

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 2715

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

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:

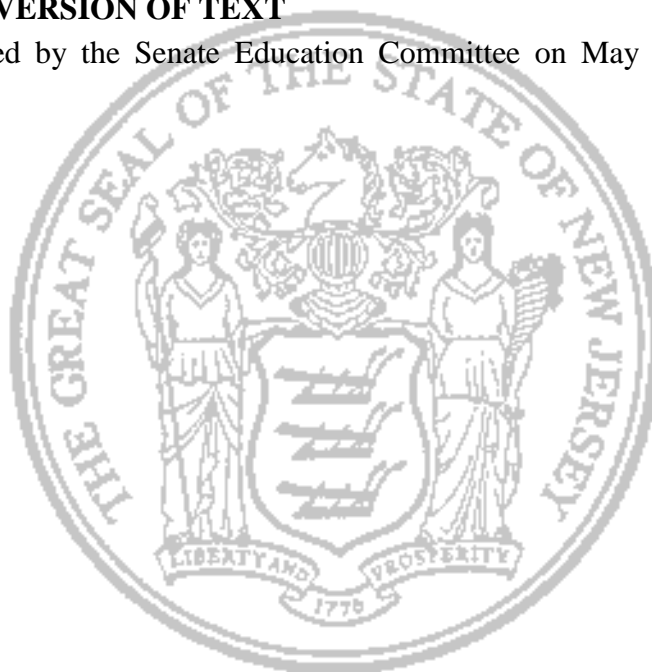
Senators Pou, Turner, Ruiz and Greenstein

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: 12/20/2021)

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 ¹or groups of school districts¹ 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 ¹or a group of school districts seeking to
25 participate in the program together¹ 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 ¹or a group of school districts¹ 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 ¹or a group of
37 school districts¹ shall include information regarding the following:

38 (1) the details of the partnership formed between the school district
39 ¹or group of school districts¹ 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 ¹or districts¹;

43 (2) a description of how the lack of school-based mental health
44 services providers is affecting students in the school district ¹or
45 districts¹;

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:

¹Senate SED committee amendments adopted May 13, 2021.

1 (3) the school ¹**["district's"]** district or districts¹ 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 ¹or districts¹ and their
5 caseloads;

6 (5) the existing ratio of school-based mental health services
7 providers to students enrolled in the district ¹or districts¹;

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 ¹**["anticipates"]** or school districts anticipate¹ 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 ¹**["high-need"]** school districts ¹that demonstrate an unmet need for
25 mental health services in the school community¹. ¹**["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.**"]**¹

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 ¹**["and"]** ¹
36 the federal "Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
37 (CARES) Act," Pub.L.116-136 ¹, 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.117-2¹. 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.

1 f. Within three years after receiving a grant award under the
2 program, a school district ¹or a group of school districts¹ shall submit
3 a report to the Commissioner of Education containing information on
4 the ¹**【district's】**¹ 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 ¹and groups of school districts¹ 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.