

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To establish an Educational Equity Challenge Grant program administered  
by the Department of Education.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. WARREN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred  
to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To establish an Educational Equity Challenge Grant program  
administered by the Department of Education.

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 “Educational Equity  
5 Challenge Grant Act of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. EDUCATIONAL EQUITY CHALLENGE GRANT PRO-**  
7 **GRAM.**

8       (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9           (1) EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY.—The  
10 term “educational service agency” has the meaning

1 given the term in section 8101 of the Elementary  
2 and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
3 7801).

4 (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-  
5 ty”—

6 (A) means—

7 (i) a local educational agency;

8 (ii) a consortium of local educational  
9 agencies;

10 (iii) a State educational agency;

11 (iv) an educational service agency;

12 (v) a partnership between a nonprofit  
13 organization, including a provider of early  
14 childhood education, an institution of high-  
15 er education, a community-based organiza-  
16 tion, or a national intermediary, and 1 or  
17 more local educational agencies; or

18 (vi) the Bureau of Indian Education;

19 and

20 (B) shall not include any for-profit entity.

21 (3) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The  
22 term “institution of higher education” has the  
23 meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher  
24 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

1           (4) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term  
2           “local educational agency” has the meaning given  
3           the term in section 8101 of the Elementary and Sec-  
4           ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

5           (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
6           the Secretary of Education.

7           (6) STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term  
8           “State educational agency” has the meaning given  
9           the term in section 8101 of the Elementary and Sec-  
10          ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

11          (b) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary  
12          shall establish an Educational Equity Challenge Grant  
13          program through which the Secretary awards grants to  
14          eligible entities to—

15               (1) adopt and implement evidence-based activi-  
16               ties, strategies, and interventions to address aca-  
17               demic, social-emotional, mental, behavioral, and  
18               physical health needs associated with the COVID–19  
19               pandemic that meet the standard of evidence de-  
20               scribed in section 8101(21)(A)(i) of the Elementary  
21               and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
22               7801(21)(A)(i)); or

23               (2) design or replicate and implement field- and  
24               educator-initiated proposals to address academic, so-  
25               cial-emotional, mental, behavioral, and physical

1 health needs associated with the COVID–19 pan-  
2 demic that—

3 (A) are independently evaluated by the  
4 grantee for efficacy; and

5 (B) meet the standard of evidence de-  
6 scribed in section 8101(21)(A)(i) of the Ele-  
7 mentary and Secondary Education Act of 1965  
8 (20 U.S.C. 7801(21)(A)(i)).

9 (c) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—

10 (1) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—The Sec-  
11 retary may use not more than 5 percent of funds  
12 available to carry out this section for administration  
13 of the Educational Equity Challenge Grant program,  
14 including technical assistance, collaboration with  
15 other relevant agencies, and dissemination of best  
16 practices.

17 (2) RESERVATION FOR TRIBES.—From  
18 amounts appropriated to carry out this section for a  
19 fiscal year and not used under paragraph (1), the  
20 Secretary shall reserve 5 percent to award grants to  
21 the outlying areas and the Bureau of Indian Edu-  
22 cation to carry out activities described in this section  
23 in schools operated or funded by the Bureau of In-  
24 dian Education.

1           (3) EVIDENCE-BASED AND FIELD-INITIATED  
2 PROPOSALS.—From the funds remaining after car-  
3 rying out paragraphs (1) and (2), in awarding  
4 grants under this section, the Secretary shall ensure  
5 that—

6           (A) 75 percent of the grant funds are  
7 awarded to evidence-based proposals, as de-  
8 scribed in subsection (b)(1); and

9           (B) 25 percent of the grant funds are  
10 awarded to field- and educator-initiated pro-  
11 posals, as described in subsection (b)(2).

12           (4) RURAL AREAS.—

13           (A) IN GENERAL.—From the funds re-  
14 maining after carrying out paragraphs (1) and  
15 (2), in awarding grants under this section, the  
16 Secretary shall ensure that not less than 25  
17 percent of the grant funds are awarded to eligi-  
18 ble entities—

19           (i) that have a locale code of 32, 33,  
20 41, 42, or 43, as determined by the Sec-  
21 retary; or

22           (ii) for which a majority of the schools  
23 to be served by the program funded by the  
24 grant awarded under this section to such  
25 an eligible entity are designated with a lo-

1           cale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43, or a  
2           combination of such codes, as determined  
3           by the Secretary.

