

SENATE, No. 1559

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
221st LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2024 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes three-year pilot program in DOE to support school district programs to increase length of school day or school year.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



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1 **AN ACT** establishing a pilot program to support school districts in
2 implementing programs to increase the length of the school day
3 or school year.

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

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8 1. a. There is established in the Department of Education a
9 three-year pilot program, the purpose of which shall be to support
10 programs to increase the length of the school day or the school year
11 in school districts selected for participation in the pilot program.
12 Under the pilot program, the Commissioner of Education shall
13 award funds on a competitive basis, with priority given to school
14 districts that have student populations demonstrating a high level of
15 need for academic support based on the most recently available
16 Statewide assessment results, the percentage of students in the
17 district who graduate from high school, and the percentage of
18 students in the district who drop out of school prior to graduation.
19 The commissioner shall select no more than 20 school districts to
20 participate in the pilot program, which shall be selected in the
21 following manner:

22 (1) five school districts from the southern region of the State;
23 (2) five school districts from the central region of the State;
24 (3) five school districts from the northern region of the State; and
25 (4) five other school districts that shall be selected by the
26 department based on a priority ranking of districts that have student
27 populations demonstrating the highest level of academic need based
28 on the most recently available Statewide assessment results, the
29 percentage of students in the district who graduate from high
30 school, and the percentage of students in the district who drop out
31 of school prior to graduation.

32 b. A school district seeking funds under the pilot program shall
33 submit an application to the commissioner. In addition to any other
34 information the commissioner may deem necessary, the application
35 shall include:

36 (1) a description of the need to offer some or all students in the
37 district a program to increase the length of the school day or the
38 school year and how extended learning time will support learning
39 acceleration;

40 (2) details concerning the manner in which the district intends to
41 implement its program to increase the length of the school day or
42 school year, including whether or not the effort to increase the
43 length of the school day or school year will be available to all
44 students and, if not, the student eligibility criteria for inclusion in
45 the program;

46 (3) a description of how the district has utilized funds, including
47 federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund
48 moneys, for learning recovery and other initiatives to address the

1 educational impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on
2 students enrolled in the district and the amount of funds, if any, that
3 have been dedicated to efforts to extend the length of the school day
4 or the school year;

5 (4) a request for the amount of funds being sought by the district
6 under the pilot program and an explanation of how the district plans
7 to use grant funds in the event that it is selected for participation;

8 (5) a description of any additional funds, on top of those funds
9 that may be currently utilized by the district or that may be granted
10 under the pilot program, that the district plans to use to support its
11 program to increase the length of the school day or school year; and

12 (6) documentation evidencing that the district's plan to increase
13 the length of the school day or the school year, as applicable, has
14 received input and feedback from teaching staff members of the
15 district and that a majority of the teaching staff members support
16 the plan. If available, the application shall include the terms of a
17 collective bargaining agreement or other contract that includes
18 provisions for an increase in the length of the school day or school
19 year.

20 c. (1) Subject to the provisions of subsection a. of this section,
21 the commissioner shall select the school districts that will receive
22 grants under the pilot program. A school district selected for
23 participation in the pilot program shall be granted no more than
24 \$1,000,000 annually throughout the duration of the pilot program.
25 A school district selected by the commissioner for participation
26 shall utilize the funds for any costs associated with the
27 implementation of a program to increase the length of the school
28 day or school year, which costs the school district would not have
29 otherwise incurred had it not implemented a program to increase the
30 length of the school day or school year. The costs associated with
31 the implementation of a program may include, but not be limited to:

32 (a) increased pay for teaching staff and other educational support
33 staff to provide for a program to increase the length of the school
34 day or school year, which increased pay shall be agreed upon and
35 included in the terms of a collective bargaining agreement or other
36 contract that includes provisions for an increase in the length of the
37 school day or school year;

38 (b) the cost of providing additional student transportation; and

39 (c) the cost of extending the provision of other student support
40 services.

41 (2) To support school districts in establishing programs to
42 increase the length of the school day or school year, the Department
43 of Education shall provide technical assistance to school districts
44 that are selected for participation in the pilot program. The technical
45 assistance shall include, but not be limited to:

46 (a) guidance for maximizing the use of other funds, outside of
47 funds currently being utilized by a district or that are granted under
48 the pilot program, that may be available to support the

