

# S. 8

To create new programs and initiatives as well as authorize previously successful programs to ensure educational access and increased modernization for schools across the United States, and prepare educators and students for the challenges of the 21st century.

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Ms. LICKINGTON (for herself) introduced the following bill.

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## AN ACT

To create new programs and initiatives as well as authorize previously successful programs to ensure educational access and increased modernization for schools across the United States, and prepare educators and students for the challenges of the 21st century.

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

### SEC 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as; “The Educational Access and Modernization Act of 2023” or; “TEAM Act of 2023”.

### SEC 2. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS

#### A. FINDINGS - Congress finds the following:

- a. In the 21st century, students, teachers, and school districts across the nation require ready access to modern and state-of-the-art technology, and educational resources to ensure that students are prepared for the unique challenges of modern-day society.
- b. Access to technology and high-speed internet can be a major hurdle for students across the nation to gain adequate access to digital resources and proper preparation for life in the 21st century.
- c. Increased career preparation programs and curriculums can assist students in gaining important career and life skills for an ever-changing and evolving global economic landscape.

- d. Professional development among teachers leads to a more well-rounded educational experience for students and more effective learning outcomes.

### **SEC 3. AMENDING AND REAUTHORIZATION OF THE “CODE ACT OF 2021”**

- A. IN GENERAL. — This section reauthorizes the CODE Act of 2021 with additional funding to continue the program as well as corrects an error in the original act.
- B. AMENDING.— H.R. 26 of the 137th Congress entitled “Computers for Opportunity Development in Education Act of 2021” otherwise cited as the “[CODE Act of 2021](#)” shall be amended by the following;
  - a. Replace the word “countries” in Section 4 Subsection (b) with the word “companies.”
- C. FUNDING. —A total sum of 2,000,000,000 is herein appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the October 2023 fiscal month, for the purposes of the administration of the provisions of the “CODE Act of 2021”, to remain available until expended.
- D. EFFECTIVE DATE.— The provisions of this section shall come into effect one month after passage.

### **SEC 4. CREATION OF THE CLASSROOM BROADBAND ACCESS GRANT PROGRAM**

- A. IN GENERAL. — This section authorizes the creation of the Classroom Broadband Access Grant Program and authorizes funds for the Department of Education to allocate funding in accordance with the provisions of this section.
- B. DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this section:
  - a. “Broadband” means the FCC standard of 1mbps a second per student.
- C. ESTABLISHMENT OF GRANT PROGRAM.—The Department of Education shall establish a grant program for the purpose of providing funding to public schools, private schools, and charter schools (referred to in this section as “eligible entities”) for the modernization of classrooms with broadband internet access.
- D. REASONING AND METHODS — For the purposes of the section, these reasonings and methods have been used to calculate the total required funds for this proposal.
  - a. In 2022, over 67% of all schools had access to broadband internet compared to when only 4.3 million students had access to speeds over 100kbps. This means that of the 73 million students in the United States, over 24 million students do not have access to broadband internet.
  - b. The average cost for a K-12 student to have access to broadband internet access of over 1mbps in the United States is \$2.26. This equates to over \$54 million dollars.

- c. By rounding up by an extra \$46 million dollars to account for any cost overruns and administrative costs, the amount of \$100 million dollars would be more than satisfactory to cover the costs for the 24 million students who do not have ready access to broadband speeds.
- E. USE OF FUNDS.—Funds provided under the grant program may be used for the following purposes:
  - a. Purchasing state-of-the-art technology equipment and software for classrooms.
  - b. Upgrading internet connectivity in classrooms to support high-speed broadband internet access.
  - c. Providing professional development for teachers and staff on the effective use of technology in the classroom.
  - d. Implementing modern teaching and learning practices that leverage technology to enhance the learning experience for students.
  - e. Grant funds may not be used for over 50% of the total of any individual program creation without special authorization from the Department of Education on a need-to-need basis.
- F. APPLICATION.—Eligible entities seeking funding under the grant program shall submit an application to the Department of Education in such form and manner as the Department may prescribe. The application shall include a detailed plan for the use of the funds, including (1) a budget, (2) a timeline for implementation, and (3) a plan for the implementation of grant funds.
- G. SELECTION CRITERIA.—The Department of Education shall establish selection criteria for the award of grants under the grant program, which shall include the following:
  - a. The need for broadband internet access in classrooms.
  - b. The impacts that the potential grant would have on the expansion of broadband internet in the digital learning environment.
  - c. The commitment of the eligible entity to maintaining the technology and internet connectivity and providing ongoing professional development for teachers and staff.