4           (B) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding sub-  
5           paragraph (A), the Secretary shall reduce the  
6           amount of funds made available under such  
7           subparagraph if the Secretary does not receive  
8           a sufficient number of applications of sufficient  
9           quality.

10          (5) LOW-INCOME STUDENTS.—

11           (A) IN GENERAL.—From the funds re-  
12           maining after carrying out paragraphs (1) and  
13           (2), in awarding grants under this section, the  
14           Secretary shall ensure that not less than 50  
15           percent of the grant funds are awarded to eligi-  
16           ble entities that serve student populations in  
17           which 20 percent or more of school-age children  
18           live in low-income families, according to the  
19           most recent Small Area Income and Poverty  
20           Estimates of the Bureau of the Census.

21           (B) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding sub-  
22           paragraph (A), the Secretary shall reduce the  
23           amount of funds made available under such  
24           subparagraph if the Secretary does not receive

1 a sufficient number of applications of sufficient  
2 quality.

3 (6) RURAL AND LOW-INCOME STUDENTS.—An  
4 eligible entity that is described in paragraph (4)(A)  
5 and also described in paragraph (5)(A) may count  
6 as an eligible entity under both paragraphs for pur-  
7 poses of the requirements under such paragraphs.

8 (d) PUBLICATION OF APPLICATION.—Not later than  
9 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
10 retary shall—

11 (1) publish the applications for grants under  
12 this section; and

13 (2) post on the public website of the Depart-  
14 ment of Education resources regarding identified  
15 evidence-based activities, strategies, and interven-  
16 tions.

17 (e) APPLICATIONS.—An eligible entity that desires to  
18 receive a grant under this section shall submit an applica-  
19 tion to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and  
20 accompanied by such information as the Secretary may  
21 require, including the following:

22 (1) Identification by the eligible entity of the in-  
23 equities experienced by students during the COVID-  
24 19 pandemic, including the impact on academic  
25 progress and social-emotional, mental, behavioral,

1 and physical health needs, identified through trauma-informed academic, social-emotional, and health  
2 needs assessments or assessments used in multi-  
3 tiered systems of support. Where possible, applicants  
4 shall utilize existing assessments and validated tools,  
5 such as surveys, to avoid duplicative or excessive  
6 student testing.  
7

8 (2) The differential impact of the COVID–19  
9 pandemic on increased academic, social-emotional,  
10 mental, and physical health needs for specific groups  
11 of students, including low-income students, students  
12 of color and Native American students, homeless  
13 students, migrant students, students in foster care,  
14 English learners, students involved with the juvenile  
15 justice system, and students with disabilities, and  
16 other specific groups identified in section  
17 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) of the Elementary and Secondary  
18 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
19 6311(b)(2)(B)(xi)), in a manner that protects personally identifiable information.  
20

21 (3) The evidence-based strategies the eligible  
22 entity will use to address these inequities if applying  
23 for a grant described in subsection (b)(1).

24 (4) How academic, social-emotional, mental, behavioral, and physical health, access to accelerated  
25



1 student learning and mastery of content, and related  
2 outcomes will be measured, including how the eligi-  
3 ble entity will use existing assessments and validated  
4 tools, such as surveys, to avoid duplicative or exces-  
5 sive student testing.

6 (5) How the eligible entity will partner and seek  
7 ongoing feedback with the parents, families, teach-  
8 ers, paraprofessionals, local stakeholders, and com-  
9 munity members, including those from marginalized  
10 communities, to identify academic, social-emotional,  
11 mental, behavioral, and physical health needs of stu-  
12 dents and collaborate on provision of high-quality  
13 services where appropriate.

14 (6) How the proposed strategies and interven-  
15 tions will accelerate student learning, promote mas-  
16 tery of content, and expand student access to and  
17 opportunity for well-rounded, culturally and linguis-  
18 tically responsive, and rigorous standards-aligned  
19 curricula.

