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119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 10631

To provide grants to local educational agencies to help public schools reduce class size in the early elementary grades, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 28, 2026

Mrs. MCBATH (for herself, Ms. BROWN, and Ms. NORTON) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

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A BILL

To provide grants to local educational agencies to help public schools reduce class size in the early elementary grades, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Smaller Class Sizes for Students and Educators Act of 2026''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ESEA TERMS.—The terms ''elementary school'', ''local educational agency'', ''poverty line'',

"professional development", and "State" have the meanings given the terms in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(2) EARLY ELEMENTARY GRADES.—The term "early elementary grades" means kindergarten through grade 3.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Education.

(4) TARGETED SCHOOL.—The term "targeted school" means a public elementary school served by a local educational agency that is in the highest quartile of all public elementary schools served by the local educational agency based on the number of students enrolled in the school who are eligible for a free or reduced price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.).

SEC. 3. REDUCING CLASS SIZE IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 3 CLASSROOMS.

(a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts made available under subsection (g), the Secretary shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to local educational

agencies to enable the local educational agencies to reduce class sizes in the early elementary grades.

(2) DURATION OF GRANT.—A grant awarded under this section shall be for a period of 5 years.

(b) APPLICATION.—A local educational agency that desires a grant under this section shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require, including the local educational agency's evidence-based plan to reduce class sizes in the early elementary grades that includes the following:

(1) A description of—

(A) how the local educational agency will reduce the class sizes in the early elementary grades in the targeted schools served by the local educational agency to not more than 18 students per class, including—

(i) the early elementary grade levels that will be supported under the grant;

(ii) how the agency will take into consideration the needs of subgroups of students (as defined in section 1111(c)(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311(c)(2))), grade level, subject area, physical facilities,

and workload maximums for educators when determining class size maximums; and

(iii) how the local educational agency will determine or define class size; and

(B) the continuum of small class sizes based on grade level the local educational agency will provide for students in the early elementary grades in the targeted schools served by the local educational agency.

(2) A description of how the local educational agency will recruit, hire, prepare, and retain educators, including educators from populations underrepresented in the teaching profession (including by racial, ethnic, or linguistic group), as teachers in the early elementary grades.

(3) A description of how the local educational agency will provide professional development and training for teachers in the early elementary grades to improve students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health outcomes.

(4) A description of how the local educational agency will provide educators with sufficient preparation time during the school year for activities such as analyzing student work, instruction and assess-

ment planning, or curriculum and instruction-specific professional development.

(5) A description of how the local educational agency will ensure that any new teachers hired using grant funds meet all applicable State certification and licensure requirements.

(6) In the case of a local educational agency that is using funds available under part A of title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6611 et seq.) for class size reduction, information regarding the extent to which the funds are being used to reduce class size in the early elementary grades in targeted schools.

(7) The average class size, by grade, in the early elementary grades of the public schools served by the local educational agency at the time the application is submitted and during the prior 2 academic years, and the goals for the class size, by grade, in the early elementary grades of the public schools served by the local educational agency.

(c) AWARD BASIS.—In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to local educational agencies serving the greatest number or percentage of students who are from families with incomes at or below the poverty line.

(d) USE OF FUNDS.—

(1) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—A local educational agency receiving a grant under this section may use not more than 3 percent of the grant funds for the administrative expenses of the grant.

(2) REDUCING CLASS SIZE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A local educational agency shall use not less than 97 percent of the grant funds to reduce class sizes in the early elementary grades at targeted schools served by the local educational agency by—

(i) recruiting, hiring, and supporting fully certified and qualified teachers, both general education teachers and teachers of children with disabilities, for the early elementary grades at the targeted schools;

(ii) obtaining additional space, or renovating school buildings, to provide more classroom space, except that not more than 15 percent of the funds provided under the grant may be used for this purpose;

(iii) providing professional development for teachers of the early elementary grades at the targeted schools, except that not more than 15 percent of the funds pro-

vided under the grant may be used for this purpose; and

(iv) developing feedback mechanisms to improve school working conditions, including through periodically and publicly reporting results of educator support and working conditions feedback.

(B) HIGHEST NEED.—In carrying out activities under the grant, the local educational agency shall first prioritize targeted schools that serve the highest percentage of students from families with incomes at or below the poverty line, and then prioritize such schools with the highest average class sizes in the early elementary grades.

(e) REPORTING.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(A) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES.—Each local educational agency receiving a grant under this section shall prepare and submit to the State in which the agency is located an annual report on activities carried out under grant, including progress in reaching the goals in reducing class size described in the application under subsection (b)(7).

(B) STATES.—A State that receives a report under subparagraph (A) shall submit such report to the Secretary.

(2) EVALUATION.—The Secretary, acting through the Director of the Institute of Education Sciences, shall conduct an evaluation of the activities carried out under grants awarded under this section, including an evaluation of—

(A) the progress of the local educational agency in reducing class size in the early elementary grades at the targeted schools served by the local educational agency;

(B) student academic achievement in the early elementary grades of the targeted schools receiving support through the local educational agency under the grant where pre- and post-assessment data is available;

(C) a climate study of—

(i) teachers in such targeted schools that addresses working conditions, job satisfaction, and teacher stress; and

(ii) students, and parents of students, enrolled in such targeted schools;

(D) teacher qualifications for newly hired teachers in such targeted schools for class size reduction;

(E) targeted professional development and training provided to newly hired teachers in targeted schools for class size reduction;

(F) the time added to be used for teachers to collaborate in targeted schools;

(G) teacher chronic absenteeism and retention and turnover rates pre- and post-class size reduction efforts; and

(H) rates of student discipline and chronic student absenteeism.

(3) ANNUAL REPORTS BY THE SECRETARY.—By not later than 90 days after the date by which the reports under paragraph (1) are first due, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall prepare and submit a report to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Education and Workforce of the House of Representatives regarding the grants awarded under this section.

(f) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—A local educational agency receiving funds under this section shall use such funds to supplement, and not supplant, any other

1 funds available to the local educational agency for the pur-
2 poses of reducing class size in the early elementary grades.
3 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
4 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
5 $2,000,000,000 for the first fiscal year after the date of
6 enactment of this Act and such sums as are necessary for
7 each succeeding fiscal year.

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