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Governor Phil Murphy

ICYMI: New Jersey Department of Education Announces First-in-the-Nation \$4.5 Million Grant to Support Climate Change Education in Schools

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TRENTON, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) today announced the availability of \$4.5 million in state grants to fund locally focused climate change education in New Jersey schools.

The "Climate Awareness Education: Implementing the NJSLs for Climate Change" grants will help schools meet New Jersey's first-in-the-nation climate-change standards. In 2020, climate change was incorporated across the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLs), which provide what students are expected to learn in nine content areas such as science, social studies, health, and visual/performing arts.

"As New Jersey continues to transition to a green economy, it will be imperative to prepare our students to take on the jobs of the future," said Governor Phil Murphy. "Our civic leaders, policy makers, journalists, teachers, and many others will need climate literacy to successfully achieve our environmental goals. These grants will provide schools with the tools they need to ensure that New Jersey continues to be a leader in the fight against climate change."

"Incorporating climate change education across our learning standards was just the first step in our effort to fully prepare New Jersey's students for the jobs of tomorrow and the challenges they will face as a result of the climate crisis. Now, this grant funding will support educators as they develop local initiatives, ideas, and classroom-specific lessons," said First Lady Tammy Murphy, who has championed the effort to incorporate climate change instruction across New Jersey's learning standards. "These learning standards are more than just a new requirement, they are a symbol of the partnership between generations, and I am excited to see them come to life through our best-in-the-nation educators."

"Educators are rising to the challenge of implementing thoughtful, student-centered approaches to build climate-change instruction into the classroom," said Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education. "I believe our groundbreaking statewide learning standards, coupled with the dynamic instruction taking place in the classroom, will be a model of climate change education for the entire country."

While the state sets overarching learning standards, local school districts design the day-to-day classroom curriculum that helps students meet the standards. The Climate Awareness Education grants are designed to help schools implement hands-on, experiential learning opportunities for students; create "Green Teams" of students and educators to provide leadership and support local initiatives; establish professional development for teachers; and offer curriculum development and instructional materials aligned with the State's learning standards.

All public school districts, charter schools, and renaissance school projects in New Jersey are eligible to apply for a share of the funding, which was part of Governor Murphy's Fiscal Year 2023 budget.

School districts and charter/renaissance schools will have until mid-March to apply for the funding. Districts that apply will get an equal share of the funding, with the 31 Schools Development Authority districts receiving an additional 15 percent. The application process will be streamlined to allow grant funding to be distributed for use in the current school year for schools that have programs ready to be implemented. Funds are to be used by June 30, 2023.

For more information on climate education in new Jersey, visit NJ Climate Change Education Resources (https://www.nj.gov/education/standards/climate/index.shtml).

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