20 (7) Identification by the eligible entity of the  
21 mental and physical health impacts on school staff  
22 during the COVID–19 pandemic.

23 (8) A proposed detailed budget, including how  
24 the applicant plans to distribute funds among

1 schools and groups of students identified as highest  
2 need.

3 (9) For eligible entities that intend to carry out  
4 field- and educator-initiated proposals described in  
5 subsection (b)(2), a proposal for conducting an inde-  
6 pendent evaluation of the effectiveness of the pro-  
7 posal.

8 (f) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this sec-  
9 tion, the Secretary shall give priority to applicants serving  
10 disproportionately higher percentages of high-need stu-  
11 dents, including low-income students, students of color  
12 and Native American students, homeless students, mi-  
13 grant students, students in foster care, English learners,  
14 students involved with the juvenile justice system, stu-  
15 dents with disabilities, and students that have been dis-  
16 proportionately affected by COVID–19.

17 (g) USES OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives  
18 a grant under this section shall carry out 1 of the fol-  
19 lowing:

20 (1) Implementation of evidence-based activities,  
21 strategies, and interventions that meet the require-  
22 ments described in section 8101(21)(A)(i) of the El-  
23 elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20  
24 U.S.C. 7801(21)(A)(i)), which shall include at least  
25 1 of the following:

1 (A) Developing, administering, and using  
2 high-quality, universally designed assessments  
3 that are valid and reliable, to accurately assess  
4 students' academic needs and progress and as-  
5 sist educators in meeting students' academic  
6 needs, including through differentiating instruc-  
7 tion, progress monitoring, and providing profes-  
8 sional development on how to develop univer-  
9 sally designed, high-quality assessments that  
10 are aligned with curricula or how to effectively  
11 implement and use existing high-quality assess-  
12 ments for these purposes.

13 (B) Supporting social and emotional learn-  
14 ing, including through integrated systems of  
15 support, counseling, and the explicit teaching of  
16 cognitive, social, and emotional skills and com-  
17 petencies, by building social and emotional in-  
18 struction into all classes, and which may in-  
19 clude instituting restorative practices.

20 (C) Implementing school- and district-wide  
21 practices that support students holistically, in-  
22 cluding mental health services, early interven-  
23 tion and prevention practices, trauma-informed  
24 practices, and efforts to improve family engage-  
25 ment and staff well-being.

1 (D) Implementing culturally and linguis-  
2 tically responsive practices.

3 (E) Extending instructional time, which  
4 may include—

5 (i) before or after school programs  
6 and extending the school day or year, in-  
7 cluding through summer learning pro-  
8 grams; or

9 (ii) high-quality distance instruction,  
10 during non-traditional school days and  
11 hours (including during the summer), in-  
12 cluding providing professional development  
13 to support effective, personalized instruc-  
14 tion.

15 (F) Implementing high-quality structured  
16 individual or small group tutoring.

17 (G) Implementing and providing profes-  
18 sional development on the use of rigorous, cul-  
19 turally and linguistically competent, universally  
20 designed, and well-rounded curriculum.

21 (H) Recruiting and supporting racially,  
22 ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse,  
23 well-prepared educators, including those with  
24 disabilities, through comprehensive State-ac-  
25 credited teacher preparation programs.

1 (I) Implementing programs that promote  
2 school racial and socioeconomic integration and  
3 diversity and effective inclusion of students with  
4 disabilities.

5 (2) Design or replication and implementation of  
6 field- and educator-initiated proposals—

7 (A) that meet the standard of evidence de-  
8 scribed in section 8101(21)(A)(ii) of the Ele-  
9 mentary and Secondary Education Act of 1965  
10 (20 U.S.C. 7801(21)(A)(ii));

11 (B) that demonstrate a promising ap-  
12 proach;

13 (C) that include family and educator input  
14 into their design and implementation; and

15 (D) that include activities, strategies, or  
16 interventions that are independently evaluated  
17 and published by the grantee for efficacy.

