

SENATE, No. 4862

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 22, 2026

Sponsored by:
Senator M. TERESA RUIZ
District 29 (Essex and Hudson)

SYNOPSIS
Establishes Teacher Residency Program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing a Teacher Residency 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:

8 “Certificate of eligibility with advanced standing” means a
9 certificate with lifetime validity issued by the State Board of
10 Examiners to candidates who meet degree, academic and test
11 requirements for teacher certification and complete a State-
12 approved college professional education preparation program.

13 “Commissioner” means the Commissioner of Education.

14 “Field experience” means observing and assisting with student
15 learning which may include, but is not limited to, providing
16 operational support to public schools; assisting instructional staff
17 with data entry, grading, lesson planning, parental communication,
18 and assessment development; and conducting classroom instruction.

19 “Non-certificated staff member” means a member of the staff,
20 including a paraprofessional, of any public school holding office,
21 position, or employment of such character that the qualifications,
22 for such office, position, or employment, do not require the staff
23 member to hold a valid and effective standard, provisional, or
24 emergency certificate issued by the State Board of Examiners.

25 “Paraprofessional” means an individual who is employed in a
26 public school as a school aide or classroom aide who assists a
27 teaching staff member with the supervision of pupil activities.

28 “Program” means the Teacher Residency Program established
29 pursuant to section 2 of this act.

30 “Program participant” means a public high school student
31 entering grade 12 who has been accepted into the Teacher
32 Residency Program, or a non-certificated staff member who has
33 obtained a minimum of 60 college credits or an associate degree
34 who has been accepted into the Teacher Residency Program.

35 “Public school” means a school district, charter school, and
36 renaissance school project in the State.

37 “Secretary” means the Secretary of Higher Education.

38
39 2. The Commissioner of Education, in coordination with the
40 Secretary of Higher Education, shall establish a Teacher Residency
41 Program, the purpose of which shall be to offer stipends and
42 provide program participants with the education and field
43 experience necessary to obtain a New Jersey certificate of eligibility
44 with advanced standing.

45
46 3. a. A public school and an accredited institution of higher
47 education with a Department of Education approved educator
48 preparation program that wish to offer the Teacher Residency

1 Program shall jointly apply to the Department of Education in such
2 manner as determined by the commissioner in consultation with the
3 secretary. The application shall include, but not be limited to:

4 (1) a dual enrollment agreement between the public school and
5 institution of higher education;

6 (2) the number of teachers in the public school and faculty at the
7 institution of higher education available to provide college level
8 instruction in connection with the program; and

9 (3) a program implementation plan which includes information
10 on the types of services in place to support students enrolled in the
11 program.

12 b. A public school and institution of higher education selected
13 to offer the program shall jointly enter into an agreement with the
14 department in which the public school and institution of higher
15 education agree to provide program participants with the education
16 and field experience necessary to obtain a certificate of eligibility
17 with advanced standing.

18
19 4. The Teacher Residency Program shall be comprised of three
20 stages during which a program participant shall complete the
21 coursework and field experience necessary to obtain a certificate of
22 eligibility with advanced standing.

23 a. Stage one of the program shall be open to high school
24 students entering grade 12. A program participant who completes
25 stage one of the program shall be awarded a Teacher Trainee
26 credential. In order to complete stage one, a program participant
27 shall:

28 (1) earn a minimum of 15 college credits in accordance with
29 State Board of Education regulations;

30 (2) author a literature review on a topic approved by the
31 program participant's academic advisor; and

32 (3) perform 200 hours of field experience.

33 b. Stage two of the program shall be open to individuals with a
34 Teacher Trainee credential and non-certificated staff members who
35 have obtained a minimum of 60 college credits or an associate
36 degree. A program participant enrolled in an educator preparation
37 program who completes stage two of the program shall be awarded
38 a Teacher Resident I credential. In order to complete stage two, a
39 program participant shall:

40 (1) earn a cumulative total of 90 college credits in accordance
41 with State Board of Education regulations;

42 (2) perform a minimum of 720 hours of field experience; and

43 (3) pass an appropriate State test of subject matter knowledge.

44 c. Stage three of the program shall be open to individuals with
45 a Teacher Resident I credential. A program participant who
46 completes stage three of the program shall be awarded a Teacher
47 Resident II credential. In order to complete stage three, the
48 program participant shall:

- 1 (1) earn a cumulative total of 120 college credits in accordance
- 2 with State Board of Education regulations;
- 3 (2) perform a minimum of 1,000 hours of field experience;
- 4 (3) complete an educator preparation program and all necessary
- 5 requirements for and obtain a bachelor's degree; and
- 6 (4) pass a commissioner-approved performance-based
- 7 assessment.

8 d. An individual who possesses a Teacher Resident II
9 credential awarded pursuant to the provisions of this act and meets
10 the general certification requirements including, but not limited to,
11 citizenship, age, and examination requirements, established by the
12 State Board of Education shall be eligible for a certificate of
13 eligibility with advanced standing.