- H. **REPORTING.**—Eligible entities that receive funding under the grant program established under the provisions of this section shall submit a report to the Department of Education on the use of the funds and the impact of the individual learning experience.
- I. **EVALUATION.**— The Department of Education shall conduct an evaluation of the grant program established under the provisions of this section to assess the effectiveness of the program.
- J. **AUTHORIZATION AND APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS** — A total sum of 100,000,000 is herein appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the October 2023 fiscal month, for the purposes of the administration of the provisions of this section.
- K. **EFFECTIVE DATE** — The provisions of this section shall come into full effect one month after passage.

## **SEC 5. CREATION OF THE INTERDISCIPLINARY AND CRITICAL THINKING GRANT PROGRAM**

- A. **IN GENERAL.** — This section establishes the Interdisciplinary and Critical Thinking Program as proposed in S.17 of the 168th Congress, and authorizes the Department of Education to allocate funding in accordance with the provisions of this section.
- B. **DEFINITIONS.** — In this section:
  - a. "Eligible entity" means a local educational agency (LEA), which includes public school districts, a state educational agency (SEA), which encompasses state departments and boards of education; a public or private nonprofit agency or organization with a demonstrated record in providing educational services or programs; or a consortium of these entities that form a joint agreement to pool resources for the execution of the proposed project.
  - b. "Interdisciplinary learning" refers to a method of teaching and learning that integrates concepts and skills from multiple academic disciplines to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a complex topic or problem.
  - c. "Secretary" means the Secretary of Education.
- C. **ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GRANT PROGRAM** — The Secretary shall establish a grant program to promote interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity in K-12 education.
- D. **USE OF FUNDS.**— Grant funds may be used to:
  - a. Develop and implement interdisciplinary curricula that emphasize critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
  - b. Train teachers in methods for teaching interdisciplinary content and critical thinking skills.
  - c. Purchase materials or technology necessary for implementing interdisciplinary learning.

- d. Evaluate the impact of the grant program on student learning outcomes.
- e. Grant funds may not be used for over 50% of the total of any individual program creation without special authorization from the Department of Education on a need-to-need basis.

E. APPLICATION. —

- a. SUBMISSION — An eligible entity seeking a grant under this Act shall submit an application to the Secretary in such form, and containing such information, as the Secretary may prescribe.
- b. CONTENTS.— The application shall include, at a minimum:
  - i. A description of the proposed project, including the specific goals and expected outcomes.
  - ii. An explanation of how the project will promote interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity.
  - iii. A plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the project.
- c. REVIEW PROCESS.— The Secretary shall establish a review process for grant applications, which may include peer review, to ensure that grants are awarded to the most deserving and innovative projects.

F. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM — The Secretary shall also establish a professional development program for K-12 teachers to enhance their ability to teach interdisciplinary content and promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity.

- a. PROGRAM COMPONENTS — The program may include, but is not limited to:
  - i. In-person and online workshops providing comprehensive training in interdisciplinary teaching methodologies, development of critical thinking skills, problem-solving strategies, and fostering creativity.
  - ii. Creation and distribution of detailed resources and guidelines for implementing interdisciplinary learning and critical thinking in various classroom settings.
  - iii. A mentorship scheme where experienced teachers in the field of interdisciplinary learning can provide guidance to early-career teachers.
  - iv. Regular follow-up sessions for continual assessment and improvement of teaching practices.

- G. **EVALUATION AND REPORTING** — The Secretary shall contract with an independent organization to conduct an evaluation of the grant program and the professional development program. The Secretary shall also submit a report to Congress on the results of the evaluation and any recommendations for improving the programs.
- H. **AUTHORIZATION AND APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS** — There is authorized to be appropriated \$150,000,000 from the treasury for each of the fiscal years 2023 through 2028 to carry out this Act.
- I. **EFFECTIVE DATE** — The provisions of this section shall come into full effect one month after passage.

