[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 4678

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 30, 2025

Sponsored by:
Senator VIN GOPAL
District 11 (Monmouth)
Senator RAJ MUKHERJI
District 32 (Hudson)
Assemblywoman LISA SWAIN
District 38 (Bergen)
Assemblywoman VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON
District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Co-Sponsored by:
Senator Turner

SYNOPSIS

Includes retired teachers and county college faculty members in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics teacher grant program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on December 15, 2025, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/22/2025)

AN ACT concerning a grant program for teachers of certain subjects[1]**[**,**]** and[1] amending [1]and supplementing[1] P.L.2019, c.256 [1]**[**, and making an appropriation**]**[1].

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

1. Section 1 of P.L.2019, c.256 (C.18A:6-137) is amended to read as follows:

1. As used in sections 2 through 5 of P.L.2019, c.256 (C.18A:6-138 through C.18A:6-141):

"Eligible teacher" means an individual who is employed as a teacher in a public school [1]**[**or**]** ,[1] was previously employed as a teacher in a public school and is receiving a retirement allowance under the Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund [1], or is currently employed as a faculty member at a county college and participates in a collective bargaining agreement,[1] and who meets one of the following criteria: (1) holds a valid and effective provisional or standard instructional certificate issued by the State Board of Examiners with an endorsement in a science field, mathematics, technology education, **[**or**]** computer science education, or other STEM subject or area; (2) is currently enrolled in a degree program or a coherent sequence of courses in science, mathematics, technology, **[**or**]** computer science, or other STEM subject or area; (3) will enroll in a degree program or a coherent sequence of courses in science, mathematics, technology, **[**or**]** computer science, or other STEM subject or area within two years of the effective date of P.L.2019, c.256 (C.18A:6-137 et seq.) or within two years of participating in the grant program established pursuant to section 2 of P.L.2019, c.256 (C.18A:6-138); [1]**[**or**]**[1] (4) is currently employed or was previously employed by a public school district to teach in a science, technology, engineering, mathematics, **[**or**]** computer science field, or other STEM subject or area and will teach a subject and a grade level in the nonpublic school for which the teacher holds appropriate certification, including certification without a specific subject matter endorsement where permitted by N.J.S.18A:26-1 et seq.[1]; or (5) is currently employed as a faculty member at a county college teaching a course in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, computer science, or other STEM subject or area.[1]

"Nonpublic school" means an elementary or secondary school within the State, other than a public school, offering education for grades kindergarten through 12, or any combination of them, wherein any child may legally fulfill compulsory school attendance requirements and which complies with the requirements of Title VI

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.
Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:
[1]Senate SBA committee amendments adopted December 15, 2025.

of the "Civil Rights Act of 1964," Pub.L.88-352 (42 U.S.C. s.2000d et seq.).

"Valid objection" means an explanation of why a school district disapproves of an eligible teacher currently employed by the school district from entering into a partnership with a participating nonpublic school. A school district with a valid objection shall cite, with sufficient supporting proof, as determined by the Commissioner of Education, one or more of the following reasons:

a. the proposed teaching hours at the nonpublic school conflict with the teacher's public school work responsibilities and no resolution could be found after consulting with the teacher and nonpublic school; or

b. approval of a proposed partnership between the nonpublic school and teacher would otherwise substantially impact the quality of student instruction in the school district.

(cf: P.L.2022, c.119, s.1)

2. Section 2 of P.L.2019, c.256 (C.18A:6-138) is amended to read as follows:

2. a. There is established in the Department of Education a grant program in which an eligible teacher employed or previously employed by a school district [1]or currently employed by a county college[1] may receive additional remuneration to teach science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) classes, or other STEM subject or area at a nonpublic school. Under the program, participating nonpublic schools shall form partnerships with eligible teachers [1]**[**and school districts**]** , and the school district in which the eligible teacher is employed as applicable[1], in which an eligible teacher [1]**[**employed or previously employed by the district**]**[1] teaches STEM classes at the nonpublic school at such times and during such hours mutually agreed upon by the teacher, nonpublic school, and school district, which may include hours beyond regular public school day hours such as extended day, evening, or weekend programming.

