

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1055

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE**

DATED: MAY 19, 2021

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Establishes five-year community schools pilot program.
- Type of Impact:** Five-year State expenditure increase.
- Agencies Affected:** Department of Education and participating local school districts, charter schools, and renaissance schools.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Year 1 through Year 5</u>
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that this bill would result in an expenditure increase to the Department of Education (DOE). The costs associated with implementing the bill would be dependent upon the cost of establishing and administering the pilot program over a five-year time frame.
- The DOE would incur costs to enter into various contracts required under the bill. The costs of those contracts is indeterminate as the bill only provides general terms of the duties that the entities selected under those contracts would perform; it is reasonable to conclude that the DOE would have significant latitude in determining the specific parameters and costs of each contract.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill establishes a five-year Community Schools Pilot Program in the DOE. Community schools are defined as partnerships between public schools, nonprofit organizations, and local governments to provide an integrated focus on academics, health, and social services, youth and community development, expanded learning time and opportunities, actively engage families, and foster collaborative practices based on an individual community’s identified need.

Under the bill, the Commissioner of Education would issue a request for proposals to identify a nonprofit organization located in the State to manage the pilot program. The selected organization would be responsible for providing technical assistance to any school district, renaissance school, or charter school that is participating in the pilot program and would be responsible for making group training sessions and information about community schools available to any public school that is interested in establishing a community school. Additionally, the organization and the DOE would be responsible for selecting up to 50 schools, including renaissance and charter schools, which would receive direct assistance from a site coordinator.

Schools would be selected under the pilot program in three application periods by both the DOE and the organization collaboratively. In each of the first and second application periods, no more than 15 schools would be selected to receive a site coordinator. In the third application period, no more than 20 schools would be selected to receive a site coordinator. The organization, in collaboration with the department, may increase the number of schools selected in a subsequent application period if the maximum number was not selected in a prior application period. At no time would the cumulative number of schools selected to receive a site coordinator exceed 30 after the second application period or 50 after the third application period. In selecting schools to receive a site coordinator, lower priority may be given to a school district, renaissance school, or charter school that is currently receiving federal funds to establish or operate a community school while higher priority may be given to a school located in a school district that does not have any schools in which a site coordinator has been assigned.

The commissioner would annually enter into a contract with an independent entity to perform an audit of the organization's accounts and financial transactions. The audits, which must be completed no later than five months following the organization's fiscal year, would be posted on the DOE's website. The bill also requires that the commissioner enter into a contract with an independent entity to conduct an evaluation of the pilot program. The final report, which the organization would forward to the Governor and the Legislature, would be due no later than six months prior to the conclusion of the pilot program.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS finds that this bill would result in an expenditure increase to the DOE. The costs associated with implementing the bill would be dependent upon the cost of establishing and administering the pilot program over a five-year time frame. The DOE would incur costs to enter into various contracts required under the bill. The costs of these contracts is indeterminate as the bill only provides general terms of the duties that the entities selected under those contracts would perform; it is reasonable to conclude that the DOE would have significant latitude in determining the specific parameters and costs of each contract.

Under the bill, the DOE would enter into a contract with a qualified nonprofit organization that will make technical assistance available to participating public schools as well as group training sessions and materials about community school operations accessible to any public school that expresses an interest in developing a community school. Lastly, the DOE would incur costs to annually enter into a contract with an independent entity to perform an audit of the nonprofit

organization’s accounts and financial transactions. The DOE would face increased expenditures to enter into a contract with an independent entity to perform an evaluation of the pilot program.

Under the bill, lower priority for selection under the pilot program would be given to school districts that are currently receiving federal funds to establish or operate a community school. While public information appears to be insufficient to determine the Statewide prevalence of the utilization of the community school model, the OLS notes that, since 2010, the following entities have been awarded a grant under the United State Department of Education’s Full Service Community Schools Grant Program:

Year Awarded	Grantee	Project Title	Duration (Years)	Year 1	Total Expected Funding
2018	Paterson Board of Education	Paterson Schools and Community Partners: Empowering Students and Families, Together We Can	5	\$499,668	\$2,498,340
2015	Mercer Street Friends	Trenton Community Schools Initiative	5	\$276,114	\$2,217,867
2015	Paterson Public School District	Continuing our Commitment to Excellence	5	\$499,928	\$2,499,640
2014	Montclair State University	University Assisted Full Service Community Schools	5	\$497,156	\$2,490,450
2010	Paterson Public Schools	A Renewed Commitment to Excellence through Full Service Community Schools	5	\$466,111	\$2,465,147
Source: United States Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-discretionary-grants-support-services/school-choice-improvement-programs/full-service-community-schools-program-fscs/awards/					

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This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).