

[Second Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4433

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JULY 23, 2020

Sponsored by:

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District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Assemblyman RAJ MUKHERJI

District 33 (Hudson)

Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPITT

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Senator JAMES BEACH

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Senator KRISTIN M. CORRADO

District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)

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Huttle, Murphy, Assemblyman Verrelli, Assemblywomen Mosquera,
Reynolds-Jackson, Assemblymen Johnson, Chiaravalloti, Assemblywoman
McKnight, Assemblyman Armato, Assemblywoman Timberlake,
Assemblyman Freiman, Assemblywomen Swain, Lopez, Assemblyman
Tully, Assemblywoman Downey, Senators Pou, Turner and Ruiz**

SYNOPSIS

Creates grant program to encourage school districts to partner with institutions of higher education in training school-based mental health services providers.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Education Committee on May 13, 2021, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/21/2021)

1 AN ACT establishing a grant program for the training of school-
2 based mental health services providers and supplementing
3 chapter 6 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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 a grant
9 program to assist school districts in the training of school-based mental
10 health services providers, expand the pipeline of high-quality, trained
11 providers, and address the shortages of mental health professionals in
12 schools. As used in this section, “school-based mental health services
13 provider” means a State-licensed or State-certified school counselor,
14 school psychologist, school social worker, or other State-licensed or
15 State-certified mental health professional qualified under State law to
16 provide mental health services to children and adolescents.

17 b. Grants under the program shall be awarded on a competitive
18 basis. School districts ¹or groups of school districts¹ that receive a
19 grant under the program shall use the funds for efforts to create and
20 grow programs and partnerships that train students who are attending
21 graduate school to become school-based mental health services
22 providers.

23 c. To be eligible for consideration of a grant award under the
24 program, a school district ¹or a group of school districts seeking to
25 participate in the program together¹ shall submit an application to the
26 Commissioner of Education, in accordance with application
27 procedures and requirements prescribed by the commissioner. A
28 school district ¹or a group of school districts¹ applying for a grant
29 award under the program shall, prior to submitting an application,
30 form a partnership with one or more institutions of higher education
31 that offer graduate programs in school-based mental health fields. The
32 partnership shall allow a student enrolled in an institution of higher
33 education’s graduate program to perform applicable fieldwork, credit
34 hours, internships, externships, or other related training as applicable
35 for the academic program of the student.

36 A grant application submitted by a school district ¹or a group of
37 school districts¹ shall include information regarding the following:

38 (1) the details of the partnership formed between the school district
39 ¹or group of school districts¹ and an institution of higher education,
40 including plans for supervising the graduate students in school settings
41 and ensuring that the students are trained in providing mental health
42 supports and services to students in the school district ¹or districts¹;

43 (2) a description of how the lack of school-based mental health

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:

¹Assembly AED committee amendments adopted December 14, 2020.

²Senate SED committee amendments adopted May 13, 2021.

- 1 services providers is affecting students in the school district ¹or
2 districts¹;
- 3 (3) the school ¹**【district’s】** district or districts¹ unmet need for
4 student mental health supports and services;
- 5 (4) the number of school-based mental health services providers
6 currently employed by the school district ¹or districts¹ and their
7 caseloads;
- 8 (5) the existing ratio of school-based mental health services
9 providers to students enrolled in the district ¹or districts¹;
- 10 (6) the schools and student populations that will benefit from the
11 grant funding;
- 12 (7) the objectives for the number of graduate students the school
13 district ¹**【anticipates】** or school districts anticipate¹ training under the
14 grant program;
- 15 (8) plans to collaborate with federal, State, regional, and local
16 entities to expand the pipeline of school-based mental health services
17 providers and achieve partnership goals and objectives; and
- 18 (9) any other information as required by the commissioner.
- 19 d. (1) The commissioner shall establish selection criteria for the
20 awarding of grants under the program, including consideration of the
21 information listed in subsection c. of this section. Grants shall be
22 awarded based upon review of the applications and subject to the
23 availability of funds. The commissioner shall establish the amount for
24 each grant that is approved.
- 25 (2) Priority for grants awarded under the program shall be given to
26 ²**【high-need】**² school districts ²that demonstrate an unmet need for
27 mental health services in the school community². ²**【The**
28 Commissioner of Children and Families, in consultation with the
29 Commissioner of Education, shall establish criteria for designating
30 high-need school districts based upon evidence that the school district
31 is located in an area of the State that has significant mental health
32 needs that are not currently being met. **】**²
- 33 e. The Department of Education shall annually apply for and use
34 any federal grant funds or other federal assistance which may be
35 available to be used for the grant program established pursuant to this
36 section including, but not limited to, funds under the federal Mental
37 Health Service Professional Demonstration Grant Program ²**【and】** ²
38 the federal “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
39 (CARES) Act,” Pub.L.116-136 ², the federal “Coronavirus Response
40 and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021,”
41 Pub.L.116-260, and the federal “American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of
42 2021,” Pub.L.117-2². The department may, if applicable, apply for
43 federal grant funds or other federal assistance on behalf of one or more
44 school districts approved for participation in the grant program
45 established pursuant to this section. Any federal grant funds or other
46 federal assistance awarded to the department shall first be used to

1 provide grant awards to school districts, prior to using State funds
2 under the grant program established pursuant to this section.

3 f. Within three years after receiving a grant award under the
4 program, a school district ¹or a group of school districts¹ shall submit
5 a report to the Commissioner of Education containing information on
6 the ¹**【district's】**¹ use of the grant funds. The report shall include, at a
7 minimum, information on the number of graduate students trained
8 under the program, the number of graduate students who were hired as
9 school-based mental health services providers using grant funds,
10 increases or improvements in the provision of student mental health
11 supports and services as a result of the grant, and any notable changes
12 in school climate, attendance rates, student achievement, school
13 discipline, or other measures since receiving the grant.

14

15 2. The Commissioner of Education shall submit a report to the
16 Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991,
17 c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than four years after the establishment
18 of the grant program established pursuant to section 1 of this act. The
19 report shall include, but need not be limited to, information on the
20 number of grant applicants, the number and amounts of the grant
21 awards, information provided by school districts ²and groups of school
22 districts² in the reports submitted pursuant to subsection f. of section 1
23 of this act, and any recommendations concerning the continuation or
24 expansion of the grant program.

25

26 3. The State Board of Education shall adopt, pursuant to the
27 “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
28 seq.), rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of
29 this act.

30

31 4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
32 the first full school year following the date of enactment.