

P.L. 2021, CHAPTER 239, *approved September 28, 2021*
Assembly, No. 1625 (*First Reprint*)

1 **AN ACT** establishing a STEM outreach program and supplementing
2 chapter 6 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.
3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*
6
7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:
8 a. The science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
9 (STEM) field has become extremely important for the success of
10 the innovation economy both in New Jersey and the United States,
11 and STEM education is critical in developing a globally competitive
12 workforce in the 21st century.
13 b. Despite the increasing demand for workers with experience
14 in STEM, women and minority groups are largely underrepresented
15 in the STEM workforce and in STEM education at the post-
16 secondary level.
17 c. According to the National Science Foundation’s Science and
18 Engineering Indicators for 2016, women comprised only 29 percent
19 of the science and engineering workforce, despite making up half of
20 the total college-educated workforce in the United States.
21 d. The gender gap in the national STEM workforce is also
22 evidenced in New Jersey as women made up only 25.1 percent of
23 the State’s STEM workforce in October 2018, according to the New
24 Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.
25 e. Although women comprise more than half of the nation’s
26 college students, they are underrepresented in many STEM-related
27 post-secondary degree programs, especially in engineering and the
28 computer sciences.
29 f. Racial and ethnic minorities are similarly underrepresented
30 in the STEM field as Hispanics, blacks, and Native
31 Americans/Alaska Natives make up a smaller share of the science
32 and engineering workforce (11 percent) than their proportion in the
33 general population (27 percent of the United States working age 33
34 population).
35 g. In 2012, only 11.2 percent of bachelor’s degrees in science
36 and engineering, 8.2 percent of master’s degrees in science and

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 January 14, 2021.

1 engineering, and 4.1 percent of doctorate degrees in science and
2 engineering were awarded to minority women.

3 h. Encouraging young women and minorities to pursue post-
4 secondary degrees and careers in STEM professions and increasing
5 opportunities in the STEM field are important means for realizing
6 greater economic innovation, success, and equality.

7
8 2. a. The Department of Education, in consultation with the
9 Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the Commission on
10 Science, Innovation and Technology, shall develop and administer
11 an outreach program to encourage young women and minorities to
12 pursue post-secondary degrees and careers in science, technology,
13 engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

14 b. The department, in developing and administering the
15 outreach program, shall:

16 (1) provide elementary and secondary school students,
17 especially young women and minorities, with opportunities to
18 increase their exposure to the STEM field;

19 (2) distribute various printed materials to schools, encouraging
20 young women and minorities to pursue post-secondary degrees and
21 careers in STEM;

22 (3) organize and conduct mentoring sessions, in which
23 individuals working or pursuing a post-secondary degree in the
24 STEM field engage with elementary and secondary school students;

25 (4) establish a mentoring program that partners STEM
26 professionals and STEM post-secondary students with elementary
27 and secondary school students;

28 (5) create programs to increase the recruitment and retention of
29 underrepresented faculty in STEM subject areas; and

30 (6) undertake any other activities the Commissioner of
31 Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education
32 and the chair of the Commission on Science, Innovation and
33 Technology, deems necessary to effectuate the purposes of the
34 outreach program.

35 ¹For purposes of this act, STEM shall include, but not be limited
36 to, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and computer
37 science.¹

38
39 3. This act shall take effect 30 days after enactment.

40
41
42
43
44 Directs DOE to develop outreach program to encourage young
45 women and minorities to pursue post-secondary degrees and careers
46 in STEM.