b. The purposes of the grant program shall be to: incentivize current and retired teachers [1]and current county college faculty members[1] to obtain the necessary qualifications to teach STEM subjects; incentivize individuals to enter the teaching profession to fill the demand for qualified educators in STEM subjects; assist in addressing the difficulties public and nonpublic schools face in attracting qualified educators in the STEM fields; [1]increase the earning potential of teachers in public schools and county colleges; improve retention among public school teachers;[1] and improve Statewide access to education in the STEM fields to address the workforce demands of New Jersey's economy.

c. A school district annually shall notify all teachers employed by the district[1]**[**, as well as individuals who are retired but

previously employed by the district,]1 of the grant program, and shall submit a list of all eligible teachers that express an interest in participating in the program to the executive county superintendent by January 15 of each year. The executive county superintendent shall share the lists with nonpublic schools upon request.
(cf: P.L.2019, c.256, s.2)

3. Section 3 of P.L.2019, c.256 (C.18A:6-139) is amended to read as follows:

3. a. A nonpublic school that wishes to participate in the grant program established under section 2 of P.L.2019, c.256 (C.18A:6-138) shall submit an application to the Commissioner of Education, in a manner and on such forms as determined by the commissioner. The commissioner shall establish the application deadlines for each school year. In the event that the grant program is not operational by September 1, 2019, the commissioner shall allow nonpublic schools to submit applications during the course of the 2019-2020 school year for implementation of the program in that nonpublic school during the 2019-2020 school year.

An application shall include the following:

(1) the names of the nonpublic school, school district 1or county college1, and eligible teacher that will form a STEM partnership under the program;

(2) acknowledgement from the nonpublic school that 1[the] a currently employed eligible teacher will teach at the nonpublic school during hours 1[during]1 which the teacher has no conflicting public school duties;

(3) the proposed schedule and grades to be taught by the eligible teacher at the nonpublic school;

(4) the number of students, based on enrollment projections, that will receive instruction from the eligible teacher under the proposed schedule at the nonpublic school;

(5) a certification from the nonpublic school that the eligible teacher shall provide only secular instruction at the nonpublic school; and

(6) any other information specified by the commissioner.

Upon receiving a notification from a nonpublic school that a teacher currently employed by the school district plans to participate in the program, a school district may submit to the commissioner or designee any valid objection within 10 business days. The notification from a nonpublic school that a teacher currently employed by the school district plans to participate in the program and the 10-business-day period for receipt of a valid objection from the district shall occur prior to application submission. If a valid objection is received, then the commissioner shall reject the application and inform both the teacher and nonpublic school that the application was rejected.

b. The commissioner shall establish selection criteria for the awarding of grants under the program, including consideration of the application information submitted pursuant to subsection a. of this section. To the maximum extent possible, the commissioner shall select at least three nonpublic schools in each of the northern, central, and southern regions of the State to participate in the program, and nothing shall prohibit more than three nonpublic schools in each region of the State from participating. During the program's operation, the program may be expanded beyond the nonpublic schools that were initially selected to participate, as determined by the commissioner and subject to the availability of funds.

c. The commissioner shall award grants under the program based upon review of the applications and subject to the limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program. Grant funds for approved applications [1]of eligible teachers currently employed by a school district[1] shall be allocated by the Department of Education to [the school district of] [1]the school district of[1] each eligible teacher participating in the program[1].[1] [. The school district shall use the funds] [1]The school district shall use the funds[1] to provide compensation to [a participating] [1][the] a participating[1] eligible teacher pursuant to this subsection [including applicable federal employment payroll taxes] [1]including applicable federal payroll taxes[1]. [1][The commissioner may contract with a third party to administer grant fund payments.] Grant funds for approved applications of eligible teachers, who are retired teachers previously employed by a school district or county college faculty members, may be allocated by the Department of Education to each eligible teacher participating in the program to provide compensation to the eligible teacher pursuant to this subsection or the commissioner may contract with a third party to administer the grant funds for approved applications of eligible teachers, who are retired teachers previously employed by a school district or county college faculty members.[1]

