and learn to create
14 and innovate.

15 (6) TECHNOLOGY-BASED OR ONLINE COURSES
16 THAT ALLOW STUDENTS TO TAKE COURSES THAT
17 THEY WOULD NOT OTHERWISE HAVE ACCESS TO.—
18 Technology-based or online courses identified under
19 this paragraph include courses or collections of
20 courses approved by the applicable local educational
21 agency or State educational agency that provide stu-
22 dents with access to courses that they would not oth-
23 erwise have access to, such as the following:

24 (A) An online repository of elective
25 courses.

1 (B) Online or software-based courses in
2 foreign languages, especially in languages iden-
3 tified as critical or in schools where a teacher
4 is not available to teach the language or course
5 level a student requires.

6 (C) Online advanced or college-level
7 courses that can be taken for credit.

8 (b) AUTHORIZED USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible part-
9 nership receiving a grant under this title may use grant
10 funds to—

11 (1) develop or implement the technology for
12 technology-based learning strategies, practices,
13 courses, or tools to be carried out under the grant;

14 (2) purchase hardware or software needed to
15 carry out such strategies, practices, courses, or tools
16 under the grant, except that such purchases may not
17 exceed 50 percent of total grant funds;

18 (3) address the particular needs of student sub-
19 groups, including students with disabilities and
20 English-language learners;

21 (4) provide technology-based professional devel-
22 opment or professional development on how to maxi-
23 mize the utility of technology; and

24 (5) address issues of cost and capacity in rural
25 areas and shortage subjects.

1 (c) SUPPLEMENTATION.—An eligible partnership
2 that receives a grant under this title shall use the grant
3 funds to supplement, not supplant, the work of teachers
4 with students, and may not use such funds to reduce staff-
5 ing levels for the school partners in the eligible partner-
6 ship.

7 (d) TEACHER OF RECORD.—For each student in a
8 class or school implementing a practice, tool, strategy, or
9 course using grant funds provided under this title, there
10 shall be a teacher of record, holding the relevant certifi-
11 cation or license, and otherwise qualified to implement any
12 digitally based practice, tool, strategy or course using the
13 grant funds. An eligible partnership shall use grant funds
14 provided under this title, and shall determine the extent
15 and nature of pedagogical uses of digital tools, in a man-
16 ner that is consistent with the judgments of teachers of
17 record about what is developmentally appropriate for stu-
18 dents.

19 **SEC. 305. DATA COLLECTION AND EVALUATION.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible partnership receiv-
21 ing a grant under this title shall require its evaluation
22 partner to complete an independent, comprehensive, well-
23 designed, and well-implemented evaluation that meets the
24 standards of the What Works Clearinghouse after the

1 third year of implementation of the grant to measure the
2 effect of the practice, tool, strategy, or course on—

3 (1) growth in student achievement, as measured
4 by high quality assessments that provide objective,
5 valid, reliable measures of student academic growth
6 and information on whether a student is on-track to
7 graduate ready for college and career;

8 (2) costs and savings to the school partner; and

9 (3) at least one of the following:

10 (A) Student achievement gaps.

11 (B) Graduation and dropout rates.

12 (C) College enrollment.

13 (D) College persistence.

14 (E) College completion.

15 (F) Placement in a living-wage job.

16 (G) Enhanced teacher or principal effective-
17 tiveness as measured by valid, reliable, and
18 multiple measures of student achievement and
19 other appropriate measures.

20 (b) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall—

21 (1) acting through the Director of the Institute
22 of Education Sciences—

23 (A) evaluate the implementation and im-
24 pact of the activities supported under the grant
25 program authorized under this section; and

1 (B) identify best practices; and

2 (2) disseminate, in consultation with the re-
3 gional educational laboratories established under
4 part D of the Education Sciences Reform Act of
5 2002 and comprehensive centers established under
6 the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002,
7 research on best practices in school leadership.

8 (c) IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION.—An evaluation
9 partner may use funds under this title to carry out an
10 implementation evaluation designed to provide information
11 that may be useful for schools, local educational agencies,
12 States, consortia of schools, and charter school networks
13 seeking to implement similar practices, tools, strategies,
14 or courses in the future.

15 (d) PUBLICATION OF RESULTS.—Upon completion of
16 an evaluation described in subsection (a), (b), or (c) the
17 evaluation partner shall—

18 (1) submit a report of the results of the evalua-
19 tion to the Secretary; and

20 (2) make publicly available such results.

21 **SEC. 306. DEFINITIONS.**

22 In this title:

23 (1) DIGITAL LEARNING PARTNER.—The term
24 “digital learning partner” means an organization
25 with expertise in the technology required to develop

1 or implement the digital learning practices, tools,
2 strategies, or courses proposed by the school partner
3 with which the digital learning partner will partner
4 or has partnered under this title, such as—

5 (A) an institution of higher education;

6 (B) a nonprofit organization; or

7 (C) an organization with school develop-
8 ment or turnaround experience.

