

# SENATE, No. 688

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2018 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator M. TERESA RUIZ**

**District 29 (Essex)**

**Senator JAMES BEACH**

**District 6 (Burlington and Camden)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senator Singleton**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes the four-year “New Jersey Early Innovation Inspiration School Grant Pilot Program” in DOE to fund non-traditional Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics programs for students in grades K through 8.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/17/2018)**

1    **AN ACT** establishing the “New Jersey Early Innovation Inspiration  
2       School Grant Pilot Program” in the Department of Education.

3

4       **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
5       *of New Jersey:*

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7       1.   This act shall be known and may be cited as the “New Jersey  
8       Early Innovation Inspiration School Grant Pilot Program Act.”

9

10      2.   As used in this act:

11       “Low-income student” means a student who qualifies for free or  
12       reduced price lunch under the federal school lunch program.

13       “Non-traditional STEM teaching method” means a STEM  
14       education method or strategy such as incorporating self-directed  
15       student-learning, inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning in  
16       small groups, collaboration with mentors in the field of study, and  
17       participation in STEM-related competitions.

18       “STEM” means science, technology, engineering, or  
19       mathematics.

20

21      3.   The Commissioner of Education shall develop and  
22       administer a four-year New Jersey Early Innovation Inspiration  
23       School Grant Pilot Program. The purpose of the pilot program shall  
24       be to award grants to school districts to:

25       a.   cultivate interest in the STEM fields at an early age;

26       b.   support non-traditional STEM teaching methods for students  
27       in grades kindergarten through 8;

28       c.   promote innovation and broaden interest in careers in the  
29       STEM fields by investing in programs supported by teachers and  
30       professional mentors; and

31       d.   encourage collaboration among students, engineers, and  
32       other professional mentors.

33       The grants shall be allocated to school districts on a competitive  
34       basis.

35

36      4.   a.   A school district that wants to apply for a grant under the  
37       pilot program shall submit an application to the commissioner. The  
38       application shall, at the minimum, include a description of how the  
39       school district will:

40       (1) implement STEM teaching programs for students in grades  
41       K through 8 that use a non-traditional STEM teaching method;

42       (2) identify and recruit partners and mentors to help implement  
43       the programs, and to assist students who participate in STEM  
44       programs, including through the use of technology;

45       (3) support teachers who lead the STEM programs, and  
46       participants in the programs, through stipends or other incentives;

1 (4) recruit young women and students from other populations  
2 historically underrepresented in the STEM fields to participate in  
3 the programs;

4 (5) identify public and private partners that can support the  
5 programs with cash or in-kind contributions;

6 (6) develop a plan for sustaining the programs financially  
7 beyond the grant period; and

8 (7) develop a method to evaluate the impact of the STEM  
9 teaching programs on participating students.

10 b. The commissioner shall award a one-time, up-front grant not  
11 to exceed \$150,000 to each of the six qualifying school districts to  
12 be used to implement the pilot program. The grant funds may be  
13 used by the school district for a period of up to four years. The  
14 commissioner shall award an equal number of grants to school  
15 districts located in the north, central, and southern regions of the  
16 State.

17 In awarding grants under the pilot program, the commissioner  
18 shall give priority to applications from school districts that propose  
19 to carry out activities that target:

20 (1) a rural or urban school;

21 (2) a low-performing school; or

22 (3) a school or school district that serves low-income students.

23 c. A school district that receives a grant may use the grant  
24 funds for any of the following:

25 (1) the promotion of STEM education and career activities;

26 (2) the purchase of supplies needed to support participation in  
27 non-traditional STEM teaching programs, such as robotics;

28 (3) to provide incentives and stipends for teachers involved in  
29 non-traditional STEM teaching methods outside of their regular  
30 teaching duties;

31 (4) to provide support and finance the expenses of student  
32 participation in regional and national nonprofit STEM competitions;

33 (5) to finance items such as equipment, facility use, technology,  
34 broadband access, and other expenses, directly associated with non-  
35 traditional STEM teaching and mentoring; and

36 (6) to carry out other activities that are related to the goals of the  
37 pilot program.

38 d. A school district that receives a grant under the pilot  
39 program shall provide district matching funds in an amount equal to  
40 25% of the grant amount. The district shall also secure matching  
41 funds or in-kind contributions from corporate donors or other  
42 private sector donors in an amount equal to 25% of the grant  
43 amount. The matching funds shall be used by the district to support  
44 the STEM-related activities outlined in the application submitted to  
45 the commissioner for grant funds.

46 e. Grant funds provided to a school district shall be used to  
47 supplement, and not supplant, funds used for STEM activities in the  
48 district at the time of the application for the grant.

c. The department shall seek to secure the use of such funds or other resources from the federal government or private nonprofit or for-profit sources to effectuate the purposes of this act as may be available therefor.

6. This act shall first take effect in the 2014-2015 school year, but the Commissioner of Education may take such anticipatory administrative action in advance thereof as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.

Under the pilot program, the commissioner will award a total of six one-time, up-front grants of up to \$150,000 each. In awarding the grants, the commissioner will give priority to applications from districts that intend to target activities in a rural or urban school, a low-performing school, or a school or school district that serves low-income students. The districts will be permitted to use the grant funds for a period of up to four years.

1       A school district that receives a grant is to use the funds to:  
2       promote STEM education and career activities; purchase supplies  
3       needed for participation in non-traditional STEM teaching  
4       programs; finance the expenses of student participation in regional  
5       and national nonprofit STEM competitions; and provide incentives  
6       and stipends for teachers involved in non-traditional STEM  
7       teaching methods outside of their regular teaching duties.  
8       The bill establishes the “Early Innovation Inspiration School  
9       Grant Fund” within the Department of Education to provide grants  
10      to school districts under the pilot program. A school district that  
11      receives a grant will provide district matching funds in an amount  
12      equal to 25% of the grant amount. In addition, the district must  
13      secure matching funds or in-kind contributions from corporate  
14      donors or other private sector donors in an amount equal to 25% of  
15      the grant amount.