The commissioner shall establish the amount of each grant awarded for an eligible teacher, subject to the following:

(1) (a) A participating teacher currently employed by a school district shall receive an amount equal to the teacher's annual salary as calculated on a per-hour basis multiplied by the number of hours the teacher will teach STEM classes at a nonpublic school under the program multiplied by 1.25; and

(b) A participating retired teacher previously employed by a school district [1]or currently employed by a county college[1] shall receive an amount equal to the Statewide average teacher salary in the prior school year calculated on a per-hour basis multiplied by the number of hours the teacher will teach STEM classes at a nonpublic school under the program multiplied by 1.25.

(2) In the event that sufficient funds are not appropriated to fully fund the compensation to be provided to participating eligible teachers pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection, the commissioner shall apportion the amount appropriated among the participating eligible teachers in proportion to the compensation each participating eligible teacher would have received had the full amount been appropriated[1], provided that applications by eligible teachers currently employed by a school district shall be fully funded before any funding is apportioned to eligible teachers who are retired teachers or county college faculty members[1].

(3) Payments received by a participating teacher under the grant program shall not be considered "compensation" under N.J.S.18A:66-2 [1]. Payments received by a participating teacher under the grant program shall not be considered in the calculation of "base salary" or "base annual salary" as defined pursuant to section 3 of P.L.1969, c.242 (C.18A:66-169). The payments shall not change any status or benefits under any retirement system or program to which the eligible teacher has membership[1].

d. Funds appropriated for the grant program shall be used exclusively for [the hiring of] compensating eligible teachers to teach STEM classes at a participating nonpublic school, and the eligible teacher shall teach only the classes stipulated under the program.

e. If at any time a participating nonpublic school determines that a participating eligible teacher is not in compliance with the program or is violating the nonpublic school's code of conduct, the nonpublic school may submit information to the commissioner supporting its determination, and request that the teacher be removed from participation in the program at the nonpublic school. The information submitted shall demonstrate noncompliance with the program, the nonpublic school's code of conduct, or the nonpublic school's faculty handbook. After reviewing the information, the commissioner may terminate the teacher's participation in the program at that nonpublic school.

f. The grant program established pursuant to section 2 of P.L.2019, c.256 (C.18A:6-138) shall not infringe upon the collective bargaining agreement between the majority representative of the collective negotiations unit in which [the] a participating eligible teacher currently employed by a school district [1]or a county college[1] is a member and the school district [1]or county college[1] in which the teacher is employed.

g. Any appropriation for the grant program made in a fiscal year that is not expended in that fiscal year shall be available to be used for the same purpose in the subsequent fiscal years.

(cf: P.L.2022, c.119, s.2)

[1]**[**4. There is appropriated from the General Find to the Department of Education the sum of $3,500,000 to implement the provisions of this act.**]**[1]

[1]4. (New section) Notwithstanding the provisions of N.J.S.18A:66-53.2 or any other law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, the cancellation, reenrollment, and additional retirement allowance provisions of subsection a. of N.J.S.18A:66-53.2 or any other similar provision of law related to other retirement systems or programs shall not apply to a former member of the Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund who is a teacher and who, after having been granted a retirement allowance, becomes employed for the purposes of the grant program established pursuant to section 2 of P.L.2019, c.256 (C.18A:6-138); except that the cancellation, reenrollment, and additional retirement allowance provisions shall apply if the former member becomes employed within 180 days with the employer from which the member retired. The former member's retirement shall have been a bona fide retirement and any employment or reemployment under this section shall not be prearranged before retirement. This subsection shall be effective if the qualified status of the retirement system under federal law can be maintained upon its application, and such modifications to the system as may be available shall be made to allow for its application.[1]

5. This act shall take effect immediately.