

## Educational Equity Challenge Grant Act

### The Problem

Public schools across the nation have long lacked sufficient funding and resources to provide all students with a high-quality public education. This challenge has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which [worsened pre-existing achievement gaps](#) for students in low-income communities and communities of color, leading to [instructional loss and increased mental health challenges](#).

Increased school funding has [supported](#) post-COVID-19 educational recovery, but data [shows](#) that students are still half a year behind their pre-pandemic achievement levels and were even further behind in reading in 2024 than they were in 2022. The performance of students in the bottom quartile has been [steadily decreasing](#) since 2013 even as higher-achieving students have begun to recover from the impact of the pandemic. The compounded effect of both pre-existing inequities and the COVID-19 pandemic on students' academic and social development have proven to be [lingering](#), and more support is necessary to assist schools in fully recovering.

### The Educational Equity Challenge Grant Act

*The Educational Equity Challenge Grant Act* creates a **\$100 billion** application-based grant program administered by the Department of Education over the next **ten years** to accelerate academic progress and address social, emotional, mental, behavioral, and physical health needs, including those associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. This long-term program complements crucial short-term relief funds for schools previously provided by Congress and will encourage high-quality, evidence-based programs to ensure students have access to the tools they need to recover and thrive throughout their academic careers.

States, school districts, nonprofits in partnership with school districts, and the Bureau of Indian Education can apply for grants for one of two purposes:

- 1. Implement Evidence-Based Strategies:** 75% of funds are reserved for grantees to adopt programs that meet a high bar of evidence, which may include supporting social-emotional learning, implementing culturally and linguistically responsive practices, extending instructional time, and implementing high-quality individual or small-group tutoring.
- 2. Support Field- and Educator-Initiated Innovations:** 25% of funds are reserved for grantees to develop or replicate new ideas and strategies designed by educators in the field to accelerate academic progress and address social, emotional, mental, behavioral, and physical health needs, including those associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Grantees must include an independent evaluation for efficacy.

*The Educational Equity Challenge Grant Act* reserves funds for the Bureau of Indian Education, rural areas, and applicants serving low-income students. The Department must also give priority to applicants serving disproportionately higher percentages of high-need students, including low-income students, students of color and Native American students, homeless students, migrant students, students in foster care, English learners, and students with disabilities.