

REFERENCE TITLE: project rocket pilot program; appropriations

State of Arizona
House of Representatives
Fifty-fourth Legislature
Second Regular Session
2020

HB 2762

Introduced by

Representatives Udall: Blackman, Espinoza, Hernandez A, Lawrence,
Lieberman, Longdon, Nutt, Osborne, Pawlik, Payne, Shope, Sierra, Thorpe,
Weninger, Senators Boyer, Brophy McGee, Carter, Kerr, Livingston, Pratt

AN ACT

ESTABLISHING THE PROJECT ROCKET PILOT PROGRAM; APPROPRIATING MONIES.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Project rocket pilot program; fund; distributions;
3 improvement plans; request for proposals;
4 independent school improvement experts;
5 reporting requirements; delayed repeal

6 A. The project rocket pilot program is established to improve
7 academic outcomes for all students in schools that meet the eligibility
8 requirements prescribed in subsection C of this section. Schools that
9 receive funding pursuant to this section shall prioritize these resources
10 to implement evidence-based, proven strategies to increase academic gain
11 and graduation rates for students who are struggling academically due to
12 socioeconomic factors such as poverty, adverse childhood experiences and
13 English language acquisition.

14 B. The project rocket fund is established for the purposes of this
15 section. The fund consists of legislative appropriations, gifts, grants,
16 donations and any other monies transferred to the fund. The department of
17 education shall administer the fund at the direction of the state board of
18 education. Monies in the fund are continuously appropriated and are
19 exempt from the provisions of section 35-190, Arizona Revised Statutes,
20 relating to lapsing of appropriations. The department of education may
21 accept and spend federal monies and private grants, gifts, contributions
22 and devises to assist in carrying out the purposes of this section. These
23 monies do not revert to the state general fund at the end of a fiscal
24 year.

25 C. For fiscal years 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, at the
26 direction of the state board of education, the department of education
27 shall distribute monies from the project rocket fund to school districts
28 and charter schools as follows:

29 1. Each school operated by a school district or charter holder that
30 received a letter grade of C during the prior fiscal year pursuant to
31 section 15-241, Arizona Revised Statutes, shall receive \$150 per student
32 from the fund if at least sixty percent of the pupils enrolled in the
33 school meet the eligibility requirements established under the national
34 school lunch and child nutrition acts (42 United States Code sections 1751
35 through 1793) for free or reduced-price lunches, or an equivalent measure
36 recognized for participating in the federal free and reduced-price lunch
37 program and other school programs dependent on a poverty measure,
38 including the community eligibility provision for which free and
39 reduced-lunch data is not available.

40 2. Each school operated by a school district or charter holder that
41 received a letter grade of D during the prior fiscal year pursuant to
42 section 15-241, Arizona Revised Statutes, shall receive \$150 per student
43 from the fund.

1 3. Each school operated by a school district or charter holder that
2 received a letter grade of F during the prior fiscal year pursuant to
3 section 15-241, Arizona Revised Statutes, shall receive \$150 per student
4 from the fund.

5 D. Any monies a school district or charter holder receives from the
6 project rocket fund shall be separately accounted for in the school
7 district's or charter holder's annual financial report.

8 E. All monies received pursuant to this section shall be spent at a
9 qualifying school site.

10 F. To participate in the project rocket pilot program, an eligible
11 school shall file a notice of intent to participate with the state board
12 of education not later than July 1, 2020. The department of education
13 shall disburse a payment equal to one-fourth of the annual funding amount
14 under this section to the school district or charter school on the state
15 board of education's receipt of the notice. The department shall disburse
16 the remainder of the funding for that fiscal year on the state board of
17 education's approval of the school's improvement plan submitted pursuant
18 to subsection G, H or I of this section.

