

**SENATE BILL NO. 4678**  
**(First Reprint)**

To the Senate:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Bill No. 4678 (First Reprint) with my recommendations for reconsideration.

The bill expands the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics teacher ("STEM") grant program. Under the STEM grant program, the Department of Education ("department") awards grants to incentivize public school teachers to teach STEM classes in nonpublic schools during hours mutually agreed upon by the teacher, district, and nonpublic school. This bill would expand the STEM grant program by allowing retired teachers and faculty members at county colleges that currently teach STEM courses to participate in the program. To assist with the implementation of the expanded program, the bill authorizes the department to contract with a third party to facilitate the award of grant funds to retired teachers and community college faculty members.

I commend the sponsors of this legislation for working to expand this innovative program that has increased access to advanced STEM education programs across the State. The further expansion of the program, which I first signed into law in 2019, will provide public-school and community college educators with greater flexibility and compensation to provide STEM education to nonpublic school students. The program advances multiple important policy goals, including incentivizing committed, well-qualified candidates to pursue a career in teaching, ensuring educational equity for every student in New Jersey, regardless of what school they attend, and instilling in our students the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in the State's burgeoning innovation economy.

While I support the goals of this legislation, I am suggesting several minor changes to simplify the administration of the expanded STEM program and better align the program with the existing scope of operations of the department. In the department's traditional role of interfacing with school districts, the inclusion of retired teachers and community college faculty in the STEM grant program presents special challenges which my recommended changes seek to ameliorate by authorizing the department to provide available grant funding to one or more nonprofit organizations to ensure that the resources available to the program are disbursed in an effective and efficient manner. Under my amendments, the department will pursue partnerships with organizations that have experience with the unique administrative and operational requirements of educators who are not employed by a public school district. With these changes, this legislation will help progress our shared goal of advancing educational opportunities in STEM fields that drive innovation and strengthen our State.

Therefore, I herewith return Senate Bill No. 4678 (First Reprint) and recommend that it be amended as follows:

<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 13:</u>	Delete ", was previously employed as a"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Lines 14-16:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 17:</u>	Delete "in a collective bargaining agreement,"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 30:</u>	After "(C.18A:6-138);" insert "or"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 31:</u>	Delete "or was previously employed"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 37:</u>	Delete ";" or (5)" and insert "'Eligible retired teacher'" means an individual who was previously employed as a teacher in a public school and is receiving a retirement allowance under the Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund for

reasons other than disability, and who holds a valid and effective standard instructional certificate issued by the State Board of Examiners with an endorsement in a science field, mathematics, technology education, computer science education, or other STEM subject or area.

"Eligible county college faculty member" means an individual who"

Page 2, Section 1, Line 40:

After "area" insert "and who participates in a collective bargaining agreement"

Page 3, Section 2, Line 21-22:

Delete "or previously employed"

Page 3, Section 2, Lines 22-23:

Delete "or currently employed by a county college"

Page 3, Section 2, Line 23:

After "renumeration" insert ", pursuant to the provisions of section 3 of P.L.2019, c.256 (C.18A:6-139), and an eligible retired teacher or eligible county college faculty member may receive renumeration, pursuant to the provisions of section 4 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill),"

Page 3, Section 2, Lines 27-28:

Delete ", and the school district in which the eligible teacher is employed as applicable, in which" and insert "and school districts, as applicable, or with eligible retired teachers, eligible county college faculty members, and the nonprofit selected pursuant to section 4 of P.L. , c. (C ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), as applicable, and under which partnerships"

Page 3, Section 2, Line 29:

After "teacher" insert ", eligible retired teacher, or eligible county college faculty member"

Page 3, Section 2, Line 35:

After "program" insert "administered pursuant to section 3 of P.L.2019, c.256 (C.18A:6-139)"

Page 3, Section 2, Line 36:

Delete "and retired"

Page 3, Section 2, Lines 36-37:

Delete "and current county college faculty members"

<u>Page 3, Section 2, Line 42:</u>	Delete "and county colleges"
<u>Page 4, Section 2, Line 1:</u>	After "program" insert "administered pursuant to section 3 of P.L.2019, c.256 (C.18A:6-139)"
<u>Page 4, Section 3, Lines 21-22:</u>	Delete "or county college"
<u>Page 5, Section 3, Line 25:</u>	Delete "Grant funds for approved"
<u>Page 5, Section 3, Lines 26-34:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 5, Section 3, Line 41:</u>	Delete ";" and insert ".."
<u>Page 5, Section 3, Lines 42-47:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 6, Section 3, Line 9-10:</u>	Delete "teachers who are"
<u>Page 6, Section 3, Line 10:</u>	After "or" insert "eligible"
<u>Page 6, Section 3, Line 10:</u>	After "members" insert "pursuant to section 4 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)"
<u>Page 6, Section 3, Lines 39-40:</u>	Delete "or a county college"
<u>Page 6, Section 3, Line 40:</u>	Delete "or county college"
<u>Page 6, Section 3, Line 44:</u>	After "years." insert "h. The provisions of this section shall not be deemed to apply to the provisions of section 4 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)."
<u>Page 7 Section 4, Line 5:</u>	After "4." insert "a. The Commissioner of Education may award a grant consistent with the provisions of this section for the purposes of allowing an eligible retired teacher or eligible county college faculty member to receive remuneration to teach science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) classes, or other STEM subject or area at a nonpublic school.  b. In accordance with the provisions of this section, subject to available appropriations, and in compliance with section 1 of P.L.1987, c.7 (C.52:14-34.4), the Commissioner of Education shall award funding as a grant or grants to one or more nonprofit organizations for the purpose of allowing eligible retired teachers and eligible county college

faculty members to teach STEM classes in non-public schools. Such organization or organizations shall review applications submitted by individuals for participation as an eligible retired teacher or eligible college county faculty members. A nonprofit organization awarded a grant pursuant to this subparagraph shall provide funding to eligible retired teachers and eligible county college faculty members in accordance with the provisions of subsection d. of this section.

c. The commissioner shall establish eligibility criteria and program requirements. Only secular instruction shall be provided pursuant to participation in the program. To the maximum extent possible, the Commissioner of Education shall select one or more non-profit organizations that are able to administer the program across the northern, central, and southern regions of the State.

d. A participating eligible retired teacher or eligible county college faculty member shall receive grants in 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.

e. The grant program shall not infringe upon the collective bargaining agreement between the majority representative of the collective negotiations unit in which a participating eligible county college faculty member is a member and the county college for which the eligible county college faculty member is employed.

f. 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.  
g."

Page 7, Section 5, Line 26:

[seal]

Delete "immediately" and  
insert "July 1, 2026"

Respectfully,

/s/ Philip D. Murphy

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Kate E. McDonnell

Chief Counsel to the Governor