- 1 implementation of the program to increase the length of the school
2 day or school year;
- 3 (b) connecting districts to resources, including educational
4 nonprofit organizations and groups, that may be useful in making
5 the program to increase the length of the school day or school year
6 more effective in promoting academic achievement; and
- 7 (c) support in resolving issues related to the long-term
8 sustainability of a district's program to increase the length of the
9 school day or school year.
- 10 d. (1) No later than July 30 of each school year in which grant
11 funds are distributed pursuant to this section, each school district
12 selected for participation in the pilot program shall submit a report
13 to the commissioner that includes the following information:
- 14 (a) the number of students who were eligible for, and
15 participated in, the district's program to increase the length of the
16 school day or school year;
- 17 (b) the attendance rates among the students who participated in
18 the district's program to increase the length of the school day or
19 school year; and
- 20 (c) any student-level information the commissioner may need to
21 produce the report required pursuant to paragraph (2) of this
22 subsection.
- 23 (2) No later than 180 days prior to the conclusion of the pilot
24 program, the commissioner shall submit to the Governor, and to the
25 Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1),
26 a report that evaluates the effectiveness of the pilot program in
27 increasing student achievement and reducing the extent of the
28 educational impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in each school
29 district selected for participation in the pilot program. The report
30 submitted pursuant to this section shall include, at a minimum:
- 31 (a) descriptions of each school district's program to increase the
32 length of the school day or school year;
- 33 (b) an analysis comparing the academic performance indicators
34 of students participating in each district's program and those of
35 students not participating in the program, which academic
36 performance indicators shall include, but need not be limited to, the
37 most recently available Statewide assessment results, the percentage
38 of students in the district who graduate from high school, and the
39 percentage of students in the district who drop out of school prior to
40 graduation;
- 41 (c) an analysis comparing the academic performance indicators
42 of students participating in each district's program and those of
43 students across the State, which academic performance indicators
44 shall include, but need not be limited to, the most recently available
45 Statewide assessment results, the percentage of district students
46 who graduate from high school, and the percentage of district
47 students who drop out of school prior to graduation;

1 (d) recommendations as to the feasibility and advisability of
2 extending the duration of the pilot program.

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4 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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7 STATEMENT

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9 This bill establishes in the Department of Education a three-year
10 pilot program, the purpose of which is to support programs to
11 increase the length of the school day or the school year in school
12 districts selected for participation. Under the pilot program, the
13 Commissioner of Education would award funds on a competitive
14 basis, with priority given to school districts that have student
15 populations demonstrating a high level of need for academic
16 support. The commissioner would select no more than 20 school
17 districts to participate in the pilot program.

18 A school district seeking funds under the pilot program would
19 submit an application to the commissioner. In addition to any other
20 information the commissioner may deem necessary, the application
21 would include:

- 22 • a description of the need to offer some or all students in the
23 district a program to increase the length of the school day or
24 the school year and how extended learning time will support
25 learning acceleration;
- 26 • details concerning the manner in which the district intends to
27 implement its program to increase the length of the school
28 day or school year;
- 29 • a description of how the district has utilized funds, including
30 federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief
31 Fund moneys, for learning recovery and other initiatives to
32 address the educational impacts that the COVID-19
33 pandemic has had on students enrolled in the district and the
34 amount of funds, if any, that have been dedicated to efforts
35 to extend the length of the school day or the school year;
- 36 • a request for the amount of funds being sought by the district
37 under the pilot program and an explanation of how the
38 district plans to use grant funds in the event that it is selected
39 for participation;
- 40 • a description of any additional funds the district plans to use
41 to support its program to increase the length of the school
42 day or school year; and
- 43 • documentation evidencing that the district's plan to increase
44 the length of the school day or the school year has received
45 input and feedback from teaching staff members of the
46 district and that a majority of the teaching staff members
47 support the plan. If available, the application would include
48 the terms of a collective bargaining agreement or other

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1 contract that includes provisions for an increase in the length
2 of the school day or school year.

3 A school district selected for participation in the pilot program
4 would be granted no more than \$1 million annually throughout the
5 duration of the pilot program. A school district selected by the
6 commissioner for participation would utilize the funds for any costs
7 associated with the implementation of a program to increase the
8 length of the school day or school year.

9 The bill requires that, no later than July 30 of each school year in
10 which grant funds are distributed under the pilot program, each
11 school district selected for participation would submit a report to
12 the commissioner that includes the following information: the
13 number of students who were eligible for, and participated in, the
14 district's program to increase the length of the school day or school
15 year; the attendance rates among the students who participated in
16 the district's program to increase the length of the school day or
17 school year; and any student-level information the commissioner
18 may need to produce a separate report required under the bill. The
19 separate report produced by the commissioner would be submitted
20 to the Governor and the Legislature no later than 180 days prior to
21 the conclusion of the pilot program. The report would evaluate the
22 effectiveness of the pilot program in increasing student achievement
23 and reducing the extent of the educational impacts of the COVID-
24 19 pandemic in each school district selected for participation in the
25 pilot program.