9 (2) ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIP.—The term “eligi-
10 ble partnership” means a partnership that includes
11 a school partner and not less than 1—

12 (A) digital learning partner, except that in
13 a case in which a school partner or evaluation
14 partner demonstrates expertise in digital learn-
15 ing to the Secretary; and

16 (B) evaluation partner.

17 (3) EVALUATION PARTNER.—The term “evalua-
18 tion partner” means a partner that has the expertise
19 and ability to carry out the evaluation of a grant re-
20 ceived under this title, such as—

21 (A) an institution of higher education;

22 (B) a nonprofit organization with expertise
23 in evaluation; or

24 (C) an evaluation firm.

1 (4) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
2 term “institution of higher education” has the
3 meaning given the term in section 102 of the Higher
4 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

5 (5) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term
6 “local educational agency” has the meaning given
7 the term in section 9101 of the Elementary and Sec-
8 ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

9 (6) SCHOOL PARTNER.—The term “school part-
10 ner” means a—

11 (A) local educational agency;

12 (B) a charter school network that does not
13 include virtual schools;

14 (C) a consortium of public elementary
15 schools or secondary schools;

16 (D) a regional educational service agency
17 or similar regional educational service provider;
18 or

19 (E) a consortium of the entities described
20 in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

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

1 **TITLE IV—ELEMENTARY AND**
2 **SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT**
3 **AMENDMENTS**

4 **SEC. 401. OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR**
5 **RURAL LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart 2 of part E of title IX
7 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
8 (20 U.S.C. 7901 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
9 the following:

10 **“SEC. 9537. OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR**
11 **RURAL LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES.**

12 “(a) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall engage in out-
13 reach to rural local educational agencies regarding oppor-
14 tunities to apply for competitive grant programs under
15 this Act.

16 “(b) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—If requested to do
17 so, the Secretary shall provide technical assistance to rural
18 local educational agencies with locale codes 32, 33, 41, 42,
19 or 43, or an educational service agency representing rural
20 local educational agencies with locale codes 32, 33, 41, 42,
21 or 43 on applications or pre-applications for any competi-
22 tive grant program under this Act. No rural local edu-
23 cational agency or education service agency shall be re-
24 quired to request technical assistance or include any tech-

1 nical assistance provided by the Secretary in any applica-
 2 tion.”.

3 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of con-
 4 tents for such Act is amended by inserting after the item
 5 relating to section 9536 the following:

“Sec. 9537. Outreach and technical assistance for rural local educational agen-
 cies.”.

6 **SEC. 402. RURAL CONSOLIDATED PLAN.**

7 Section 9305 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
 8 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7845) is amended by add-
 9 ing at the end the following:

10 “(e) RURAL CONSOLIDATED PLAN.—

11 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Two or more eligible local
 12 educational agencies, a consortium of eligible local
 13 education service agencies, or an education service
 14 agency on behalf of eligible local educational agen-
 15 cies may submit plans or applications for one or
 16 more covered programs to the State educational
 17 agency on a consolidated basis, if each eligible local
 18 educational agency impacted elects to participate in
 19 the joint application or elects to allow the edu-
 20 cational service agency to apply on its behalf.

21 “(2) ELIGIBLE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGEN-
 22 CY.—For the purposes of this subsection, the term
 23 ‘eligible local educational agency’ means a local edu-

1 cational agency that is an eligible local educational
 2 agency under part B of title VI.”.

3 **TITLE V—EXPANDED LEARNING** 4 **OPPORTUNITIES**

5 **SEC. 501. EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.**

6 Subtitle D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural De-
 7 velopment Act is amended by inserting after section 365
 8 (7 U.S.C. 2008) the following:

9 **“SEC. 366. EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.**

10 “(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to en-
 11 hance expanded learning time opportunities in rural areas
 12 by helping communities—

13 “(1) to establish expanded learning time oppor-
 14 tunities, including after-school programs; and

15 “(2) to improve existing programs by over-
 16 coming barriers to service.

17 “(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

18 “(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible en-
 19 tity’ means a local educational agency (as such term
 20 is defined in section 9101 of the Elementary and
 21 Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
 22 7801)), educational service agency, community-based
 23 organization, another public or private entity, or a
 24 consortium of 2 or more such agencies, organiza-
 25 tions, or entities.

1 “(2) EXPANDED LEARNING TIME.—The term
2 ‘expanded learning time’ means using a longer
3 school day, week, or year schedule to significantly
4 increase the total number of school hours, in order
5 to include additional time for—

6 “(A) instruction and enrichment in core
7 academic subjects, other academic subjects, and
8 other activities that contribute to a well-round-
9 ed education; and

10 “(B) instructional and support staff to col-
11 laborate, plan, and engage in professional devel-
12 opment (including professional development on
13 family and community engagement) within and
14 across grades and subjects.

15 “(3) RURAL AREA.—The term ‘rural area’
16 means an area that is served by an elementary or
17 secondary school that is designated with a school lo-
18 cale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43, as determined by
19 the Secretary of Education.

20 “(c) GRANTS.—

21 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall make
22 grants to eligible entities to improve, expand, or es-
23 tablish expanded learning time programs, and after-
24 school programs (taking place during non-school
25 hours), in rural areas.

