

[Second Reprint]

**ASSEMBLY, No. 4434**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**219th LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED JULY 23, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman LOUIS D. GREENWALD**

**District 6 (Burlington and Camden)**

**Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPITT**

**District 6 (Burlington and Camden)**

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**Senator JAMES BEACH**

**District 6 (Burlington and Camden)**

**Senator M. TERESA RUIZ**

**District 29 (Essex)**

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**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes Student Wellness Grant Program in DOE.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As amended on January 10, 2022 by the General Assembly pursuant to the Governor's recommendations.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/20/2021)

1 AN ACT establishing the Student Wellness Grant Program and  
2 supplementing 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. a. The Commissioner of Education, in <sup>1</sup>full<sup>1</sup> consultation  
8 with the Commissioner of Children and Families, shall establish the  
9 Student Wellness Grant Program. The purpose of the Student  
10 Wellness Grant Program shall be to provide grants that support  
11 school districts in implementing school-based programs and  
12 practices that promote mental wellness, social and emotional  
13 learning, and student resilience.

14 b. A grant awarded through the Student Wellness Grant  
15 Program shall be used to support school districts in:

16 (1) the provision of school-based mental health clinics or  
17 workshops for both students and families that engage the  
18 community on universal topics of student wellness and mental  
19 health;

20 (2) the implementation and coordination of policies, practices,  
21 and programs that support the mental, emotional, and social needs  
22 of students;

23 (3) the provision of mental health services on-site at the school  
24 to students in need of short-term counseling or crisis intervention  
25 focused on mental health or situational concerns, such as grief or  
26 family transitions, by a properly trained and licensed mental health  
27 professional; and

28 (4) the timely and appropriate referral of students in need of  
29 long-term therapeutic counseling or mental health intervention with  
30 available community resources.

31

32 2. a. A school district which elects to participate in the grant  
33 program created pursuant to this act shall submit an application to  
34 the Commissioner of Education <sup>1</sup>to be reviewed by a team of  
35 qualified professionals within the Department of Education and  
36 Department of Children and Families<sup>1</sup> in such form as required by  
37 the commissioner. The application shall include, but need not be  
38 limited to:

39 (1) a description of current school district actions to support the  
40 socioemotional needs of students in a stigma-free environment and  
41 how a grant will support the expansion of those efforts;

42 (2) a commitment to provide staff training, including a clearly  
43 outlined plan on who will receive training, the resources needed for  
44 training, and how the training will be implemented. The training

**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>Senate floor amendments adopted June 21, 2021.

<sup>2</sup>Assembly amendments adopted in accordance with Governor's recommendations January 10, 2022.

1 shall include content on how to recognize symptoms of mental  
2 health conditions in the student population, and a component on  
3 identifying at-risk students most likely to be in need of mental  
4 health supports; and

5 (3) the school district protocol for on-site and community  
6 referrals for targeted therapeutic interventions, such as short-term  
7 and long-term counseling.

8 b. The Commissioner of Education, in <sup>1</sup>full<sup>1</sup> consultation with  
9 the Commissioner of Children and Families, shall develop criteria  
10 for the evaluation of applications for grants. Based upon the  
11 criteria developed by the commissioners, and within the limit of  
12 available appropriations, the Commissioner of Education shall  
13 allocate to each selected school district a grant in such amount as  
14 determined by the commissioner. <sup>1</sup>~~【The Commissioner of~~  
15 ~~Education shall give special】~~ Special<sup>1</sup> consideration <sup>1</sup>shall be  
16 given<sup>1</sup> to applicants that: can demonstrate strong ties to relevant  
17 community resources, such as mental health providers; or have  
18 secured external funding for their student wellness program from  
19 community partners.

20

21 3. No student shall be compelled to participate in any programs  
22 or services offered by a school district pursuant to a student  
23 wellness grant received under this act, if the student or the student's  
24 parent or guardian objects to participation.

25

26 4. The Commissioner of Education, in <sup>1</sup>full<sup>1</sup> consultation with  
27 the Commissioner of Children and Families, shall develop and  
28 disseminate to all school districts <sup>1</sup>~~【model policies and】~~<sup>1</sup> best  
29 practices in school-based programs that promote mental wellness,  
30 social and emotional learning, and student resilience.

31

32 5. Each school district that receives a student wellness grant  
33 shall prepare and submit to the Commissioner of Education  
34 annually a report on its experience with and the effects of the  
35 program. The report shall include, at a minimum, the specific  
36 programs and practices implemented as a result of the grant to  
37 promote mental wellness, social and emotional learning, and student  
38 resilience, and any notable changes in school climate, attendance  
39 rates, student achievement, school discipline, or other measures  
40 since receiving the grant. The report shall include, to the greatest  
41 extent feasible, quantifiable measures of the program's impact.

42

43 6. The Commissioner of Education, in <sup>1</sup>full<sup>1</sup> consultation with  
44 the Commissioner of Children and Families, shall submit annually a  
45 report to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164  
46 (C.52:14-19.1), the Legislature containing information on the  
47 implementation of the Student Wellness Grant Program. The report

1 shall include relevant information from the reports submitted to the  
2 Commissioner of Education by the grant recipients pursuant to  
3 section 5 of this act.

4  
5 7. The Department of Education <sup>2</sup>~~shall~~ may<sup>2</sup> use any  
6 <sup>2</sup>~~available~~<sup>2</sup> federal funds which may become available, including  
7 funds provided under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic  
8 Security (CARES) Act, Pub.L. 116-136, to effectuate the purposes  
9 of this act. <sup>2</sup>~~Any federal~~ Federal<sup>2</sup> funds available to the  
10 department <sup>2</sup>to effectuate the purposes of this act<sup>2</sup> shall <sup>2</sup>~~first~~<sup>2</sup> be  
11 used to provide grant awards to school districts <sup>2</sup>in amounts deemed  
12 appropriate by the Commissioner of Education<sup>2</sup> , prior to using  
13 State funds <sup>2</sup>~~under~~ which may be appropriated by the Legislature  
14 for<sup>2</sup> the grant program established pursuant to this act. <sup>2</sup>~~If~~  
15 sufficient funding is unavailable, the grant program shall be paused  
16 and shall resume once funding becomes available by way of  
17 legislative appropriation or other means.<sup>2</sup>

18  
19 8. This act shall take effect immediately.