

STATE OF NEW YORK

10887

IN ASSEMBLY

April 8, 2026

Introduced by M. of A. MAHER -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing an innovative learning grant program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

- 1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "New York innovative learning models act".
- 3 § 2. Findings and purposes. 1. The legislature finds that:
- 4 a. Rapid shifts in technology, workforce needs and educational deliv-
5 ery methods call for more flexible and innovative learning models;
- 6 b. Students in New York state benefit from expanded opportunities that
7 complement traditional classroom instruction through blended, project-
8 based, competency-based, and other models of learning;
- 9 c. To maintain and enhance the competitiveness of New York's economy
10 and meet the needs of employers and communities, the state must support
11 schools and education entities in designing, implementing, and scaling
12 such innovative models; and
- 13 d. A state-led grant program can incentivize and accelerate the
14 adoption and continuous improvement of innovative learning models across
15 the state's varied school districts and types of educational insti-
16 tutions.
- 17 2. It is the purpose of this act to:
- 18 a. Establish a competitive grant program that supports local educa-
19 tional agencies, districts, charter schools, and other eligible entities
20 in the development and implementation of innovative learning models;
- 21 b. Promote research, evaluation and dissemination of best practices
22 for such models; and
- 23 c. Ensure accountability and continuous improvement of participating
24 models to improve student outcomes, including academic achievement,
25 college and career readiness, and equity in access.
- 26 § 3. The education law is amended by adding a new section 3602-g to
27 read as follows:

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 § 3602-g. Innovative learning grant program. 1. Definitions. As used
2 in this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

3 a. "Local education agency" means a public school district, public
4 charter school, board of cooperative educational services, or other
5 public school entity under state law.

6 b. "Eligible entity" means a local education agency or a partnership
7 thereof. For the purposes of this section, entities that have partner-
8 ships with local education agencies may include, but need not be limited
9 to, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, or commu-
10 nity-based organizations that propose to plan, develop or implement an
11 innovative learning model.

12 c. "Innovative learning model" means a school or instructional model
13 that:

14 (i) fundamentally redesigns the learning environment and uses blended,
15 personalized, competency-based, and student-driven approaches;

16 (ii) includes flexible scheduling, modular curricula, adaptive tech-
17 nologies, project-based or experiential learning;

18 (iii) demonstrates potential for improving student outcomes, especial-
19 ly for historically underserved populations; and

20 (iv) has a clearly defined evaluation plan and intends to scale or
21 replicate if effective.

22 2. Innovative learning grant program. a. The department, in consulta-
23 tion with the regents, shall establish an innovative learning grant
24 program. Within amounts appropriated or otherwise available therefor,
25 the department shall award grants to eligible entities for the planning,
26 development, implementation, replication and scaling of innovative
27 learning models.

28 b. No later than twelve months after the effective date of this
29 section and annually thereafter, the department shall publish notice of
30 the availability of funds, application procedures, selection criteria,
31 performance expectations and reporting requirements of the grant
32 program.

33 c. The department shall give priority to proposals that:

34 (i) focus on underserved student populations, including students with
35 disabilities, English language learners, economically disadvantaged
36 students, and rural or urban high-need districts;

37 (ii) demonstrate partnerships across sectors (e.g., K-12, higher
38 education, business, nonprofit);

39 (iii) include rigorous evaluation and measurement of student outcomes;
40 and

41 (iv) have a plan for sustainability and potential for replication.

42 d. An eligible entity that receives a grant pursuant to this section
43 may use such grant funds for activities including but not limited to:

44 (i) designing or redesigning curricula and instructional models;

45 (ii) professional development for educators and staff in new learning
46 models;

47 (iii) technology acquisition and infrastructure to support blended or
48 adaptive learning;

49 (iv) pilot implementation of the innovative model;

50 (v) data systems and assessment tools aligned to the model; and

51 (vi) scaling or replication of successful models across additional
52 schools or districts.

53 e. The grant program may include tiers of awards provided that there
54 are appropriate performance benchmarks for each tier. For the purposes
55 of this section, tiers of awards may include, but need not be limited
56 to, planning grants, implementation grants, and scale-up grants.

1 f. The department shall coordinate dissemination of successful innova-
2 tive learning models, best practices, and lessons learned statewide,
3 including through webinars, reports and state education conferences.

4 3. Evaluation, reporting and accountability. a. Each grantee shall
5 submit annual reports to the department, including baseline and outcome
6 data, implementation milestones, fidelity of model, cost-effectiveness,
7 and plans for future phases.

8 b. The department shall compile and publish a statewide annual report
9 on the grant program. Such report shall include, but need not be limited
10 to, the following data:

11 (i) the number of grants awarded;

12 (ii) the types of models supported;

13 (iii) the student demographics served;

14 (iv) student outcomes;

15 (v) cost metrics; and

16 (vi) policy recommendations.

17 c. The department shall conduct or contract for an independent evalu-
18 ation of the overall grant program every three years. Such evaluation
19 shall assess student achievement, graduation rates, college or career
20 readiness, equity impacts, and scalability of models.

21 d. The department and the regents may suspend or terminate funding for
22 a grantee that:

23 (i) fails to meet agreed performance targets;

24 (ii) fails to submit required reports; or

25 (iii) does not maintain fiscal accountability.

26 4. Nothing in this section shall be construed to restrict the authori-
27 ty of the department to enforce existing state law, regulations and
28 oversight of local education agencies.

29 § 4. The department of education is hereby authorized to promulgate
30 any rules or regulations necessary for the implementation of this act.

31 § 5. Severability clause. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivi-
32 sion, section or part of this act shall be adjudged by any court of
33 competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect,
34 impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in
35 its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section
36 or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judg-
37 ment shall have been rendered. It is hereby declared to be the intent of
38 the legislature that this act would have been enacted even if such
39 invalid provisions had not been included herein.

40 § 6. This act shall take effect immediately.