

ASSEMBLY, No. 1168

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2022 SESSION

Sponsored by:

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District 27 (Essex and Morris)

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SYNOPSIS

Establishes five-year community schools pilot program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/9/2022)

1 AN ACT establishing a community schools pilot 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. As used in this act, “community schools” means partnerships
8 between public schools, nonprofit organizations, and local
9 governments to provide an integrated focus on academics, health,
10 and social services, youth and community development, expanded
11 learning time and opportunities, actively engage families, and foster
12 collaborative practices based on an individual community’s
13 identified need.

14

15 2. a. The Commissioner of Education shall establish a five-year
16 “Community Schools Pilot Program” in the Department of Education.
17 The objective of the pilot program shall be to facilitate the
18 establishment of community schools. Under the pilot program, any
19 school district, renaissance school, or charter school shall be able to
20 receive training regarding the establishment of a community school,
21 and no more than 50 schools shall be assigned a site coordinator who
22 shall assist in the establishment and operations of a community school.

23

24 b. No later than three months following the effective date of this
25 act, the commissioner shall issue a request for proposals to identify a
26 qualified nonprofit organization located in the State whose mission is
27 to facilitate high quality community schools in New Jersey to manage
28 the pilot program. Upon selecting an organization to manage the pilot
29 program, the commissioner shall enter into a contract with that
30 organization specifying its duties and responsibilities including, but
31 not limited to, those identified in section 3 of this act.

32

33 c. No later than six months following the effective date of this
34 act, the commissioner shall survey school districts, renaissance
35 schools, and charter schools to assess the extent to which community
36 schools have been established. The survey shall obtain information
37 including, but not limited to: 1) identifying school districts,
38 renaissance schools, and charter schools that have established
39 community schools; 2) listing the entities with which the community
40 school has entered into a partnership for the provision of services; and
41 3) detailing services that are provided at the community schools. The
42 commissioner shall use the survey results to establish an inventory of
43 community schools, which shall be updated annually.

44

45 3. a. The organization selected by the commissioner to manage
46 the pilot program shall make technical assistance available to school
47 districts, renaissance schools, and charter schools that are participating
in the pilot program. The organization shall also make group training
sessions and materials about community school operations accessible

1 to any school district, renaissance school, or charter school that
2 expresses an interest in developing a community school.

3 b. (1) The organization, in coordination with the department,
4 shall develop an application procedure and specific criteria for
5 selecting schools, including renaissance and charter schools, to
6 participate in the pilot program and receive direct support from a site
7 coordinator assigned to the school. The selection criteria shall be
8 posted on the department's website at least 20 days prior to each
9 application period. Schools shall be selected in three application
10 periods by the department and the organization collaboratively. In
11 each of the first and second application periods, no more than 15
12 schools shall be selected to receive a site coordinator. In the third
13 application period, no more than 20 schools shall be selected to receive
14 a site coordinator. The organization in collaboration with the
15 department may increase the number of schools selected in a
16 subsequent application period if the maximum number was not
17 selected in a prior application period. In no event shall the cumulative
18 number of schools selected to receive a site coordinator exceed 30
19 after the second application period, or 50 after the third application
20 period.

21 (2) In selecting schools to receive a site coordinator, lower priority
22 may be given to a school district, renaissance school, or charter school
23 that is currently receiving federal funds to establish or operate a
24 community school, or higher priority may be given to a school located
25 in a school district that does not have any schools in which a site
26 coordinator has been assigned.

27 c. The organization shall employ and train individuals who shall
28 be assigned to serve as a site coordinator in a school that has been
29 selected to receive a site coordinator. Individuals selected to serve as
30 site coordinators shall be employees of the organization, and not the
31 school district, renaissance school, or charter school to which they are
32 assigned.

33 d. The organization may enter into an agreement with another
34 nonprofit entity to assist it in fulfilling any of the responsibilities
35 enumerated in subsections a. through c. of this section.

