

[First Reprint]

**SENATE, No. 2715**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**219th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED JULY 22, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator JAMES BEACH**

**District 6 (Burlington and Camden)**

**Senator KRISTIN M. CORRADO**

**District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

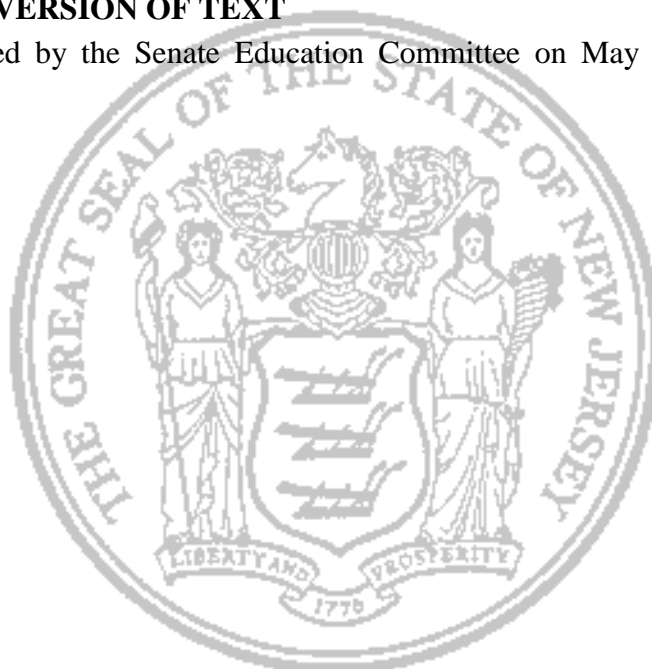
**Senators Pou, Turner and Ruiz**

**SYNOPSIS**

Creates grant program to encourage school districts to partner with institutions of higher education in training school-based mental health services providers.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As reported by the Senate Education Committee on May 13, 2021, with amendments.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/21/2021)**

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2

1 AN ACT establishing a grant program for the training of school-  
2 based mental health services providers and supplementing  
3 chapter 6 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

4

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

7

8 1. a. There is established in the Department of Education a grant  
9 program to assist school districts in the training of school-based mental  
10 health services providers, expand the pipeline of high-quality, trained  
11 providers, and address the shortages of mental health professionals in  
12 schools. As used in this section, “school-based mental health services  
13 provider” means a State-licensed or State-certified school counselor,  
14 school psychologist, school social worker, or other State-licensed or  
15 State-certified mental health professional qualified under State law to  
16 provide mental health services to children and adolescents.

17 b. Grants under the program shall be awarded on a competitive  
18 basis. School districts <sup>1</sup>or groups of school districts<sup>1</sup> that receive a  
19 grant under the program shall use the funds for efforts to create and  
20 grow programs and partnerships that train students who are attending  
21 graduate school to become school-based mental health services  
22 providers.

23 c. To be eligible for consideration of a grant award under the  
24 program, a school district <sup>1</sup>or a group of school districts seeking to  
25 participate in the program together<sup>1</sup> shall submit an application to the  
26 Commissioner of Education, in accordance with application  
27 procedures and requirements prescribed by the commissioner. A  
28 school district <sup>1</sup>or a group of school districts<sup>1</sup> applying for a grant  
29 award under the program shall, prior to submitting an application,  
30 form a partnership with one or more institutions of higher education  
31 that offer graduate programs in school-based mental health fields. The  
32 partnership shall allow a student enrolled in an institution of higher  
33 education’s graduate program to perform applicable fieldwork, credit  
34 hours, internships, externships, or other related training as applicable  
35 for the academic program of the student.

36 A grant application submitted by a school district <sup>1</sup>or a group of  
37 school districts<sup>1</sup> shall include information regarding the following:

38 (1) the details of the partnership formed between the school district  
39 <sup>1</sup>or group of school districts<sup>1</sup> and an institution of higher education,  
40 including plans for supervising the graduate students in school settings  
41 and ensuring that the students are trained in providing mental health  
42 supports and services to students in the school district <sup>1</sup>or districts<sup>1</sup>;

43 (2) a description of how the lack of school-based mental health  
44 services providers is affecting students in the school district <sup>1</sup>or  
45 districts<sup>1</sup>;

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Senate SED committee amendments adopted May 13, 2021.

