

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1096

To provide for improved educational opportunities in low-income and rural schools and districts, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 20, 2001

Mr. JOHN (for himself, Mr. GORDON, Mr. BISHOP, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. HILLEARY, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. KIND, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. CLAYTON, Mr. CLEMENT, Mr. BERRY, Mr. STENHOLM, Mr. PHELPS, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. BOYD, Mr. SHOWS, Mr. BOUCHER, Mr. TANNER, Mr. BAKER, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. FROST, and Mr. CHAMBLISS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To provide for improved educational opportunities in low-income and rural schools and districts, 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”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

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

1 (1) While there are rural education initiatives
2 identified at the State and local level, no Federal
3 education policy focuses on the specific needs of
4 rural school districts and schools, especially those
5 that serve poor students.

6 (2) The National Center for Educational Statis-
7 tics (NCES) reports that while 46 percent of our
8 Nation's public schools serve rural areas, they only
9 receive 22 percent of the Nation's education funds
10 annually.

11 (3) A critical problem for rural school districts
12 involves the hiring and retention of qualified admin-
13 istrators and certified teachers (especially in special
14 education, science, and mathematics). Consequently,
15 teachers in rural schools are almost twice as likely
16 to provide instruction in two or more subjects than
17 teachers in urban schools. Rural schools also face
18 other tough challenges, such as shrinking local tax
19 bases, high transportation costs, aging buildings,
20 limited course offerings, and limited resources.

21 (4) Data from the National Assessment of Edu-
22 cational Progress (NAEP) consistently shows large
23 gaps between the achievement of students in high-
24 poverty schools and those in other schools. High-pov-
25 erty schools face special challenges in preparing

1 their students to reach high standards of perform-
2 ance on State and national assessments.

3 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to provide
4 rural school students in the United States with increased
5 learning opportunities.

6 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) The terms “elementary school”, “local edu-
9 cational agency”, and “State educational agency”
10 have the meanings given such terms in section
11 14101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education
12 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 8801).

13 (2) The term “eligible local educational agency”
14 means a local educational agency that serves—

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

18 “(B)(i) only schools designated by the Sec-
19 retary with a school locale code of 6, 7, or 8;
20 or

21 (ii) a school-age population of 800 or
22 fewer.

23 (3) The term “poverty line” has the meaning
24 given such term by section 673(2) of the Community

1 Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) appli-
2 cable to a family of the size involved.

3 (4) The term “rural area” means the area de-
4 fined by the Secretary using school locale codes 6,
5 7, and 8.

6 (5) The term “school-age population” means
7 the number of students aged 5 through 17.

8 (6) The term “school locale code” has the
9 meaning given such term by the Secretary.

10 (7) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary
11 of Education.

12 (8) The term “specially qualified agency”
13 means an eligible local educational agency, located in
14 a State that does not participate in a program under
15 this Act in a fiscal year, that may apply directly to
16 the Secretary for a grant in such year under section
17 4(a)(3).

18 **SEC. 4. RURAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE AUTHORIZED.**

19 (a) GRANTS TO STATES.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
21 graph (3), from the amount appropriated under sec-
22 tion 10 and not reserved under subsection (c) for a
23 fiscal year, the Secretary shall award grants to State
24 educational agencies that have applications approved
25 under section 5 to enable such agencies to award

1 grants to eligible local educational agencies for local
2 authorized activities described in subsection (c).

3 (2) FORMULA.—

4 (A) IN GENERAL.—Each State educational
5 agency that receives a grant under this section
6 shall receive an amount that bears the same re-
7 lation to the amount of funds appropriated
8 under section 10 that are not reserved under
9 subsection (c) for a fiscal year as the number
10 of students in average daily attendance served
11 by eligible local education agencies in the State
12 bears to the number of all such students served
13 by eligible local education agencies in all States
14 for that fiscal year.

15 (B) DATA.—In determining the school-age
16 population under subparagraph (A) the Sec-
17 retary shall use the most recent data available
18 from the Bureau of the Census.

19 (3) DIRECT AWARDS TO SPECIALLY QUALIFIED
20 AGENCIES.—If a State educational agency elects not
21 to participate in the program under this Act or does
22 not have an application approved under section 5,
23 the Secretary may award, on a competitive basis, the
24 amount the State educational agency is eligible to

1 receive under paragraph (2) directly to specially
2 qualified agencies in the State.

