

P.L. 2021, CHAPTER 320, *approved December 21, 2021*
Assembly, No. 2455 (*Second Reprint*)

1 AN ACT establishing a robotics competition pilot program in the
2 Department of Education.

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4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

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7 1. a. The Commissioner of Education shall establish a three-year
8 pilot program that provides grant funding to ¹encourage and support¹
9 school districts to ¹establish ²For Inspiration and Recognition of
10 Science and Technology (FIRST) nonprofit organization's² robotics
11 programs and¹ participate in ²1a¹ FIRST Robotics²
12 ¹Competitions ²Competition¹ robotics competitions². The
13 purpose of the pilot program shall be to:

14 (1) increase opportunities for students to participate in ²1a¹
15 FIRST Robotics² ²1¹Competitions Competition¹ robotics
16 competitions²;

17 (2) motivate students to pursue education and career opportunities
18 in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and

19 (3) improve students' knowledge in the fields of science,
20 technology, engineering, and mathematics.

21 b. ²(1) The Commissioner of Education shall identify one or more
22 eligible nonprofit organizations to assist school districts selected to
23 participate in the pilot program in developing robotics programs and
24 participating in robotics competitions. The commissioner shall
25 compile a list of eligible nonprofit organizations available to partner
26 with school districts and incorporate the contents of the list into the
27 application created pursuant to paragraph (2) of this subsection.
28 Nonprofit organizations included on the list shall offer technical
29 assistance to participating schools, including mentor-based assistance
30 in establishing a robotics program to develop science, technology,
31 engineering, and mathematical skills for students. A school district
32 that applies to participate in the pilot program shall partner with a
33 nonprofit organization on the list.

34 (2)² A school district that wants to participate in the pilot program
35 shall submit an application to the commissioner in such form as
36 required by the commissioner. The school district shall select no more
37 than one school serving students from grades nine through 12 to
38 participate in the pilot program.

39 c. The commissioner shall select up to 12 school districts for
40 participation in the pilot program. The commissioner shall select

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 AST committee amendments adopted February 22, 2021.

²Assembly amendments adopted in accordance with Governor's
recommendations November 8, 2021.

1 districts in the northern, central, and southern regions of the State and
2 shall seek a cross section of school districts from urban, suburban, and
3 rural areas of the State. The 'school districts selected by the'
4 commissioner shall '[award] be eligible for' grants, within the limit
5 of available '[State appropriations] funds that are' 'appropriated by
6 the State or' 'donated pursuant to subsection d. of this section', to
7 '[selected school districts to]' be used to support the development
8 and implementation of '[a FIRST]' '[Robotics Program] robotics
9 '[program] programs' in the selected schools. The
10 '[commissioner]' '[FIRST nonprofit organization]' 'commissioner'
11 shall determine the amount of each grant awarded under the program
12 and may award multi-year grants. Grants awarded pursuant to this
13 subsection shall be used by school districts to 'develop robotics
14 programs in which school districts partner with an approved nonprofit
15 organization that has demonstrated its ability to inspire students
16 through mentor-based programs to build science, technology,
17 engineering, and mathematical skills whereby funds may be used to'
18 provide coaching stipends, purchase materials for competitions,
19 finance competition travel expenses, and register for events. School
20 districts selected by the commissioner to participate in the pilot
21 program may apply for additional funding 'in separate grant
22 application periods' as teams in the school district become eligible to
23 participate in 'the' '[FIRST]' '[Robotics Program's] robotics
24 program's' district, district championship, and world championship
25 events.

26 d. '[The commissioner shall collaborate with the FIRST
27 nonprofit organization] Nonprofit organizations', educational
28 advocacy groups, and private sector businesses may collaborate to
29 encourage and identify the donation of funds for the purpose of
30 awarding grants pursuant to subsection c. of this section. The
31 donated funds shall only be used for the purpose of supporting grants
32 under the program. Such funds shall be accepted by the Department of
33 Education to be used for the purposes of the program. If sufficient
34 funding is unavailable, the pilot program shall be paused and shall
35 resume once funding becomes available to support the issuance of
36 grants under the program.'

37 e. ' There is established within the Department of Education a
38 fund to be known as the "Robotics Competitions in Schools Fund."
39 The fund shall be credited only with funds appropriated by the State or
40 funds donated for the purposes of the pilot program established under
41 this section. The fund shall only be used to provide grants to school
42 districts selected for participation under the pilot program.

43 f. ' Three years following the establishment of the pilot program,
44 the commissioner shall submit a report to the Governor, and to the
45 Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1).

1 The report shall contain information on the implementation of the pilot
2 program, the number of students participating in the program, and the
3 recommendations of the commissioner on continuing, expanding, or
4 modifying the program.

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6 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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11 Establishes pilot program in DOE to support robotics programs in
12 school districts.