14
15 5. To be eligible to participate in the program, an applicant
16 shall:

- 17 a. be a resident of New Jersey;
- 18 b. if a high school student:
 - 19 (1) pass a background check administered by the Department of
 - 20 Education; and
 - 21 (2) have a minimum cumulative grade point average of a 3.0 on
 - 22 a scale of 4.0, or its equivalent, at the time of application to the
 - 23 program; and
- 24 c. if a non-certificated staff member who has obtained a
- 25 minimum of 60 college credits or an associate degree, have
- 26 maintained a minimum cumulative grade point average of a 3.0 on a
- 27 scale of 4.0, or its equivalent while enrolled in or upon graduation
- 28 from an institution of higher education, as applicable.

29
30 6. a. A high school student who wishes to participate in the
31 program shall submit an application to the public school in which
32 the student is enrolled and to the institution of higher education that
33 has partnered with the public school to offer the program. The
34 application, which shall be submitted by the end of the fall semester
35 of the applicant's junior year of high school, shall include:

- 36 (1) an official high school transcript;
- 37 (2) a personal statement detailing the applicant's reasons for
- 38 applying to the program;
- 39 (3) two letters of recommendation; and
- 40 (4) any other information the commissioner and secretary deem
- 41 appropriate.

42 b. A non-certificated staff member who has obtained a
43 minimum of 60 college credits or an associate degree and wishes to
44 participate in the program shall submit an application to the public
45 school in which the non-certificated staff member is employed or to
46 a public school offering the Teacher Residency Program and to the
47 institution of higher education that has partnered with the public
48 school to offer the program. An application shall be accepted in a

1 manner determined by the partnering public school and institution
2 of higher education. The application shall include, but not be
3 limited to, the following:

4 (1) official transcripts from each institution of higher education
5 the non-certificated staff member has attended;

6 (2) a personal statement detailing the applicant's reasons for
7 applying to the program;

8 (3) three letters of recommendation, one of which shall be from
9 a current supervisor, principal, or employing public school's human
10 resource officer; and

11 (4) any other information the commissioner and secretary deem
12 appropriate.

13 c. The public school and the institution of higher education that
14 has partnered with the public school shall jointly select the
15 applicants for participation in the program.

16 d. As a condition of acceptance into the program, a program
17 participant shall enter into an agreement with the Department of
18 Education to maintain employment as a teaching staff member in
19 the State for four years following completion of the program. A
20 program participant who is unable to obtain employment as a
21 teaching staff member in the State following completion of the
22 program may seek a waiver from the department exempting the
23 program participant from the provisions of this paragraph. The
24 department shall establish guidelines governing the provisions of
25 this subsection.

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27 7. a. A program participant shall receive stipend awards which
28 shall be distributed in such manner as determined by the
29 commissioner and secretary. The total amounts awarded shall be:

30 (1) \$2,000 during stage one of the program;

31 (2) \$10,000 during stage two of the program; and

32 (3) \$15,000 during stage three of the program.

33 b. In order to receive the full amount of the stipend award
34 during stages two and three of the program, a program participant
35 shall be enrolled full-time in a course of study at the institution of
36 higher education that has partnered with the public school under the
37 program and complete all required hours of field experience.

38 c. The commissioner and secretary may determine to provide
39 additional stipend awards to a program participant whose course of
40 study while enrolled in the program may lead to a subject area
41 endorsement in any subject area in which there is a shortage of
42 teachers in the State as determined by the commissioner.

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44 8. A program participant, as a condition of participation, shall
45 be required to adhere to performance standards established by the
46 commissioner in coordination with the secretary. The standards
47 shall include, but not be limited to, requirements that a program
48 participant:

1 to individuals who have completed stage one of the program and
2 non-certificated staff members who have obtained a minimum of 60
3 college credits or an associate degree, and stage three of the
4 program is open to individuals who have completed stage two of the
5 program. Individuals who complete stage three of the program will
6 be awarded a Teacher Resident II credential. Individuals with a
7 Teacher Resident II credential who meet the general certification
8 requirements established by the State Board of Education will be
9 eligible for a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing.

10 As a condition of acceptance into the program, the bill requires a
11 program participant to enter into an agreement with the Department
12 of Education to maintain employment as a teaching staff member in
13 the State for four years following completion of the program. A
14 program participant who is unable to obtain employment as a
15 teaching staff member in the State following completion of the
16 program may seek a waiver from the department from this
17 requirement.

18 Under the bill, a program participant will receive stipend awards,
19 which will be distributed in such manner as determined by the
20 Commissioner of Education and Secretary of Higher Education.
21 The stipends will be awarded as follows: (1) \$2,000 during stage
22 one of the program; (2) \$10,000 during stage two of the program;
23 and (3) \$15,000 during stage three of the program. In order to
24 receive the full stipend award during stages two and three, the
25 program participant must be enrolled full-time in an institution of
26 higher education and complete all required hours of field
27 experience. The bill permits the commissioner and secretary to
28 provide additional stipend awards to a program participant whose
29 course of study while enrolled in the program may lead to a subject
30 area endorsement in any subject area in which there is a shortage of
31 teachers in the State as determined by the commissioner.

32 The bill requires program participants to adhere to certain
33 performance standards as a condition of participation in the
34 program.