

ASSEMBLY, No. 5378

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 8, 2023

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman CRAIG J. COUGHLIN
District 19 (Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Sauickie

SYNOPSIS

Requires Commissioner of Education to establish matching grant program for certain school districts and schools using federal funds to increase instructional time and accelerate learning.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/30/2023)

1 AN ACT concerning learning loss in school districts, charter
2 schools, and renaissance school projects.

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

6
7 1. a. The Commissioner of Education shall establish a matching
8 grant program to support school districts, charter schools, and
9 renaissance school projects that use a portion of their eligible funds
10 to increase student instructional time and accelerate student learning
11 through the implementation of high-quality, evidence-based
12 interventions and programs that address the academic, social, and
13 emotional needs of students in the district according to the
14 provisions of this section. Eligible funds under this section shall be
15 a school district, charter school, or renaissance school project's
16 local educational agency subgrant from the Elementary and
17 Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund allocated pursuant to the
18 formula under section 2001(d)(1) of the federal American Rescue
19 Plan Act of 2021, excluding any amount required to be reserved by
20 the district or school to address learning loss and the other purposes
21 enumerated in section 2001(e)(1) of that act. A school district,
22 charter school, or renaissance school project shall be eligible to
23 apply for funds under the grant program only if, among all students
24 in the district or school to whom a State assessment was
25 administered, the sum of the percent of students in the "did not yet
26 meet expectations" and the "partially met expectations" categories
27 in the English language arts or mathematics subject areas increased
28 according to the most recently administered State assessments for
29 which data is available, compared to the corresponding sum in the
30 2018-2019 school year.

31 b. The purpose of the matching grant program shall be to assist
32 school districts, charter schools, and renaissance school projects in
33 implementing interventions and programs that supplement
34 traditional classroom instruction and that respond to interrupted
35 learning time and learning loss among students resulting from the
36 COVID-19 pandemic. A district or school that receives a matching
37 grant under the program shall use the grant to augment the eligible
38 funds dedicated to interventions and programs including:

39 (1) comprehensive before-school, after-school, and out-of-
40 school learning programs;

41 (2) summer learning academies or summer enrichment
42 programs;

43 (3) during-school or out-of-school time tutoring programs,
44 including one-on-one tutoring and high-impact or high-dosage
45 tutoring;

46 (4) hiring additional staff that would increase student access to
47 additional learning opportunities or provide more individualized
48 instruction to students;

- 1 (5) project-based learning or work-based learning opportunities
- 2 and programs;
- 3 (6) increasing student access to postsecondary opportunities,
- 4 including dual enrollment programs, early college high school
- 5 programs, and career pathway programs that integrate academic
- 6 coursework, career and technical education, work-based learning,
- 7 and support services; and
- 8 (7) any other intervention or program that the commissioner
- 9 deems necessary to supplement traditional classroom instruction
- 10 and respond to interrupted learning time and learning loss among
- 11 students resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 12 c. A school district, charter school, or renaissance school project
- 13 seeking funds under the grant program shall submit an application
- 14 to the commissioner. In addition to any other information deemed
- 15 necessary by the commissioner, the application shall include:
- 16 (1) a description of the manner in which the district or school
- 17 will use its eligible funds to increase student instructional time and
- 18 accelerate student learning and in what ways the district's
- 19 intervention or program is high-quality in nature;
- 20 (2) a description of the need to increase student instructional
- 21 time and accelerate student learning, including an analysis of
- 22 relevant assessment data and other information concerning the
- 23 extent of interrupted learning or learning loss experienced by
- 24 students in the district as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 25 (3) evidence that the district or school's intervention or program
- 26 will lead to positive student outcomes and reduce the level of
- 27 learning loss among the student population at-large and any student
- 28 subgroups, including available evidence that a similar intervention
- 29 or program has been effective in other school districts or states;
- 30 (4) an explanation concerning how the intervention or program
- 31 will support students in not only meeting grade-level expectations
- 32 but also in preparing them for further education;
- 33 (5) a description of the specific student subgroups on which the
- 34 district's intervention or program focuses, if any, and the effect that
- 35 the intervention or program will have in addressing the
- 36 disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the
- 37 academic, social, and emotional needs of students in the subgroups;
- 38 (6) a description of any grade levels or subject areas on which
- 39 the district is seeking to focus its intervention or program;
- 40 (7) details concerning any partnerships into which the district or
- 41 school will enter with community-based organizations or other
- 42 entities for the purposes of implementing its intervention or
- 43 program;
- 44 (8) an explanation of the measures on which the district or
- 45 school will measure the success of its intervention or program;
- 46 (9) the amount of eligible funds that is dedicated to the
- 47 intervention or program to increase student instructional time and
- 48 accelerate student learning; and

1 (10) an updated Plan for Use of American Rescue Plan
2 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds if the
3 district or school chooses to make substantial changes to its
4 previously submitted plan as a result of the matching grant
5 opportunity established pursuant to this section.

6 d. If the commissioner approves the application, the school
7 district, charter school, or renaissance school project shall receive a
8 matching grant equal to 50 percent of the amount of the district or
9 school's eligible funds that is dedicated to the intervention or
10 program to increase student instructional time and accelerate
11 student learning as specified in its application pursuant to paragraph
12 (9) of subsection c. of this section.

13 e. The aggregate amount of funds provided to school districts,
14 charter schools, and renaissance school projects pursuant to the
15 grant program shall not exceed \$200,000,000. The grants provided
16 pursuant to this section shall, to the extent permitted by federal law,
17 be funded from the monies received by the State under the federal
18 "American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act," Pub.L.117-2.

19 f. No later than July 30 of each school year in which matching
20 grants are distributed pursuant to this section, the commissioner
21 shall submit to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to
22 section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), a report that evaluates
23 the effectiveness of the grant program in increasing student
24 achievement and reducing the level of interrupted learning or
25 learning loss in each school district that receives a matching grant.

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27 2. This act shall take effect immediately.
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30 STATEMENT

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32 This bill requires the Commissioner of Education to establish a
33 matching grant program to support school districts that use a
34 portion of their eligible funds to increase student instructional time
35 and accelerate student learning. Eligible funds as defined in the bill
36 are moneys under a school district, charter school, or renaissance
37 school project's local educational agency subgrant from the
38 American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act ESSER Fund, excluding any
39 amount required by the provisions of the ARP Act to be spent on
40 evidence-based learning loss interventions. A district or school
41 would be eligible to apply for funds under the grant program only if
42 the percentage of students in the district or school who are not
43 meeting or partially meeting grade-level expectation increased
44 compared to the 2018-2019 school year. The aggregate amount of
45 funds provided to school districts, charter schools, or renaissance
46 school projects under the bill would not exceed \$200 million. Under
47 the bill, the program would be funded from the monies received by
48 the State under the federal ARP Act.

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1 A school district, charter school, or renaissance school project
2 seeking funds under the program is required to submit an
3 application to the commissioner that is to include certain
4 information enumerated in the bill. If the commissioner approves
5 the application, the school district will receive a matching grant
6 equal to 50 percent of the amount of the district's local educational
7 agency federal allotment under the ARP Act that is dedicated to the
8 intervention or program to increase student instructional time and
9 accelerate student learning which has been specified in its
10 application.