

# SENATE, No. 3031

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 215th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 7, 2013

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator M. TERESA RUIZ**

**District 29 (Essex)**

**Senator THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.**

**District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes Innovation Grant Program; appropriates \$5 million to DOE.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 11/15/2013)

1 AN ACT establishing an Innovation Grant Program in the  
2 Department of Education, supplementing chapter 6 of Title 18A  
3 of the New Jersey Statutes, and making an appropriation.  
4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
6 *of New Jersey:*  
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8 1. There is created a special fund in the Department of  
9 Education, which shall be designated the "Innovation Fund." The  
10 fund shall be maintained in a separate account and administered by  
11 the Commissioner of Education to carry out the provisions of this  
12 act. The fund shall be credited with the amount appropriated  
13 pursuant to section 4 of this act and any contributions made to the  
14 fund. All interest or other income or earnings derived from the  
15 investment or reinvestment of moneys in the fund shall be credited  
16 to the fund.  
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18 2. a. Within 90 days of the effective date of this act, the  
19 commissioner shall establish the Innovation Grant Program. Under  
20 the program, the commissioner shall award competitive grants to  
21 school districts seeking to develop and implement innovative  
22 educational practices including, but not limited to, extended  
23 learning time, personalization of instruction to meet students'  
24 individualized needs, and the use of educational technology to  
25 promote student readiness for college and career. The  
26 commissioner shall not award a grant to a school district to  
27 implement:

28 (1) a program in which teaching staff members receive  
29 compensation or bonuses on a competitive basis or based on  
30 achieving specified objectives; or

31 (2) a program in which instruction is provided to students via the  
32 Internet.

33 b. The commissioner shall establish a five-member Innovation  
34 Grant Program Advisory Committee. The members appointed to  
35 the advisory committee shall have expertise in education policy and  
36 practice, and at least one member shall be a representative of the  
37 New Jersey Education Association. No member of the advisory  
38 committee shall be an employee of, or consultant to, the Department  
39 of Education. The advisory committee shall advise the  
40 commissioner on the development, implementation, and assessment  
41 of the grant program.

42 c. As a condition of receiving a grant, the commissioner shall  
43 require a school district to participate in an innovation community.  
44 The purpose of the innovation community shall be to provide school  
45 districts that received a grant the opportunity to exchange  
46 information regarding the success and challenges associated with  
47 the implementation of the program.

- 1 d. The commissioner shall enter into an agreement with an  
2 independent entity to assess the effectiveness of the grant program.  
3 The assessment shall be conducted by an individual or entity  
4 primarily identified with expertise in the analysis of educational  
5 programs. The assessment shall include, but need not be limited to,  
6 the following:
- 7 (1) a description of the programs for which a grant was  
8 awarded, and a description of the programs for which an application  
9 was submitted to the commissioner, but did not receive funding;
  - 10 (2) a discussion of the objectives of the programs that have been  
11 implemented by school districts that received a grant;
  - 12 (3) a summary of any challenges encountered during the  
13 implementation of the program; and
  - 14 (4) an analysis of the degree to which the program objectives  
15 have been met.
- 16 e. The commissioner may retain up to 6.5% of the amount  
17 appropriated to the Innovation Fund pursuant to this act to  
18 administer the program.  
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- 20 3. a. A school district that elects to apply for a grant from the  
21 Innovation Fund shall establish a three-member innovation grant  
22 committee. At least one member of the committee shall be a  
23 representative of the collective bargaining unit that represents  
24 teaching staff members in the district. The committee shall  
25 recommend projects to the board of education to submit for  
26 approval for grant funding.
- 27 b. A school district shall not apply for a grant to implement a  
28 program that is inconsistent with any provision of an existing  
29 collective bargaining agreement into which the school district has  
30 entered. All terms and conditions of employment related to the  
31 implementation of a program shall be subject to collective  
32 bargaining.
- 33 c. A charter school established pursuant to the provisions of  
34 P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-1 et seq.) and a renaissance school  
35 project established pursuant to the provisions of P.L.2011, c.176  
36 (C.18A:36C-1 et seq.) shall not be eligible to apply for grant  
37 funding.  
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- 39 4. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
40 Department of Education the sum of \$5,000,000 to be credited to  
41 the "Innovation Fund" to effectuate the provisions of this act.  
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- 43 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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This bill establishes an Innovation Grant Program in the Department of Education, and appropriates \$5 million for its implementation. Under the bill, the Commissioner of Education will establish a competitive grant program under which school districts may apply for funding to develop innovative educational practices. The bill stipulates that the commissioner may not award a grant to a program that would compensate teaching staff members on a competitive basis or for achieving specified objectives, nor may a grant be awarded to a program that provides instruction to students via the Internet.

As part of the program, the commissioner will appoint a five-member advisory committee that will include individuals with expertise in education policy and practice, including one representative of the New Jersey Education Association. The committee will advise the commissioner on the program's development, implementation, and assessment. The commissioner would also be required to enter into an agreement with an independent entity to evaluate the program. Up to 6.5 percent of the appropriation may be retained by the commissioner to cover the costs of administering the program.

A school district that elects to apply for a grant would be required to establish a three-member innovation grant committee, in which at least one member would be a representative of the collective bargaining unit that represents teaching staff members. The committee would be responsible for recommending projects to the board of education for submission to the department for grant funding. A district may not apply for funding for a project that is inconsistent with the provisions of a collective bargaining agreement, and any terms and conditions related to the implementation of a program would be subject to collective bargaining. Charter schools and renaissance school projects would not be eligible to apply for a grant.