

SENATE, No. 785

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator NICHOLAS P. SCUTARI

District 22 (Middlesex, Somerset and Union)

Senator JAMES BEACH

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “New Jersey STEM Scholars Grant Pilot Program” in Department of Education.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** establishing the “New Jersey STEM Scholars Grant Pilot
2 Program” in the 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. As used in this section:

8 “After-school STEM” means educational projects and programs
9 that focus on extra-curricular learning including, but not limited to,
10 science fairs, STEM clubs, monthly labs, and workshops.

11 “Department” means the Department of Education.

12 “Out-of-School STEM” means creative STEM experiences
13 outside of the traditional classroom setting, which better prepare
14 students for STEM work in the classroom and in the workforce.

15 “Project-Based Learning” means creative, STEM-integrated
16 educational programming that focuses on learning through a broad
17 project that includes instruction, substantive content, and reflection,
18 with the goal that students participating in the project will achieve a
19 concrete goal or complete a project.

20 “STEM” means science, technology, engineering (including
21 robotics), or mathematics.

22 b. The Commissioner of Education shall develop and
23 administer the four-year “New Jersey STEM Scholars Grant Pilot
24 Program” to assist school districts in enhancing STEM education
25 programs for students and increasing access to STEM education
26 programs.

27 c. The pilot program shall award grants to school districts
28 seeking to create or expand STEM education programs along three
29 distinct areas of concentration: project-based learning, after-school
30 STEM, and out-of-school STEM.

31 d. A school district applying for a grant under the pilot
32 program shall submit an application to the commissioner. The
33 application shall, at a minimum:

34 (1) identify the area or areas of concentration, as enumerated in
35 subsection c. of this section, for which the school district is seeking
36 the grant funding;

37 (2) include the amount of grant funding being sought by the
38 school district;

39 (3) describe how the grant funding will be used to create new
40 STEM education programs or how the grant funding will
41 supplement existing STEM education efforts;

42 (4) outline plans for recruiting students to the STEM education
43 programs;

44 (5) include a description of how the school district will support
45 teachers and other mentors who lead the STEM education programs
46 and participants in the programs;

47 (6) provide a plan for sustaining the programs financially beyond
48 the grant period; and

1 (7) include a method to evaluate the impact of the STEM
2 education programs on participating students.

3 e. Grant awards shall be allocated to school districts on a
4 competitive basis, in a manner to be determined by the
5 commissioner.

6 f. Grant funds provided to a school district shall be used to
7 supplement, not supplant, funds used for STEM activities in the
8 district at the time of the application for the grant.

9 g. There is established within the Department of Education a
10 fund to be known as the “STEM Scholars Grant Fund”, hereinafter
11 referred to as the “fund.” The fund shall be used to provide grants to
12 school districts under the pilot program.

13 (1) The fund shall be annually credited with money appropriated
14 by the Legislature, any moneys received by the State from corporate
15 donors or other private sector support, and any federal funds which
16 may become available for STEM-related activities.

17 (2) The department shall seek to secure the use of such funds or
18 other resources from the federal government or private nonprofit or
19 for-profit sources to effectuate the purposes of this act as may be
20 available therefor.

21 (3) No State funds shall be used to support a grant under the pilot
22 program unless there is an appropriation for the pilot program in the
23 annual appropriations act for that fiscal year.

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25 2. This act shall first take effect in the first full school year
26 following the date of enactment, but the Commissioner of
27 Education may take such anticipatory administrative action in
28 advance thereof as shall be necessary for the implementation of this
29 act.

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STATEMENT

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34 This bill would establish the four-year “New Jersey STEM
35 Scholars Grant Pilot Program,” which would provide grants to
36 assist school districts in enhancing STEM (science, technology,
37 engineering, and mathematics) education programs for students and
38 increasing access to STEM education programs.

39 Applications for grant awards under this pilot program would be
40 submitted to the Commissioner of Education, who would allocate
41 the awards on a competitive basis.

42 The grant awards would be distributed so that school districts
43 can build upon existing STEM education programs or create new
44 education programs along three distinct areas of concentration,
45 namely project-based learning, afterschool STEM, and out-of-
46 school STEM.

47 This bill also establishes within the Department of Education a
48 fund to be known as the “STEM Scholars Grant Fund,” which

S785 SCUTARI, BEACH

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1 would be used to provide grants to school districts under the pilot
2 program. The fund would be annually credited with money
3 appropriated by the Legislature, any moneys received by the State
4 from corporate donors or other private sector support, and any
5 federal funds which may become available for STEM-related
6 activities. No State funds would be used to support a grant under
7 the pilot program unless there is an appropriation for the pilot
8 program in the annual appropriations act for that fiscal year.