

106TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1868

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

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## 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

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## 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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