3 (b) LOCAL AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—Funds made
4 available under this Act may be used for—

5 (1) local educational technology efforts as de-
6 scribed in section 3134 of the Elementary and Sec-
7 ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6844);

8 (2) professional development activities designed
9 to prepare teachers who are teaching out of their
10 primary subject area;

11 (3) academic enrichment programs described in
12 section 10204 of the Elementary and Secondary
13 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 8034);

14 (4) innovative academic enrichment programs
15 related to the educational needs of students at-risk
16 of academic failure, including remedial instruction in
17 one or more of the core subject areas of English,
18 mathematics, science, and history; and

19 (5) activities to recruit and retain highly quali-
20 fied teachers in special education, mathematics, or
21 science.

22 (c) RESERVATION OF FUNDS.—From the amount ap-
23 propriated under section 10 for a fiscal year, the Secretary
24 shall reserve 0.5 percent to make awards to elementary

1 or secondary schools operated or supported by the Bureau
2 of Indian Affairs to carry out the purpose of this Act.

3 (d) **RELATION TO OTHER FEDERAL FUNDING.**—

4 Funds received under this Act by a State educational
5 agency or a specially qualified agency shall not be taken
6 into consideration in determining the eligibility for, or
7 amount of, any other Federal funding awarded to such
8 agency.

9 **SEC. 5. APPLICATIONS.**

10 Each State educational agency or specially qualified
11 agency desiring a grant under this Act shall submit an
12 application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner,
13 and accompanied by such information as the Secretary
14 may require. Such application shall include specific meas-
15 urable goals and objectives relating to increased student
16 academic achievement, decreased student drop-out rates,
17 or such other factors that the State educational agency
18 or specially qualified agency may choose to measure.

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

20 (a) **AWARD BASIS.**—A State educational agency that
21 receives funds under this Act shall award grants to eligible
22 local educational agencies or provide assistance to schools
23 described in subsection (b)(2)—

24 (1) on a competitive basis; or

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

5 **SEC. 7. ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.**

6 A State educational agency or specially qualified
7 agency that receives funds under this Act may not use
8 more than 5 percent of the grant funds for State activities
9 or administrative costs related to the program.

10 **SEC. 8. REPORTS.**

11 (a) STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY REPORTS.—

12 (1) CONTENTS.—Each State educational agen-
13 cy that receives a grant under this Act shall submit
14 an annual report to the Secretary describing—

15 (A) the methods the State educational
16 agency used to award grants to eligible local
17 educational agencies under this Act;

18 (B) how eligible local educational agencies
19 and schools used funds provided under this Act;
20 and

21 (C) the degree to which progress has been
22 made toward meeting the goals and objectives
23 described the application submitted under sec-
24 tion 5.

1 (2) AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary shall make
2 available the annual State reports received under
3 paragraph (1) for dissemination to the Congress, in-
4 terested parties (including educators, parents, stu-
5 dents, and advocacy and civil rights organizations),
6 and the public.

7 (b) SPECIALLY QUALIFIED AGENCY REPORTS.—
8 Each specially qualified agency that receives a grant under
9 this Act shall submit an annual report to the Secretary
10 describing how such agency used funds received under this
11 Act to coordinate with other Federal, State, and local pro-
12 grams.

13 (c) REPORT BY SECRETARY TO CONGRESS.—The
14 Secretary shall prepare and submit to Congress an annual
15 report which shall describe—

16 (1) the methods the State educational agency
17 used to award grants to eligible local educational
18 agencies and to provide assistance to schools under
19 this Act;

20 (2) how eligible local educational agencies used
21 funds provided under this Act; and

22 (3) progress made by State educational agen-
23 cies and eligible local educational agencies receiving
24 assistance under this Act in meeting specific, an-
25 nual, measurable performance goals and objectives

1 established by such agencies for activities assisted
2 under this Act.

3 **SEC. 9. ACCOUNTABILITY.**

4 If, at the end of the third consecutive year in which
5 a State educational agency or specially qualified agency
6 receives funds under this Act, the Secretary determines
7 that such agency has not substantially met its perform-
8 ance goals and objectives described in the application sub-
9 mitted under section 5, such agency shall be ineligible to
10 receive additional funds under this Act for a period of one
11 year after the date of such determination.

12 **SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

13 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
14 this Act \$300,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2002
15 through 2005.

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