

SENATE No. 2862

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

—
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**
—

SENATE, December 24, 2025.

The committee on Education to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 457) of Bruce E. Tarr for legislation to provide grants and other support to programs administered by local school districts that engage project-centered group learning methods in grades 5-8, report the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2862).

For the committee,
Jason M. Lewis

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An Act to establish the Middle School Innovation Fund.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. There is hereby established and set up on the books of the commonwealth,
2 the Commonwealth Middle School Innovation Fund, the purpose of which shall be to provide
3 grants and other support to programs administered by local school districts and community
4 partners that engage project-centered group learning methods in grades 5-8 that integrate
5 multiple areas of subject matter including but not limited to science and mathematics, promote
6 learning among students at various skill levels, and seek to comport with the requirements of
7 time on learning as contained in statute and regulations promulgated by the department of
8 elementary and secondary education, including but not limited to 603 CMR 27.00.

9 Such grants may be used for purposes including but not limited to personnel costs,
10 curriculum development and design, and materials.

11 SECTION 2. Amounts shall be credited to the fund from legislative appropriation, gifts,
12 grants, and other sources, provided that the department of elementary and secondary education
13 shall work to identify and secure such grants to the maximum feasible extent. Amounts

14 contained in the fund shall not revert to the general fund, but shall remain available for
15 expenditure by the department, which shall promulgate regulations to distribute such grants in a
16 fair and equitable manner. In doing so the department shall consider factors including but not
17 limited to geographic distribution, distribution across the range of sizes of local school districts
18 and community partners across the commonwealth, and maximizing the impact of such grants in
19 developing programs and curriculum that are replicable and sustainable for such districts and
20 community partners.

21 SECTION 3. The fund shall be administered by the department, which shall develop and
22 maintain the Commonwealth Middle School Innovation Council for the purposes of advising the
23 department for the purposes of maximizing the effectiveness, sustainability, and practicality of
24 programs funded in whole or in part by such grants. Said council shall be chaired by the
25 commissioner of the department, and shall also include the secretary of education and the
26 secretary of energy and economic development, and 9 additional members to be appointed by the
27 governor, 1 of whom shall represent the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, 1 of
28 whom shall represent the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, 3 of whom shall
29 represent middle school educators from diverse geographic regions in the commonwealth, 1 of
30 whom shall represent local charitable education foundations, 2 of whom shall represent parents
31 of middle school students in the commonwealth, 1 of whom shall represent an an organized labor
32 organization representing educators in the commonwealth, and 1 of whom shall represent an
33 institution of higher learning in the commonwealth with expertise in education and science,
34 mathematics, and engineering. The council shall meet not less than twice per calendar year,
35 provided that its meetings shall be public and shall provide for remote observation by the public
36 through electronic means.

37 SECTION 4. The department shall produce an annual report detailing the amounts and
38 recipients of grants pursuant to this section, any innovative programs developed or supported by
39 such grants, opportunities for replication of such programs, and any legislative or regulatory
40 recommendations to improve or support the work of the fund. Said report shall be filed with the
41 clerks of the House and Senate, whom shall post them electronically for public inspection, not
42 later than December 31 of each calendar year.