

**SENATE, No. 2870**

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

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator NICHOLAS P. SCUTARI**

**District 22 (Middlesex, Somerset and Union)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes Education Rescue Grant Program in DOE to support qualified personnel costs of school districts impacted by COVID-19 pandemic.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



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2

1 AN ACT establishing the Education Rescue Grant Program to  
2 support the qualified personnel costs of school districts impacted  
3 by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 the  
9 Education Rescue Grant Program to support the qualified personnel  
10 costs of school districts impacted by the outbreak of the COVID-19  
11 pandemic.

12 b. If a school district terminates, or is expected to terminate,  
13 the employment of one or more teaching staff members as a result  
14 of the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the school  
15 district may apply to the Commissioner of Education for an  
16 Education Rescue Grant to support the costs of rehiring or retaining  
17 the teaching staff member, or if such person is not able to be  
18 rehired, the costs of hiring a similarly qualified teaching staff  
19 member. The proceeds of each grant shall be dedicated to the  
20 salaries, not including fringe benefits or other non-monetary  
21 compensation, payable to the teaching staff members by the  
22 recipient school district.

23 c. In addition to any other information required by the  
24 commissioner, the application submitted by a school district shall  
25 include:

26 (1) the number of teaching staff members that would be hired,  
27 rehired, or retained through the grant;

28 (2) the position of each teaching staff member who would be  
29 hired, rehired, or retained through the grant;

30 (3) the total salaries, not including fringe benefits or other non-  
31 monetary compensation, paid to the persons employed in each  
32 position set forth in the grant application during the most recent 12  
33 months of employment with the school district; and

34 (4) a detailed description of the fiscal condition of the school  
35 district, including an explanation of how the financial impact of the  
36 COVID-19 pandemic would otherwise necessitate the termination  
37 of each teaching staff member.

38 d. (1) A grant shall be awarded in an amount determined by  
39 the commissioner, except that the amount shall not exceed the total  
40 salaries, not including fringe benefits and other non-monetary  
41 compensation, paid to the persons employed in each position set  
42 forth in the grant application during the most recent 12 months of  
43 employment with the school district.

44 (2) If the commissioner determines that the fiscal condition of  
45 an applicant school district does not necessitate the termination of  
46 one or more teaching staff members, the commissioner shall reject  
47 the grant application or reduce the amount awarded to the school  
48 district.

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1 (3) When awarding grants, the commissioner may give  
2 preference to applicants that experienced the greatest fiscal distress  
3 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, or applicants that dedicate  
4 funding to support the employment of teaching staff members in  
5 specific types of positions.

6 e. If the commissioner determines that a recipient school  
7 district has used a grant for an unauthorized purpose, or the school  
8 district has terminated the employment of a teaching staff member,  
9 whose position was funded through the grant, within 12 months of  
10 receiving the grant, the commissioner shall require the school  
11 district to repay the amount of the grant to the Department of  
12 Education according to a repayment schedule established by the  
13 commissioner.

14 f. Notwithstanding any provision of P.L.1968, c.410  
15 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), or any other law to the contrary, the  
16 commissioner may adopt, immediately upon filing with the Office  
17 of Administrative Law and no later than the 90th day after the  
18 effective date of this act, such rules and regulations as the  
19 commissioner deems necessary to implement the provisions of this  
20 act, which regulations shall be effective for a period not to exceed  
21 12 months. The regulations shall, at a minimum, set forth the  
22 requirements for application submissions, the criteria for  
23 application selections, and the eligible uses of grant funds. The  
24 regulations shall thereafter be amended, adopted, or readopted by  
25 the commissioner in accordance with the provisions of P.L.1968,  
26 c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.).

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28 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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**STATEMENT**

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33 This bill establishes the Education Rescue Grant Program to  
34 support the qualified personnel costs of school districts impacted by  
35 the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

36 Under the bill, if a school district terminates, or is expected to  
37 terminate, the employment of one or more teaching staff members  
38 as a result of the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the  
39 school district may apply to the Commissioner of Education for an  
40 Education Rescue Grant to support the costs of rehiring or retaining  
41 the teaching staff member, or if such person is unable to be rehired,  
42 the costs of hiring a similarly qualified teaching staff member. The  
43 bill requires each grant to be dedicated to the salaries, not including  
44 fringe benefits or other non-monetary compensation, paid by the  
45 recipient school district to the teaching staff members.

46 In addition to any other information required by the  
47 commissioner, the bill requires a school district's grant application  
48 to include:

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1 (1) the number of teaching staff members that would be hired,  
2 rehired, or retained through the grant;

3 (2) the position of each teaching staff member who would be  
4 hired, rehired, or retained through the grant;

5 (3) the total salaries, not including fringe benefits or other non-  
6 monetary compensation, paid to the persons employed in each  
7 position set forth in the grant application during the most recent 12  
8 months of employment with the school district; and

9 (4) a detailed description of the fiscal condition of the school  
10 district, including an explanation of how the financial impacts of  
11 the COVID-19 pandemic would otherwise necessitate the  
12 termination of each teaching staff member.

13 The bill provides that each grant would be awarded in an amount  
14 determined by the commissioner, except that the amount may not  
15 exceed the total salaries, not including fringe benefits and other  
16 non-monetary compensation, paid to the persons employed in each  
17 position set forth in the grant application during the most recent 12  
18 months of employment with the school district. However, if the  
19 commissioner determines that the fiscal condition of an applicant  
20 school district does not necessitate the termination of one or more  
21 teaching staff members, the commissioner would be required to  
22 reject the grant application or reduce the amount awarded to the  
23 school district.

24 When awarding grants, the bill also permits the commissioner to  
25 give preference to applicants that experienced the largest fiscal  
26 distress as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, or applicants that  
27 dedicate funding to support the employment of teaching staff  
28 members in specific types of positions.

29 Additionally, if the commissioner determines that a recipient  
30 school district has used a grant for an unauthorized purpose, or the  
31 school district has terminated the employment of a teaching staff  
32 member, whose position was funded through the grant, within 12  
33 months of receiving the grant, the bill requires the school district to  
34 repay the amount of the grant to the Department of Education  
35 according to a repayment schedule established by the  
36 commissioner.