19 G. Not later than October 1, 2020, a school district or charter
20 holder of a school that meets the requirements prescribed in subsection C,
21 paragraph 1 or 2 of this section shall submit to the state board of
22 education an improvement plan to improve student outcomes, which may
23 include targeted academic interventions, class size reduction as defined
24 in section 15-977, Arizona Revised Statutes, professional development,
25 adaptive technology or other evidence-based, proven strategies to close
26 the achievement gap. The plan must also identify a mentor who can assist
27 with academic achievement. The mentor must be a current or former school
28 leader with a demonstrable record of leading a successful school
29 improvement effort and must commit to providing regular check-ins and
30 advice to the project rocket school leader whom the person is mentoring.
31 Instead of identifying a mentor as described in this subsection, the
32 school district or charter holder may elect to partner with an approved
33 independent school improvement expert from the partner network list
34 identified by the state board of education pursuant to subsection J of
35 this section to implement the improvement plan developed under this
36 subsection.

37 H. The school district governing board of a school that meets the
38 requirements prescribed in subsection C, paragraph 3 of this section is
39 subject to both of the following:

40 1. The school district governing board shall establish a project
41 rocket committee composed of all of the following:

42 (a) A school district governing board member.

43 (b) The superintendent of the school district.

44 (c) The school principal from the identified school.

1 (d) A teacher from the identified school.
2 (e) The parent of a child who attends the identified school.
3 2. Not later than October 1, 2020, the project rocket committee
4 shall submit an improvement plan to the state board of education to
5 improve student outcomes, which may include targeted academic
6 interventions, class size reduction as defined in section 15-977, Arizona
7 Revised Statutes, professional development, adaptive technology or other
8 evidence-based, proven strategies to close the achievement gap. The
9 project rocket committee shall partner with an approved independent school
10 improvement expert from the partner network list identified by the state
11 board of education pursuant to subsection J of this section to implement
12 the improvement plan developed under this subsection.
13 I. The charter holder of a charter school that meets the
14 requirements prescribed in subsection C, paragraph 3 of this section is
15 subject to both of the following:
16 1. The charter holder shall establish a project rocket committee
17 composed of all of the following:
18 (a) A member of the governing body of the identified charter
19 school.
20 (b) The chief administrative officer of the identified charter
21 school.
22 (c) The school principal from the identified charter school.
23 (d) A teacher from the identified charter school.
24 (e) The parent of a child who attends the identified charter
25 school.
26 2. Not later than October 1, 2020, the project rocket committee
27 shall submit an improvement plan to the state board of education to
28 improve student outcomes, which may include targeted academic
29 interventions, adjustment of teacher and principal salaries, class size
30 reduction as defined in section 15-977, Arizona Revised Statutes,
31 professional development, adaptive technology or other evidence-based,
32 proven strategies to close the achievement gap. The project rocket
33 committee shall partner with an approved independent school improvement
34 expert from the partner network list identified by the state board of
35 education pursuant to subsection J of this section to implement the
36 improvement plan developed under this subsection.
37 J. On or before August 30, 2020, the state board of education shall
38 identify two or more approved independent school improvement experts to be
39 included on a partner network list through a request for proposals
40 process. A school district or the charter holder of a school that meets
41 the requirements prescribed in subsection C, paragraph 3 of this section
42 shall select an approved independent school improvement expert from the
43 partner network list to implement, in partnership with the school's
44 project rocket committee, the improvement plan submitted under subsection
45 H or I of this section. A state agency, or any subsidiary of the state

1 agency, that meets the criteria prescribed in subsections K and L of this
2 section is eligible for inclusion on the partner network list.

3 K. For the purposes of subsection J of this section, the state
4 board of education shall award contracts to independent school improvement
5 experts who meet all of the following requirements:

6 1. Have a credible track record of improving student academic
7 achievement in public schools with various demographic characteristics, as
8 measured by statewide assessments.

9 2. Have experience designing, implementing and evaluating
10 data-driven instructional systems in public schools.

11 3. Have experience coaching public school administrators and
12 teachers on designing and implementing data-driven school improvement
13 plans.