18 (h) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION FOR COLLECTIVE BAR-  
19 GAINING.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to  
20 alter or otherwise affect the rights, remedies, and proce-  
21 dures afforded to school or local educational agency em-  
22 ployees under Federal, State, or local laws (including ap-  
23 plicable regulations or court orders) or under the terms  
24 of collective bargaining agreements, memoranda of under-

1 standing, or other agreements between such employers  
2 and their employees.

3 (i) INDEPENDENT EVALUATIONS.—An eligible entity  
4 that receives a grant for activities described in subsection  
5 (b)(2) shall—

6 (1) conduct an independent evaluation for effi-  
7 cacy, which shall—

8 (A) estimate the impact of the interven-  
9 tions carried out under the grant (as imple-  
10 mented at the proposed level of scale on a rel-  
11 evant outcome for individual groups of stu-  
12 dents); and

13 (B) be made broadly available digitally and  
14 free of charge, through formal (including peer-  
15 reviewed journals) and informal (including  
16 newsletters) mechanisms and through posting  
17 on the Department of Education’s public  
18 website; and

19 (2) cooperate with any technical assistance pro-  
20 vided by the Department of Education or the con-  
21 tractor of the Department and comply with the re-  
22 quirements of any evaluation of the program con-  
23 ducted by the Department.

24 (j) REPORTS.—

1           (1) GRANTEES.—An eligible entity that receives  
2 a grant under this section shall submit an annual re-  
3 port to the Secretary describing—

4                   (A) the proposed and actual uses of funds,  
5 including a description of how much funding  
6 supported which evidence-based interventions;

7                   (B) how funds were used and their effect  
8 on student access to accelerated student learn-  
9 ing, mastery of content and social-emotional,  
10 mental, behavioral, and physical health out-  
11 comes, which may include success measures  
12 such as school culture surveys, workplace cul-  
13 ture surveys, family feedback, and existing di-  
14 agnostic or formative assessments,  
15 disaggregated by the specific groups identified  
16 in section 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) of the Elementary  
17 and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20  
18 U.S.C. 6311(b)(2)(B)(xi)), in a manner that  
19 protects personally identifiable information;

20                   (C) how the State educational agency or  
21 local educational agency distributed funds, in-  
22 cluding any formula or methodology that was  
23 used, to schools served by such agency to meet  
24 the academic, social-emotional, mental, behav-  
25 ioral, and physical health needs of students who

1 have been disproportionately affected by  
2 COVID–19 and school closures, including stu-  
3 dents from low-income families, children with  
4 disabilities, English learners, students of color,  
5 students experiencing homelessness, children  
6 and youth in foster care, migrant children, and  
7 students involved with the juvenile justice sys-  
8 tem; and

9 (D) how the grant funds were supple-  
10 mented with State and local funds targeted to  
11 disproportionately affected students as de-  
12 scribed in subparagraph (B), including funds  
13 appropriated through State formula grants to  
14 local educational agencies.

15 (2) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Beginning 1 year  
16 after the first grants are awarded under this section,  
17 and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit  
18 and digitally publish a report to Congress detail-  
19 ing—

20 (A) the basis on which grants were award-  
21 ed;

22 (B) eligible entities that received grants  
23 and amount of funding received by each grant-  
24 ee;



1 (C) the proposed and actual uses of funds,  
2 including a description of how much funding  
3 supported which evidence-based interventions;

4 (D) available outcomes related to student  
5 learning and social-emotional, mental, behav-  
6 ioral, and physical health, disaggregated by the  
7 specific groups identified in section  
8 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) of the Elementary and Sec-  
9 ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
10 6311(b)(2)(B)(xi)), in a manner that protects  
11 personally identifiable information; and

12 (E) the technical assistance activities of  
13 the Department of Education and costs of these  
14 activities, dissemination costs, and costs of  
15 other activities supported by the set-aside for  
16 the Department of Education.

17 (k) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
18 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this sec-  
19 tion—

20 (1) \$15,000,000,000 for each of the fiscal years  
21 2021 through 2023;

22 (2) \$10,000,000,000 for each of the fiscal years  
23 2024 through 2027; and

24 (3) \$5,000,000,000 for each of the fiscal years  
25 2028 through 2030.