

# ASSEMBLY, No. 5087

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY

### 221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 12, 2024

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywoman ANDREA KATZ**

**District 8 (Atlantic and Burlington)**

**Assemblywoman VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON**

**District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)**

**Assemblyman MICHAEL VENEZIA**

**District 34 (Essex)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman Stanley**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes New Jersey Tuition Reimbursement Program for Special Education Teachers.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/16/2024)**

1 AN ACT establishing the New Jersey Tuition Reimbursement  
2 Program for Special Education Teachers and supplementing  
3 chapter 71C of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

7  
8 1. As used in this act:

9 “Approved program of study” means a regionally-accredited  
10 educator preparation program to attain a Master’s degree in special  
11 education or to complete graduate-level coursework that leads to  
12 New Jersey Department of Education certification as a Teacher of  
13 Students with Disabilities within an elementary or secondary school  
14 setting.

15 “Authority” means the Higher Education Student Assistance  
16 Authority.

17 “Eligible tuition expenses” means tuition expenses that were  
18 incurred by a program participant in attending an approved program  
19 of study and which were not covered by any grants or scholarships.

20 “Program” means the Tuition Reimbursement Program for  
21 Special Education Teachers established pursuant to this act.

22 “Program participant” means a teacher who contracts with the  
23 authority to be employed as a special education teacher in return for  
24 tuition reimbursement provided under the program.

25  
26 2. a. There is established in the Higher Education Student  
27 Assistance Authority, in coordination with the Department of  
28 Education, the New Jersey Tuition Reimbursement Program for  
29 Special Education Teachers. The program shall provide  
30 reimbursement to program participants for a portion of the eligible  
31 tuition expenses incurred by the participant.

32 b. A program participant shall enter into a contract with the  
33 authority for a specified four-year period of service in which the  
34 participant agrees to teach students classified with a disability in a  
35 public school in the State following the participant’s completion of  
36 an approved program of study. The agreement shall specify the  
37 program participant’s dates of required service and the total amount  
38 of reimbursement of eligible tuition expenses to be received by the  
39 participant in return for service.

40 c. The executive director of the authority shall determine the  
41 maximum annual amount of tuition reimbursement that may be  
42 provided to a program participant. The total tuition reimbursement  
43 amount for a program participant shall not exceed 100 percent of  
44 the participant’s eligible tuition expenses.

45 d. The authority shall advertise the availability of the program.

46  
47 3. To be eligible to participate in the program, an applicant  
48 shall:

- 1 a. be a resident of New Jersey;
- 2 b. hold a valid instructional certificate issued by the State
- 3 Board of Examiners;
- 4 c. be enrolled in, or plan to enroll in, an approved program of
- 5 study; and
- 6 d. agree to be employed as a special education teacher at a
- 7 public school in New Jersey for four full school years in return for
- 8 the tuition reimbursement provided under the program.
- 9
- 10 4. A program participant, as a condition of participation, shall
- 11 be required to adhere to performance standards established by the
- 12 authority. The standards shall include, but not be limited to,
- 13 requirements that a program participant:
- 14 a. maintain residency in the State;
- 15 b. maintain a valid instructional certificate issued by the State
- 16 Board of Examiners;
- 17 c. remain current with payments on any student loans;
- 18 d. maintain satisfactory performance in employment as a
- 19 teacher of special education in a public school; and
- 20 e. report to the authority, on a form and in a manner prescribed
- 21 by the authority, on the program participant's performance of
- 22 services rendered prior to reimbursement of tuition under the
- 23 program.
- 24
- 25 5. A program participant which fails to complete the required
- 26 four year term of employment or fails to meet performance
- 27 standards established by the authority pursuant to section 4 of this
- 28 act shall be required to repay the full amount of any tuition
- 29 reimbursement received under the program as a debt to the State.
- 30
- 31 6. The authority shall promulgate regulations pursuant to the
- 32 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
- 33 seq.), necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act.
- 34
- 35 7. This act shall take effect immediately.
- 36
- 37

38 STATEMENT

39

40 This bill establishes in the Higher Education Student Assistance

41 Authority the New Jersey Tuition Reimbursement Program for

42 Special Education Teachers. The program is to provide

43 reimbursement to program participants for a portion of the eligible

44 tuition expenses incurred by the participant.

45 Under the bill, a program participant is to enter into a contract

46 with the authority for a specified four-year period of service in

47 which the participant agrees to teach students classified with a

48 disability in a public school in the State following the participant's

1 completion of a master's degree in special education or receipt of  
2 the teacher of students with disabilities endorsement to the  
3 instructional certificate. The agreement is to specify the program  
4 participant's dates of required service and the total amount of  
5 reimbursement of eligible tuition expenses to be received by the  
6 participant in return for service.

7 The bill directs the executive director of the authority to  
8 determine the maximum annual amount of tuition reimbursement  
9 that may be provided to a program participant. The total tuition  
10 reimbursement amount for a program participant may not exceed  
11 100 percent of the participant's eligible tuition expenses.

12 The bill requires an applicant to:

- 13 • be a resident of New Jersey;
- 14 • hold a valid instructional certificate issued by the State  
15 Board of Examiners;
- 16 • be enrolled in, or plan to enroll in, a master's degree  
17 program in special education or graduate-level  
18 coursework that leads to New Jersey Department of  
19 Education certification as a Teacher of Students with  
20 Disabilities within an elementary or secondary school  
21 setting; and
- 22 • agree to be employed as a special education teacher at a  
23 public school in New Jersey for four full school years in  
24 return for the tuition reimbursement provided under the  
25 program.

26 Under the bill, a program participant, as a condition of  
27 participation, is required to adhere to performance standards  
28 established by the authority.