14 4. Have experience delivering high-quality professional development
15 and coaching in instructional effectiveness to public school
16 administrators and teachers.

17 L. In addition to assisting in implementing the improvement plan
18 prescribed in subsection H or I of this section, the independent school
19 improvement expert shall provide ongoing support to the school, including
20 the following:

21 1. Collecting and analyzing data on student achievement.

22 2. Recommending changes to the school to improve student
23 achievement.

24 3. Monitoring the implementation of the improvement plan.

25 4. Providing implementation support for the improvement plan.

26 5. Providing any other services required by the state board of
27 education.

28 M. If a participating school is not demonstrating academic growth
29 or is otherwise dissatisfied with the services provided by the contracted
30 independent school improvement expert, the school may submit a request to
31 the state board of education to cancel that contract and select a
32 different independent school improvement expert.

33 N. The state board of education shall review all plans submitted
34 under this section within ninety days after submission. The state board
35 of education shall approve all plans submitted that meet the criteria
36 prescribed in subsection G of this section.

37 O. If a school district has an existing improvement plan under any
38 provision of title 15, Arizona Revised Statutes, on file with the
39 department of education, the plan submitted under subsection H of this
40 section must attempt to align with or expand on the existing improvement
41 plan.

42 P. The state board of education may adopt rules, policies and
43 procedures to carry out this section, including rules to establish an
44 appeals process for a school that does not receive approval of its plan.

1 Q. The state board of education shall direct the department of
2 education to provide payments to schools for the project rocket pilot
3 program on July 1 of each year, except in fiscal year 2020-2021 pursuant
4 to subsection F of this section. If the appropriated amount is not
5 sufficient to fully pay each school, the department of education shall
6 proportionately allocate the funding per student.

7 R. On or before June 1 of each year, each school that received
8 monies pursuant to this section in the prior fiscal year shall submit a
9 report to the state board of education that briefly describes how the
10 improvement plan developed under subsection G, H or I of this section has
11 improved academic improvement. The state board of education may request
12 additional reports as needed throughout the year to assess a school's
13 progress. The state board of education shall review each improvement plan
14 annually. If any improvement plan or report is not submitted, the state
15 board of education may withhold monies under this section until the plan
16 or report is submitted according to this section.

17 S. On or before October 1, 2021 and October 1, 2022, the state
18 board of education shall compile each report submitted pursuant to
19 subsection R of this section and provide that information to the joint
20 legislative budget committee, the governor's office of strategic planning
21 and budgeting and the chairpersons of the education committees of the
22 house of representatives and the senate, or their successor committees.

23 T. For the purposes of this section, only students who are eligible
24 to be included in a school's student count shall be considered in
25 determining that school's percentage of free or reduced-price lunch
26 students or other poverty indicators.

27 U. On or before December 1, 2023, the state board of education
28 shall submit a final report on the project rocket pilot program to the
29 governor, the president of the senate, the speaker of the house of
30 representatives, the joint legislative budget committee and the governor's
31 office of strategic planning and budgeting and shall provide a copy of the
32 report to the secretary of state. The report shall include information on
33 all of the following:

34 1. The schools and independent school improvement experts that
35 participated in the project rocket pilot program.

36 2. The academic progress of schools participating in the project
37 rocket pilot program.

38 3. Any other information necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of
39 the project rocket pilot program.

40 V. This section is repealed from and after December 31, 2023.

41 Sec. 2. Appropriations; project rocket fund; state board of
42 education

43 A. The sum of \$42,614,500 is appropriated from the state general
44 fund in each of fiscal years 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 to the
45 project rocket fund established by section 1 of this act.

1 B. The sum of \$1,000,000 and seven FTEs are appropriated from the
2 state general fund in each of fiscal years 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and
3 2022-2023 to the state board of education to administer the project rocket
4 pilot program established by section 1 of this act.

5 Sec. 3. Retroactivity

6 This act applies retroactively to from and after June 30, 2020.