

[Second Reprint]

**ASSEMBLY, No. 2455**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**218th LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 3, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON**

**District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)**

**Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE**

**District 37 (Bergen)**

**Assemblyman WAYNE P. DEANGELO**

**District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)**

**Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN**

**District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)**

**Senator STEVEN V. OROHO**

**District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)**

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Assemblywoman Carter, Assemblyman Stanley, Assemblywomen Jasey,  
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DiMaso, Senators Pou, Thompson, Bateman, Turner, Assemblymen Space,  
Wirths, Assemblywomen Murphy, McKnight, Assemblyman Houghtaling,  
Assemblywomen Downey and Lopez**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes pilot program in DOE to support robotics programs in school districts.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As amended on November 8, 2021 by the General Assembly pursuant to the Governor's recommendations.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/2/2021)

1 AN ACT establishing a robotics competition pilot program in the  
2 Department of Education.

3

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

6

7 1. a. The Commissioner of Education shall establish a three-year  
8 pilot program that provides grant funding to <sup>1</sup>encourage and support<sup>1</sup>  
9 school districts to <sup>1</sup>establish <sup>2</sup>For Inspiration and Recognition of  
10 Science and Technology (FIRST) nonprofit organization's<sup>2</sup> robotics  
11 programs and<sup>1</sup> participate in <sup>2</sup>[<sup>1</sup>a<sup>1</sup> FIRST Robotics]<sup>2</sup>  
12 [Competitions] <sup>2</sup>[<sup>1</sup>Competition<sup>1</sup>] robotics competitions<sup>2</sup>. The  
13 purpose of the pilot program shall be to:

14 (1) increase opportunities for students to participate in <sup>2</sup>[<sup>1</sup>a<sup>1</sup>  
15 FIRST Robotics]<sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup>[<sup>1</sup>[Competitions] Competition<sup>1</sup>] robotics  
16 competitions<sup>2</sup>;

17 (2) motivate students to pursue education and career opportunities  
18 in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and

19 (3) improve students' knowledge in the fields of science,  
20 technology, engineering, and mathematics.

21 b. <sup>2</sup>(1) The Commissioner of Education shall identify one or more  
22 eligible nonprofit organizations to assist school districts selected to  
23 participate in the pilot program in developing robotics programs and  
24 participating in robotics competitions. The commissioner shall  
25 compile a list of eligible nonprofit organizations available to partner  
26 with school districts and incorporate the contents of the list into the  
27 application created pursuant to paragraph (2) of this subsection.  
28 Nonprofit organizations included on the list shall offer technical  
29 assistance to participating schools, including mentor-based assistance  
30 in establishing a robotics program to develop science, technology,  
31 engineering, and mathematical skills for students. A school district  
32 that applies to participate in the pilot program shall partner with a  
33 nonprofit organization on the list.

34 <sup>2</sup>(2)<sup>2</sup> A school district that wants to participate in the pilot program  
35 shall submit an application to the commissioner in such form as  
36 required by the commissioner. The school district shall select no more  
37 than one school serving students from grades nine through 12 to  
38 participate in the pilot program.

39 c. The commissioner shall select up to 12 school districts for  
40 participation in the pilot program. The commissioner shall select  
41 districts in the northern, central, and southern regions of the State and  
42 shall seek a cross section of school districts from urban, suburban, and  
43 rural areas of the State. The <sup>1</sup>school districts selected by the<sup>1</sup>  
44 commissioner shall <sup>1</sup>[award] be eligible for<sup>1</sup> grants, within the limit  
45 of available <sup>1</sup>[State appropriations] funds that are <sup>2</sup>appropriated by

**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>Assembly AST committee amendments adopted February 22, 2021.

<sup>2</sup>Assembly amendments adopted in accordance with Governor's recommendations November 8, 2021.

1 the State or<sup>2</sup> donated pursuant to subsection d. of this section<sup>1</sup>, to  
2 1[**selected school districts to**]<sup>1</sup> be used to support the development  
3 and implementation of 2[**a FIRST**]<sup>2</sup> 1[**Robotics Program**] robotics  
4 2[**program**]<sup>1</sup> programs<sup>2</sup> in the selected schools. The  
5 1[**commissioner**]<sup>2</sup> 2[**FIRST nonprofit organization**]<sup>1</sup> commissioner<sup>2</sup>  
6 shall determine the amount of each grant awarded under the program  
7 and may award multi-year grants. Grants awarded pursuant to this  
8 subsection shall be used by school districts to <sup>2</sup>develop robotics  
9 programs in which school districts partner with an approved nonprofit  
10 organization that has demonstrated its ability to inspire students  
11 through mentor-based programs to build science, technology,  
12 engineering, and mathematical skills whereby funds may be used to<sup>2</sup>  
13 provide coaching stipends, purchase materials for competitions,  
14 finance competition travel expenses, and register for events. School  
15 districts selected by the commissioner to participate in the pilot  
16 program may apply for additional funding <sup>2</sup>in separate grant  
17 application periods<sup>2</sup> as teams in the school district become eligible to  
18 participate in 1the<sup>1</sup> 2[FIRST]<sup>2</sup> 1[Robotics Program's] robotics  
19 program's<sup>1</sup> district, district championship, and world championship  
20 events.

21 d. 2[1The commissioner shall collaborate with the FIRST  
22 nonprofit organization] Nonprofit organizations<sup>2</sup>, educational  
23 advocacy groups, and private sector businesses <sup>2</sup>may collaborate<sup>2</sup> to  
24 encourage and identify the donation of funds for the purpose of  
25 awarding grants pursuant to subsection c. of this section. <sup>2</sup>The  
26 donated funds shall only be used for the purpose of supporting grants  
27 under the program. Such funds shall be accepted by the Department of  
28 Education to be used for the purposes of the program. If sufficient  
29 funding is unavailable, the pilot program shall be paused and shall  
30 resume once funding becomes available to support the issuance of  
31 grants under the program.<sup>2</sup>

32 e.<sup>1</sup> 2There is established within the Department of Education a  
33 fund to be known as the "Robotics Competitions in Schools Fund."  
34 The fund shall be credited only with funds appropriated by the State or  
35 funds donated for the purposes of the pilot program established under  
36 this section. The fund shall only be used to provide grants to school  
37 districts selected for participation under the pilot program.

38 f.<sup>2</sup> Three years following the establishment of the pilot program,  
39 the commissioner shall submit a report to the Governor, and to the  
40 Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1).  
41 The report shall contain information on the implementation of the pilot  
42 program, the number of students participating in the program, and the  
43 recommendations of the commissioner on continuing, expanding, or  
44 modifying the program.

45

46 2. This act shall take effect immediately.