

SENATE, No. 3479

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 22, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator SANDRA B. CUNNINGHAM

District 31 (Hudson)

Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators Ruiz and Pou

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Alleviating Learning Loss in New Jersey Grant Program in DOE to assist public schools in establishing or expanding certain educational programs to address learning loss in students.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/20/2021)

1 AN ACT establishing the Alleviating Learning Loss in New Jersey
2 Grant Program in the Department of Education.

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 COVID-19 pandemic and the associated increase in the
9 use of virtual and remote instruction have profoundly impacted
10 elementary and secondary school students across the State in many
11 ways.

12 b. While the provision of instruction through the use of virtual
13 or remote technologies in a full-time or hybrid manner has been
14 necessary to limit student and staff exposure to COVID-19, one
15 significant effect of decreasing in-person instruction is learning loss
16 experienced by students.

17 c. Research has shown that, although online learning can
18 provide many opportunities and benefits to students, it is generally
19 not as effective in achieving similar levels of academic
20 achievement, when compared to in-person instruction delivered in a
21 classroom setting.

22 d. The difference between the overall efficacy of in-person
23 instruction and that of online instruction is exacerbated if students
24 do not have consistent or reliable access to the Internet and the
25 electronic devices needed to complete online work.

26 e. In addition to the gap in potential learning gains stemming
27 from online learning versus in-person instruction, the use of virtual
28 or remote instruction also can hinder the development of students'
29 social and emotional skills as they may not have as much face-to-
30 face contact with their friends and fellow classmates and as their
31 participation in extracurricular activities may be reduced.

32 f. Several preliminary studies and projections of learning loss
33 conducted by education experts and research organizations have
34 indicated that students may, on average, lose several months of
35 overall learning as the use of virtual or remote instruction
36 continues. The learning loss experienced by a student may be more
37 acute depending on a number of factors, including the student's
38 grade level, race, and income level and the quality of online
39 instruction and subject area.

40 g. Although education communities across the State have
41 rapidly and commendably transformed the way in which they
42 deliver education to students, it is fitting and proper that school
43 districts, charter schools, and renaissance schools are afforded more
44 resources and supports to address learning loss resulting from the
45 proliferated use of virtual and remote instruction.

46
47 2. There is established in the Department of Education the
48 Alleviating Learning Loss in New Jersey Grant Program. The

1 purpose of the grant program shall be to provide funds to school
2 districts, charter schools, and renaissance schools for the creation or
3 expansion of summer learning programs during the summer of 2021
4 and other student support programs during the 2021-2022 school
5 year, which seek to mitigate student learning loss resulting from
6 COVID-19 related school closures or the use of virtual or remote
7 instruction.

8
9 3. A school district, charter school, or renaissance school
10 seeking funds under the Alleviating Learning Loss in New Jersey
11 Grant Program shall submit an application to the Commissioner of
12 Education in accordance with application procedures and
13 requirements prescribed by the commissioner. The grants shall be
14 awarded on a competitive basis in amounts to be determined by the
15 commissioner upon review of applications submitted by districts or
16 schools. When selecting the recipients of grant funds under the
17 program, the commissioner shall give priority to school districts,
18 charter schools, and renaissance schools that:

19 a. have not established for the summer of 2021 a summer
20 learning program; and

21 b. have a student population in which 20 percent or more of the
22 students enrolled in the district or school are eligible for free or
23 reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program or
24 the federal School Breakfast Program.