- 1 (3) the school <sup>1</sup>**【district’s】** district or districts<sup>1</sup> unmet need for  
2 student mental health supports and services;
- 3 (4) the number of school-based mental health services providers  
4 currently employed by the school district <sup>1</sup>or districts<sup>1</sup> and their  
5 caseloads;
- 6 (5) the existing ratio of school-based mental health services  
7 providers to students enrolled in the district <sup>1</sup>or districts<sup>1</sup>;
- 8 (6) the schools and student populations that will benefit from the  
9 grant funding;
- 10 (7) the objectives for the number of graduate students the school  
11 district <sup>1</sup>**【anticipates】** or school districts anticipate<sup>1</sup> training under the  
12 grant program;
- 13 (8) plans to collaborate with federal, State, regional, and local  
14 entities to expand the pipeline of school-based mental health services  
15 providers and achieve partnership goals and objectives; and
- 16 (9) any other information as required by the commissioner.
- 17 d. (1) The commissioner shall establish selection criteria for the  
18 awarding of grants under the program, including consideration of the  
19 information listed in subsection c. of this section. Grants shall be  
20 awarded based upon review of the applications and subject to the  
21 availability of funds. The commissioner shall establish the amount for  
22 each grant that is approved.
- 23 (2) Priority for grants awarded under the program shall be given to  
24 <sup>1</sup>**【high-need】** school districts <sup>1</sup>that demonstrate an unmet need for  
25 mental health services in the school community<sup>1</sup>. <sup>1</sup>**【The**  
26 Commissioner of Children and Families, in consultation with the  
27 Commissioner of Education, shall establish criteria for designating  
28 high-need school districts based upon evidence that the school district  
29 is located in an area of the State that has significant mental health  
30 needs that are not currently being met.**】**<sup>1</sup>
- 31 e. The Department of Education shall annually apply for and use  
32 any federal grant funds or other federal assistance which may be  
33 available to be used for the grant program established pursuant to this  
34 section including, but not limited to, funds under the federal Mental  
35 Health Service Professional Demonstration Grant Program <sup>1</sup>**【and】** <sup>1</sup>  
36 the federal “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security  
37 (CARES) Act,” Pub.L.116-136 <sup>1</sup>, the federal “Coronavirus Response  
38 and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021,”  
39 Pub.L.116-260, and the federal “American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of  
40 2021,” Pub.L.117-2<sup>1</sup>. The department may, if applicable, apply for  
41 federal grant funds or other federal assistance on behalf of one or more  
42 school districts approved for participation in the grant program  
43 established pursuant to this section. Any federal grant funds or other  
44 federal assistance awarded to the department shall first be used to  
45 provide grant awards to school districts, prior to using State funds  
46 under the grant program established pursuant to this section.

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1 f. Within three years after receiving a grant award under the  
2 program, a school district <sup>1</sup>or a group of school districts<sup>1</sup> shall submit  
3 a report to the Commissioner of Education containing information on  
4 the <sup>1</sup>【district's】<sup>1</sup> use of the grant funds. The report shall include, at a  
5 minimum, information on the number of graduate students trained  
6 under the program, the number of graduate students who were hired as  
7 school-based mental health services providers using grant funds,  
8 increases or improvements in the provision of student mental health  
9 supports and services as a result of the grant, and any notable changes  
10 in school climate, attendance rates, student achievement, school  
11 discipline, or other measures since receiving the grant.

12

13 2. The Commissioner of Education shall submit a report to the  
14 Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of  
15 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than four years after the  
16 establishment of the grant program established pursuant to section 1 of  
17 this act. The report shall include, but need not be limited to,  
18 information on the number of grant applicants, the number and  
19 amounts of the grant awards, information provided by school districts  
20 <sup>1</sup>and groups of school districts<sup>1</sup> in the reports submitted pursuant to  
21 subsection f. of section 1 of this act, and any recommendations  
22 concerning the continuation or expansion of the grant program.

23

24 3. The State Board of Education shall adopt, pursuant to the  
25 “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et  
26 seq.), rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of  
27 this act.

28

29 4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to  
30 the first full school year following the date of enactment.