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:

Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "New York innovative learning models act".

§ 2. Findings and purposes. 1. The legislature finds that:

a. Rapid shifts in technology, workforce needs and educational delivery methods call for more flexible and innovative learning models;

b. Students in New York state benefit from expanded opportunities that complement traditional classroom instruction through blended, project-based, competency-based, and other models of learning;

c. To maintain and enhance the competitiveness of New York's economy and meet the needs of employers and communities, the state must support schools and education entities in designing, implementing, and scaling such innovative models; and

d. A state-led grant program can incentivize and accelerate the adoption and continuous improvement of innovative learning models across the state's varied school districts and types of educational institutions.

2. It is the purpose of this act to:

a. Establish a competitive grant program that supports local educational agencies, districts, charter schools, and other eligible entities in the development and implementation of innovative learning models;

b. Promote research, evaluation and dissemination of best practices for such models; and

c. Ensure accountability and continuous improvement of participating models to improve student outcomes, including academic achievement, college and career readiness, and equity in access.

§ 3. The education law is amended by adding a new section 3602-g to read as follows:

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

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

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

b. "Eligible entity" means a local education agency or a partnership thereof. For the purposes of this section, entities that have partnerships with local education agencies may include, but need not be limited to, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, or community-based organizations that propose to plan, develop or implement an innovative learning model.

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

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

(ii) includes flexible scheduling, modular curricula, adaptive technologies, project-based or experiential learning;

(iii) demonstrates potential for improving student outcomes, especially for historically underserved populations; and

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

2. Innovative learning grant program. a. The department, in consultation with the regents, shall establish an innovative learning grant program. Within amounts appropriated or otherwise available therefor, the department shall award grants to eligible entities for the planning, development, implementation, replication and scaling of innovative learning models.

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

c. The department shall give priority to proposals that:

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

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

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

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

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

(i) designing or redesigning curricula and instructional models;

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

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

(iv) pilot implementation of the innovative model;

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

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

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

f. The department shall coordinate dissemination of successful innovative learning models, best practices, and lessons learned statewide, including through webinars, reports and state education conferences.

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

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

(i) the number of grants awarded;

(ii) the types of models supported;

(iii) the student demographics served;

(iv) student outcomes;

(v) cost metrics; and

(vi) policy recommendations.

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

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

(i) fails to meet agreed performance targets;

(ii) fails to submit required reports; or

(iii) does not maintain fiscal accountability.

4. Nothing in this section shall be construed to restrict the authority of the department to enforce existing state law, regulations and oversight of local education agencies.

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

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

§ 6. This act shall take effect immediately.