36
37 4. a. The commissioner shall annually enter into a contract
38 with an independent entity to perform an audit of the organization's
39 accounts and financial transactions. The audit of the prior year's
40 activities shall be completed no later than five months following the
41 end of the organization's fiscal year. The audit shall be made
42 available on the Department of Education's website.

43 b. The commissioner shall enter into a contract with an
44 independent entity to conduct an evaluation of the pilot program.
45 The entity shall have expertise in evaluating educational programs
46 and the provision of a range of social services. The evaluator shall
47 issue a final report on the implementation of the pilot program no
48 later than six months prior to the pilot program's completion. The

1 commissioner shall forward the final report to the Governor, and to
2 the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-
3 19.1).

4
5 5. There is established in the Department of Education a
6 nonlapsing fund that shall be known as the Community Schools
7 Pilot Program Fund. The fund shall consist of any funds that are
8 appropriated by the Legislature for inclusion in the fund, investment
9 earnings of the fund, and moneys contributed to the fund by private
10 sources. The moneys in the fund shall be invested and reinvested
11 by the Director of the Division of Investment in the Department of
12 the Treasury. Expenditures from the fund shall be exclusively for
13 the purpose of implementing the provisions of this act.

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15 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

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18 STATEMENT

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20 This bill establishes a five-year Community Schools Pilot
21 Program in the Department of Education. Under the bill, the
22 Commissioner of Education would issue a request for proposals to
23 identify a nonprofit organization located in the State to manage the
24 pilot program. The selected organization would be responsible for
25 providing technical assistance to any school district, renaissance
26 school, or charter school that is participating in the pilot program,
27 and would be responsible for making group training sessions and
28 information about community schools available to any district,
29 renaissance school, or charter school that is interested in
30 establishing a community school. Additionally, the organization
31 and the Department of Education would be responsible for selecting
32 up to 50 schools, including renaissance and charter schools, that
33 would receive direct assistance from a site coordinator assigned to
34 the school.

35 The organization, in coordination with the Department of
36 Education, would develop an application procedure and specific
37 criteria for selecting schools to participate in the program and
38 receive direct support from a site coordinator. The selection criteria
39 would be posted on the department's website at least 20 days prior
40 to the beginning of each application period. Schools would be
41 selected in three application periods by both the department and the
42 organization collaboratively. In each of the first and second
43 application periods, no more than 15 schools would be selected to
44 receive a site coordinator. In the third application period, no more
45 than 20 schools would be selected to receive a site coordinator. The
46 organization, in collaboration with the department, may increase the
47 number of schools selected in a subsequent application period if the
48 maximum number was not selected in a prior application period. At

1 no time would the cumulative number of schools selected to receive
2 a site coordinator exceed 30 after the second application period or
3 50 after the third application period. In selecting schools to receive
4 a site coordinator, lower priority may be given to a school district,
5 renaissance school, or charter school that is currently receiving
6 federal funds to establish or operate a community school while
7 higher priority may be given to a school located in a school district
8 that does not have any schools in which a site coordinator has been
9 assigned. The organization would employ and train individuals
10 who would be assigned to serve as a site coordinator in a school
11 selected to receive one. Those selected to be site coordinators
12 would be required to be employees of the organization, and not the
13 school district, renaissance school, or charter school to which they
14 are assigned. The organization may enter into an agreement with
15 another nonprofit entity to assist it in providing technical assistance
16 to participating schools, conducting training sessions, providing
17 materials to interested schools, and selection of program
18 participants.

19 The commissioner would annually enter into a contract with an
20 independent entity to perform an audit of the organization's
21 accounts and financial transactions. The audits, which must be
22 completed no later than five months following the organization's
23 fiscal year, would be posted on the Department of Education's
24 website. The bill also requires that the commissioner enter into a
25 contract with an independent entity to conduct an evaluation of the
26 pilot program. The final report, which the organization would
27 forward to the Governor and the Legislature, would be due no later
28 than six months prior to the conclusion of the pilot program.