25
26 4. An application submitted to the Commissioner of Education
27 pursuant to section 3 of this act shall include:

28 a. a general description of the summer learning program to be
29 established or expanded for the summer of 2021 or of any other
30 student support program to be established or expanded for the 2021-
31 2022 school year. The general description shall, at a minimum,
32 detail how the creation or expansion of a program will address
33 learning loss resulting from COVID-19 related school closures or
34 the use of virtual or remote instruction;

35 b. details on any instruction and other learning supports and
36 services that will be provided to students participating in a program;

37 c. a description of any integrated services and supports that may
38 be provided to participating students including, but not limited to,
39 meals and health, counseling, and mental health services;

40 d. information concerning any compensatory services that may
41 be provided to students with disabilities under the programs;

42 e. details concerning any efforts, including the use of diagnostic
43 tools and assessments, that have been or will be undertaken by the
44 school district, charter school, or renaissance school to measure the
45 level of learning loss among participating students or the student
46 population at large;

1 f. how the instruction and other services and supports provided
2 to students participating in a summer learning program may be
3 continued during the 2021-2022 school year;

4 g. a description of any student eligibility criteria or prioritization
5 under a program detailed in the application;

6 h. an estimate of the number of students who will participate in
7 a program to be established or expanded during the summer of 2021
8 or the 2021-2022 school year, as applicable;

9 i. an estimate of the total cost associated with establishing or
10 expanding a program; and

11 j. any other information as required by the commissioner to
12 evaluate the effectiveness of a proposed program creation or
13 expansion in addressing student learning loss.

14
15 5. To the extent permitted by federal law, the grants awarded
16 pursuant to section 3 of this act shall be paid from the monies
17 received by the State under the federal "Coronavirus Aid, Relief,
18 and Economic Security (CARES) Act," Pub.L.116-136, or any other
19 financial assistance provided by the federal government to address
20 the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on elementary and
21 secondary schools.

22
23 6. Notwithstanding any provision of P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-
24 1 et seq.), or any other law to the contrary, the Commissioner of
25 Education may adopt, immediately upon filing with the Office of
26 Administrative Law and no later than the 90th day after the
27 effective date of this act, such rules and regulations as the
28 commissioner deems necessary to implement the provisions of this
29 act, which regulations shall be effective for a period not to exceed
30 12 months. The regulations shall thereafter be amended, adopted,
31 or readopted by the commissioner in accordance with the provisions
32 of P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.).

33
34 7. This act shall take effect immediately.
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37 STATEMENT

38
39 This bill establishes in the Department of Education the
40 Alleviating Learning Loss in New Jersey Grant Program. The
41 purpose of the grant program is to provide funds to school districts,
42 charter schools, and renaissance schools for the creation or
43 expansion of summer learning programs and other student support
44 programs during the summer of 2021 and the 2021-2022 school
45 year. The programs are to address student learning loss resulting
46 from the COVID-19 related school closures or the use of virtual or
47 remote instruction.

1 A school district, charter school, or renaissance school seeking
2 funds under the Alleviating Learning Loss in New Jersey Grant
3 Program is required to submit an application to the Commissioner
4 of Education. When selecting districts or schools for funding under
5 the grant program, the commissioner is required to give priority to
6 school districts, charter schools, and renaissance schools that: 1)
7 have not established for the summer of 2021 a summer learning
8 program; and 2) have a student population in which 20 percent or
9 more of the students enrolled in the district or school are eligible for
10 free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch
11 Program or the federal School Breakfast Program.

12 Under the bill, an application submitted to the commissioner will
13 include a general description of a summer learning program to be
14 established or expanded for the summer of 2021 or of any other
15 student support program to be established or expanded for the 2021-
16 2022 school year. The general description will, at a minimum,
17 detail how the creation or expansion of a program will address
18 learning loss resulting from COVID-19 related school closures or
19 the use of virtual or remote instruction. An application will also
20 detail the instruction, learning supports and services, and other
21 integrated supports and services that will be provided to
22 participating students. Further, an application will include: a
23 description of any student eligibility criteria or prioritization under
24 a program; an estimate of the number of students who will
25 participate in a program to be established or expanded during the
26 summer of 2021 or the 2021-2022 school year, as applicable; and an
27 estimate of the total cost associated with establishing or expanding
28 a program.

29 To the extent permitted by federal law, grants awarded under the
30 grant program would be paid from the monies received by the State
31 under the federal “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
32 (CARES) Act” or any other financial assistance provided by the
33 federal government to address the impact of the COVID-19
34 pandemic on elementary and secondary schools.