

SENATE, No. 1708

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.

District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “Supporting Educational and Entrepreneurial Development (S.E.E.D.) Program” in Office of Secretary of Higher Education.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ACT** establishing the “Supporting Educational and
2 Entrepreneurial Development (S.E.E.D.) Program” and
3 supplementing chapter 3B of Title 18A of the New Jersey
4 Statutes.

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

8
9 1. There is established a “Supporting Educational and
10 Entrepreneurial Development (S.E.E.D.) Program” in the Office of
11 the Secretary of Higher Education. The purpose of the S.E.E.D.
12 Program shall be to support original student-led projects through
13 the awarding of grants from the fund established pursuant to section
14 4 of this act. Awards made through the program shall provide the
15 initial funding necessary to support the development of promising
16 new concepts, products, or companies led by the next generation of
17 researchers.

18
19 2. a. The S.E.E.D. Program shall be implemented by a board
20 that consists of seven members including the Secretary of Higher
21 Education, or a designee; a representative of the New Jersey
22 Business and Industry Association appointed by the Governor; and
23 five public members. The five public members shall be appointed
24 as follows: one by the President of the Senate; one by the Minority
25 Leader of the Senate; one by the Speaker of the General Assembly;
26 one by the Minority Leader of the General Assembly; and one by
27 the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. The
28 Secretary of Higher Education, or a designee and the representative
29 of the New Jersey Business and Industry Association shall serve as
30 co-chairpersons of the board.

31 b. Each member of the board, other than the secretary who
32 shall serve ex-officio, shall serve for a term of four years and until a
33 successor is appointed and qualified; except that of the members
34 first appointed, one shall be appointed to serve for one year, one for
35 two years, two for three years, and two for four years. Any vacancy
36 in the membership of the board shall be filled in the same manner as
37 the original appointment for the remainder of the unexpired term.

38 c. Members of the board shall serve without compensation but
39 shall be entitled to be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary
40 expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties.

41
42 3. a. The board shall establish a competitive application
43 process for receipt of a S.E.E.D. grant that considers objective
44 factors which shall include, but need not be limited to: the
45 intellectual merit of the proposed project; the overall feasibility of
46 the proposal; and the qualifications of the applicant. A successful
47 proposal shall address the use of the S.E.E.D. grant toward the
48 sustainability of the project, either through strengthening the

1 student's application for upcoming State, federal, or foundation
2 grants, or for development of a self-sustaining program through fee-
3 for-services or generation of receipt revenue.

4 b. The board shall award S.E.E.D. grants from the fund
5 established pursuant to section 4 of this act to qualified applicants
6 enrolled in each public institution of higher education, within the
7 limits of available funds allocated to each institution. The board
8 shall determine the amount of each grant awarded under the
9 program and may award multi-year grants.

10

11 4. a. There is hereby created a special fund in the Office of the
12 Secretary of Higher Education which shall be entitled the "S.E.E.D.
13 Fund." The fund shall be maintained in a separate account and
14 administered by the board established pursuant to section 2 of this
15 act. The monies in the fund shall be used to provide S.E.E.D.
16 grants.

17 b. The fund shall consist of all moneys appropriated by the
18 State for the purposes of the fund and all interest and investment
19 earnings received on moneys in the fund.

20

21 5. In each of the first three years of the S.E.E.D. Program, the
22 State shall appropriate to the S.E.E.D. Fund for each public
23 institution of higher education an amount equal to the sum of
24 $\$2,500 \times (\text{ENRF} / 500)$ and $\$2,500 \times (\text{ENRP} / 1,000)$, where ENRF
25 is the number of full-time students enrolled in the institution, and
26 ENRP is the number of part-time students enrolled in the
27 institution.

28 In the event that the funds available for an institution of higher
29 education are not awarded as S.E.E.D. grants in any of the first
30 three years of the program, the board may either allocate those
31 funds to the institution in a subsequent year or reallocate those
32 funds to other institutions of higher education.

33 In each subsequent year, the State appropriations to the S.E.E.D.
34 Fund for each institution shall be determined with consideration of
35 the outcomes of the projects of the prior years' grantees. In the
36 event that an independent institution of higher education opts to
37 participate in the program, a State appropriation shall be made to
38 the fund in accordance with the guidelines established herein.

39

40 6. The board shall submit a report to the Governor, and to the
41 Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1),
42 four years after the establishment of the S.E.E.D. Program. The
43 report shall include, but need not be limited to, information on the
44 number of applicants, the number of awards, and a description of
45 the proposals for and outcomes of each grant awarded.

46

47 7. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill establishes a “Supporting Educational and Entrepreneurial Development (S.E.E.D.) Program” in the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. The purpose of the S.E.E.D. Program will be to support original student-led projects through the awarding of grants. Awards made through the program will provide the initial funding necessary to support the development of promising new concepts, products, or companies led by the next generation of researchers.

Under the bill, the S.E.E.D. Program will be implemented by a seven member board that includes the Secretary of Higher Education, or a designee; a representative of the New Jersey Business and Industry Association; and five public members. The board will establish a competitive application process for receipt of a S.E.E.D. grant that considers objective factors which include, but need not be limited to: the intellectual merit of the proposed project; the overall feasibility of the proposal; and the qualifications of the applicant. The bill directs the board to award S.E.E.D. grants from the fund to qualified applicants enrolled in each public institution of higher education, within the limits of available funds. The board will determine the amount of each grant awarded under the program and may award multi-year grants.

The bill creates a special fund in the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education entitled the "S.E.E.D. Fund," consisting of all moneys appropriated by the State for the purposes of the program and all interest and investment earnings received on moneys in the fund. The fund will be used to provide S.E.E.D. grants. The bill provides that in each of the first three years of the S.E.E.D. Program, the State must appropriate to the S.E.E.D. Fund for each public institution of higher education an amount equal to \$2,500 per each 500 full-time student cohort and \$2,500 per each 1,000 part-time student cohort. In the event that the funds available to an institution are not awarded as S.E.E.D. grants in any of the first three years of the program, the board may either allocate those funds to the institution in subsequent years or reallocate those funds to other institutions of higher education.