1 “(2) REQUIREMENT.—Each grant under this
2 section shall be in an amount of not less than
3 \$25,000.

4 “(d) DURATION.—

5 “(1) TERM OF GRANT.—The term of a grant
6 under this section may not be for less than 3 years.

7 “(2) RENEWAL.—The Secretary may renew a
8 grant under this section for a period of not less than
9 3 years, based on the performance of the eligible en-
10 tity during the previous grant term.

11 “(e) USES.—As a condition of the receipt of a grant
12 under this section, an eligible entity shall use the grant
13 to fund projects and activities described in subsection (c),
14 including transportation, professional development, train-
15 ing, recruitment and retention of staff, staff compensation
16 for additional hours worked, increasing access to tech-
17 nology, and planning.

18 “(f) EVALUATION.—The Secretary may use not more
19 than 1 percent of the funds under this section—

20 “(1) to conduct evaluations of the effectiveness
21 of programs and activities assisted under subsection
22 (c); and

23 “(2) to disseminate the results of those evalua-
24 tions for the purpose of refining, improving, and
25 strengthening programs.

1 “(g) OUTREACH, TRAINING, AND TECHNICAL AS-
 2 SISTANCE.—The Secretary may use not more than 3 per-
 3 cent of the funds made available to carry out this sec-
 4 tion—

5 “(1) to conduct outreach, including bidders’
 6 conferences, to ensure widespread knowledge of the
 7 availability of resources described in subsection (c);

8 “(2) to disseminate information on best prac-
 9 tices and successful program models for serving chil-
 10 dren and youth in rural areas; and

11 “(3) to provide capacity building, training, and
 12 technical assistance to after-school programs and
 13 providers in rural areas.

14 “(h) APPLICATION.—

15 “(1) IN GENERAL.—To be considered for a
 16 grant under this section, each eligible entity shall
 17 submit to the Secretary an application at such time,
 18 in such manner, and accompanied by such informa-
 19 tion as the Secretary may require.

20 “(2) CONTENTS.—An application submitted
 21 pursuant to paragraph (1) shall include—

22 “(A) a description of the expanded learn-
 23 ing time program to be funded, including—

1 “(i) an assurance that the program
2 will take place in a safe and easily acces-
3 sible facility;

4 “(ii) a description of how children and
5 youth participating in the program will
6 travel safely between the program site and
7 home;

8 “(iii) a description of how the eligible
9 entity will disseminate information about
10 the program, including the location of the
11 program, to the community in a manner
12 that is understandable and accessible;

13 “(iv)(I) a description of the services to
14 be provided to children and youth, which
15 may include a broad array of activities,
16 such as—

17 “(aa) academic enrichment and
18 youth development activities;

19 “(bb) drug and violence preven-
20 tion programs;

21 “(cc) counseling programs;

22 “(dd) art, music, physical fitness,
23 and recreational programs;

24 “(ee) technology education pro-
25 grams;

1 “(ff) character education pro-
2 grams; and

3 “(gg) service-learning programs;

4 “(II) the roles and responsibilities of
5 the partners in providing the services; and

6 “(III) how the services enhance an ex-
7 isting expanded learning time program;
8 and

9 “(v) an assurance that the program
10 will provide a nutritious snack or meal that
11 meets nutrition standards established by
12 the Secretary;

13 “(B) an assurance that the proposed pro-
14 gram was developed, and will be carried out, in
15 active collaboration with the schools the stu-
16 dents attend;

17 “(C) an assurance that funds provided
18 under this section will be used to increase the
19 level of State, local, and other non-Federal
20 funds that would, in the absence of funds under
21 this section, be made available for programs
22 and activities authorized under this section, and
23 in no case supplant Federal, State, local, or
24 non-Federal funds;

1 “(D) a description of the partnership be-
2 tween a local educational agency, a community-
3 based organization, or another public entity or
4 private entity, if applicable; and

5 “(E) such additional assurances as the
6 Secretary determines to be necessary to ensure
7 compliance with this section.

8 “(i) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall give priority to
9 applications that—

10 “(1) propose partnerships between 2 or more el-
11 igible entities; or

12 “(2) propose that a majority of the students
13 participating in the expanded learning time program
14 are eligible for free or reduced price school meals
15 under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch
16 Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) and section 4 of the
17 Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1773).

18 “(j) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act shall be
19 construed to alter or otherwise affect the rights, remedies,
20 and procedures afforded to employees of a school or local
21 educational agency under Federal, State, or local laws (in-
22 cluding applicable regulations or court orders as well as
23 requirements that school districts negotiate and meet and
24 confer in good faith) or under the terms of collective bar-
25 gaining agreements, memoranda of understanding, or

1 other agreements between such employers and their em-
2 ployees.

3 “(k) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
4 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this sec-
5 tion—

6 “(1) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2016;

7 “(2) \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2017; and

8 “(3) such sums as are necessary for each of fis-
9 cal years 2018 through 2020.”.

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