## **SEC 6. CREATION OF A CAREER READINESS GRANT PROGRAM**

- A. **IN GENERAL.** This section establishes the Career Readiness Grant Program as proposed in S.15 of the 168th Congress and authorizes the Department of Education to allocate funding in accordance with the provisions of this section.
- B. **PURPOSES.**—The purposes of this grant are—
  - a. to prioritize career readiness in our education system;
  - b. to provide funding for career readiness programs and initiatives;
  - c. to support the development of career readiness skills and knowledge among students
  - d. to promote partnerships between schools, employers, and community organizations to support career readiness.
- C. **REASONING AND METHODS** —
  - a. In order to calculate the appropriations necessary to fund this section, a thorough analysis of the requisite expenditures was conducted. It has been determined that there are approximately 130,000 public, private, and charter schools in the United States that would be eligible for the grant program. The average cost to develop and implement career readiness programs and initiatives per school was estimated to be \$50,000 with the grant program contributing no more than 50% of the total cost without special authorization from the Department of Education on a need-to-need basis.. This includes costs for professional development for teachers and staff, developing partnerships with employers and community organizations, and providing resources and support for students. Additionally, the administrative cost to administer the grant program, which includes reviewing applications, awarding grants, monitoring progress, and conducting evaluations, was estimated to be 5% of the total cost. Therefore, the total estimated cost to fund the grant program and administer it would be approximately \$4 billion.

- D. **ESTABLISHMENT OF GRANT PROGRAM.**—The Department of Education shall establish a grant program for the purpose of providing funding to public schools, private schools, and charter schools (referred to in this section as "eligible entities") for the development and implementation of career readiness programs and initiatives.
- E. **USE OF FUNDS.**—Funds provided under the grant program may be used for the following purposes:
- a. Developing and implementing career readiness programs and initiatives.
  - b. Providing professional development for teachers and
  - c. staff on career readiness instruction and best practices.
  - d. Developing partnerships with employers and community organizations to support career readiness.
  - e. Providing resources and support for students to explore and prepare for careers.
  - f. Grant funds may not be used for over 50% of the total of any individual program creation without special authorization from the Department of Education on a need-to-need basis.
- F. **APPLICATION.**—Eligible entities seeking funding under the grant program shall submit an application to the Department of Education in such form and manner as the Department may prescribe. The application shall include a detailed plan for the
- G. use of the funds, including a budget, a timeline for implementation, and a description of how the career readiness programs and initiatives will support students in preparing for the workforce.
- H. **SELECTION CRITERIA.**—The Department of Education shall establish selection criteria for the award of grants under the grant program, which shall include the following:
- a. The need for career readiness programs and initiatives in the community served by the eligible entity.
  - b. The potential impact of the career readiness programs and initiatives on the preparation of students for the workforce.
  - c. The commitment of the eligible entity to sustaining the career readiness programs and initiatives beyond the grant period.

- I. **EVALUATION AND REPORTING** — The Secretary shall contract with an independent organization to conduct an evaluation of career readiness programs and initiatives on the preparation of students for the workforce. The Secretary shall also submit a report to Congress on the results of the evaluation and any recommendations for improving the programs.
- J. **AUTHORIZATION AND APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS** — A total sum of 4,000,000,000 is herein appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the October 2023 fiscal month, for the purposes of the administration of the provisions of this section.
- K. **EFFECTIVE DATE** — The provisions of this section shall come into full effect one month after passage.

## **SEC 7. SUPREMACY.**

For the purposes of enacting this Act, any laws in conflict with this Act shall be immediately rescinded and rendered null and void.

## **SEC 8. SEVERABILITY.**

If any provision of this Act, or any amendment made by this Act, or the application of such provision to any person, entity, government, or circumstance, is held to be unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act, or any amendment made thereby, or the application of such provision to all other persons, entities, governments, or circumstances, shall not be affected thereby.

## **SEC 9. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This act shall come into force immediately upon either the signature of the President or passage by override of a Presidential Veto.