

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.

(d) A teacher from the identified school.

(e) The parent of a child who attends the identified school.

2. Not later than October 1, 2020, the project rocket committee shall submit an improvement plan to the state board of education to improve student outcomes, which may include targeted academic interventions, class size reduction as defined in section 15-977, Arizona Revised Statutes, professional development, adaptive technology or other evidence-based, proven strategies to close the achievement gap. The project rocket committee shall partner with an approved independent school improvement expert from the partner network list identified by the state board of education pursuant to subsection J of this section to implement the improvement plan developed under this subsection.

I. The charter holder of a charter school that meets the requirements prescribed in subsection C, paragraph 3 of this section is subject to both of the following:

1. The charter holder shall establish a project rocket committee composed of all of the following:

(a) A member of the governing body of the identified charter school.

(b) The chief administrative officer of the identified charter school.

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

(d) A teacher from the identified charter school.

(e) The parent of a child who attends the identified charter school.

2. Not later than October 1, 2020, the project rocket committee shall submit an improvement plan to the state board of education to improve student outcomes, which may include targeted academic interventions, adjustment of teacher and principal salaries, class size reduction as defined in section 15-977, Arizona Revised Statutes, professional development, adaptive technology or other evidence-based, proven strategies to close the achievement gap. The project rocket committee shall partner with an approved independent school improvement expert from the partner network list identified by the state board of education pursuant to subsection J of this section to implement the improvement plan developed under this subsection.

J. On or before August 30, 2020, the state board of education shall identify two or more approved independent school improvement experts to be included on a partner network list through a request for proposals process. A school district or the charter holder of a school that meets the requirements prescribed in subsection C, paragraph 3 of this section shall select an approved independent school improvement expert from the partner network list to implement, in partnership with the school's project rocket committee, the improvement plan submitted under subsection 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.