

ASSEMBLY, No. 5574

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 5, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman MILA M. JASEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes summer transition pilot program for rising kindergarten students who meet certain criteria.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ACT** establishing a summer transition pilot program for certain
2 rising kindergarten students and supplementing chapter 6 of Title
3 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. The Commissioner of Education shall establish a four-
9 year summer transition pilot program for certain rising kindergarten
10 students in participating school districts. The purpose of the
11 program shall be to provide high-quality academic instruction over
12 the summer for eligible students who will attend kindergarten in the
13 fall in order to reduce the achievement gap and provide supportive
14 resources to targeted high-needs populations.

15 b. A school district that is selected to participate in the pilot
16 program shall develop and implement a six-week summer transition
17 program for eligible rising kindergarten students. The summer
18 transition program shall provide high-quality instruction with a
19 focus on language, literacy, and mathematics and shall provide
20 additional family support and resources, as applicable, to assist the
21 students participating in the program.

22 c. In order to be eligible to attend the summer transition
23 program in a participating school district, a student must be age-
24 eligible, and registered to attend kindergarten in the September that
25 immediately follows the summer transition program, and the
26 student's family income must be at or below 85 percent of the State
27 median income as adjusted for household size. In addition, the
28 student must meet one of the following criteria:

29 (1) the student did not attend a preschool program funded
30 pursuant to section 12 of P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-54) or through
31 any other State appropriation, during the preceding school year; the
32 student did attend such a program during the preceding school year
33 but did not attend for the entire school year; or the student did
34 attend such a program during the entire preceding school year but
35 has been identified as needing additional academic support before
36 entering kindergarten; or

37 (2) the student is a member of at least one of the following
38 priority groups: (a) the student is an English language learner; (b)
39 the student has an individualized education program (IEP); (c) the
40 student is in a resource family home; or (d) the student is a
41 homeless child as determined pursuant to section 19 of P.L.1979,
42 c.207 (C.18A:7B-12).

43 d. A school district that wishes to participate in the pilot
44 program shall submit an application to the commissioner, which
45 includes a description of the district's proposal for creating and

1 implementing a summer transition program for rising kindergarten
2 students, the estimated number of students who will be eligible to
3 participate in the summer transition program, and any other
4 information as prescribed by the commissioner.

5 e. The commissioner shall select up to 15 school districts for
6 participation in the pilot program, subject to the expression of
7 interest and the availability of funds. To the maximum extent
8 possible, the commissioner shall select school districts in the
9 northern, central, and southern regions of the State and shall seek a
10 cross section of school districts from urban, suburban, and rural
11 areas.

12
13 2. a. At the conclusion of the pilot program, each participating
14 school district shall submit a report to the commissioner. The
15 report from each district shall include, at a minimum, information
16 on: the number of students who were served by the summer
17 transition program; the number of teachers who provided instruction
18 under the program; feedback from teachers of the summer transition
19 program and from kindergarten teachers who taught students who
20 had attended the program; any voluntary feedback collected from
21 parents of students who attended the program; and the school
22 district's views on the success and benefits of the program.

23 b. After receiving the reports from each participating school
24 district, the commissioner shall submit a report to the Governor, and
25 to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
26 (C.52:14-19.1), on the implementation and effectiveness of the pilot
27 program. The report shall include the commissioner's
28 recommendation on the advisability of the program's continuation
29 and expansion to additional school districts in the State.

30
31 3. a. There is established within the Department of Education a
32 fund to be known as the "Summer Transition Program Fund." The
33 fund shall be used to provide grants to participating school districts
34 to develop and implement a summer transition program pursuant to
35 section 1 of this act. The fund shall be annually credited with the
36 moneys appropriated by the Legislature, and any federal or private
37 funds that may be available for purposes of the summer transition
38 pilot program.

39 b. The commissioner shall award grants, within the limit of
40 State appropriations and other available funding for the program, to
41 participating school districts to be used to support the development
42 and implementation of a summer transition program. The
43 commissioner shall determine the amount of each grant awarded
44 under the program and may award multi-year grants.

45
46 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill requires the Commissioner of Education to establish a four-year summer transition pilot program for certain rising kindergarten students in participating school districts. The purpose of the program is to provide high-quality academic instruction over the summer for students in targeted high-needs populations who will attend kindergarten in the fall in order to reduce the achievement gap and provide supportive resources.

A school district that is selected to participate in the pilot program is required to develop and implement a six-week summer transition program for eligible rising kindergarten students. The summer transition program will provide high-quality instruction with a focus on language, literacy, and mathematics and will provide additional family support and resources, as applicable, to assist the students participating in the program.

In order to be eligible to attend the summer transition program in a participating school district, a student must be age-eligible, and registered to attend kindergarten in the September that immediately follows the summer transition program. The student's family income must be at or below 85 percent of the State median income as adjusted for household size. In addition, the student must meet one of the following criteria:

(1) the student did not attend a preschool program funded pursuant to section 12 of P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-54) or through any other State appropriation, during the preceding school year; the child did attend such a program during the preceding school year but did not attend for the entire school year; or the child did attend such a program during the entire preceding school year but has been identified as needing additional academic support before entering kindergarten; or

(2) the student is a member of at least one of the following priority groups: (a) the student is an English language learner; (b) the student has an individualized education program (IEP); (c) the student is in a resource family home; or (d) the student is a homeless child.

To participate in the pilot program a school district must submit an application to the commissioner, which includes a description of the district's proposal for creating and implementing a summer transition program and the estimated number of students who will be eligible to participate in the summer transition program. The commissioner will select up to 15 school districts for participation in the pilot program, subject to the expression of interest and the availability of funds. The commissioner will determine the amount of each grant awarded under the program to participating school districts to develop and implement the summer transition program.

1 At the conclusion of the pilot program, each participating school
2 district will submit a report to the commissioner. After receiving
3 these reports, the commissioner will submit a report to the Governor
4 and to the Legislature on the implementation and effectiveness of
5 the pilot program and will include in the report his recommendation
6 on the advisability of the program's continuation and expansion to
7 additional school districts in the State.

8 Finally, there will be established in the Department of Education
9 the "Summer Transition Program Fund" which will be used to
10 provide grants to participating school districts. The fund will be
11 annually credited with the moneys appropriated by the Legislature,
12 and any federal or private funds that may be available for purposes
13 of the summer transition pilot program.