

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Award Schools with Securing Our Children's Future Bond Act Grants

07/2/2021

\$317.2 million in awards will be granted in the initial round of SOCFBA

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy signed legislation to award school districts and county colleges with grants through the Securing Our Children's Future Bond Act (SOCFBA). The grants will fund school security, water infrastructure improvements, and enhancement of career and technical education (CTE) in county vocational-technical school districts and county colleges

The first round of grants, which the Governor transmitted to the Legislature for approval in May (</governor/news/news/562021/approved/20210528c.shtml>), will total \$317.2 million and be distributed by the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) and the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE). Funds will be disbursed on a rolling basis contingent on final grant revisions and recipient submissions of reimbursement requests.

The SOCFBA is supported by \$500 million in bonds approved by New Jersey voters in November 2018. Second-round details and applications will be announced at a later date.

"We must ensure a safe and high-quality educational experience for students across our state," **said Governor Murphy**. "These projects will help our school districts and institutions of higher education keep students safe and healthy, while also ensuring that they are ready for the careers of future."

"This is an investment that will benefit students throughout the state," **said Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. "It will lead to safer school facilities, ensure clean water, and help county vocational-technical schools grow programs to provide career readiness skills that students need."

"One of our Higher Education State Plan goals is for every student to have high-quality, career-relevant academic programs that prepare them for success. That is exactly what this funding will be used for: enhancing access to experiential learning opportunities at our state's county colleges that will equip students with in-demand skills needed to compete in a competitive job market," **said Higher Education Secretary Dr. Brian Bridges**. "These critical projects and investments will help prepare today's students for in-demand, high-paying careers needed to enhance New Jersey's economic success."

"The signing of this package of bills into law is a way of investing in the hopes and dreams of our children," **said Senate President Steve Sweeney**. "Enacting these measures provides them with enormous opportunities to learn and grow, to develop job skills for the modern workforce, to improve safety and security in schoolrooms, and protect their health and well-being by ensuring clean water. In all of these ways, we are safeguarding our most precious resource: our children."

"The safety and security of our students and educators is paramount in every school across the state. This is why it is important we improve the security infrastructure in our schools," **said Senator Ron Rice**. "The safety procedures established in Alyssa's Law are a roadmap for how school districts can install important security systems, such as silent panic alarms, shatter-resistant glass and cameras."

Governor Murphy signed the following:

A-5886/S-3959 (Caputo, Stanley, Reynolds-Jackson, Moen/Addiego, Turner) - Appropriates \$66,173,243 for School Security Projects

The SOCFBA allocated funds for the installation of silent panic alarms to alert law enforcement during an emergency as

required by Alyssa's Law, and for other school security upgrades. Other school security upgrades include exterior lighting improvements, surveillance cameras, intercoms, remote locking/unlocking doors, shatter-resistant glass, signage improvements, generator installation, and impact-rated vehicle barriers.

Assembly sponsors Ralph Caputo, Sterley Stanley, Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, and Bill Moen issued the following joint statement: "School shootings are horrific tragedies that take far too many lives throughout our country each year. It is better to prepare for the possibility of a school shooting than it is to leave our schools undefended on the assumption it could never happen here. This funding will allow more schools to implement security measures that would help protect students and staff in the event of an emergency. Making our schools safer is one crucial way we can secure our children's futures."

The first round of the SOCFBA will fund 494 proposed projects. These grants will be administered by the DOE.

For the list of round-one projects in this category, click here

(https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20210528/84/4e/90/93/fb91130435c63606b1ede25e/5.28_School_Security_Table.pdf).

A-5887/S-3960 (Benson, Jimenez, Taliaferro, Calabrese/Cunningham, Turner) - Appropriates \$6,608,212 for Water Infrastructure Projects

The SOCFBA allocated funds for the construction, reconstruction, repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of water supply infrastructure in K-12 schools.

Assembly sponsors Daniel Benson, Angelica Jimenez, Adam Taliaferro, and Clinton Calabrese issued the following joint statement: "In recent years, New Jersey has begun taking steps to tackle the issue of unsafe lead levels in more than 100 water systems throughout our state by implementing thorough testing protocols, working to replace service lines, and more. We must continue to seek ways to protect residents – especially children, who are highly vulnerable to the harmful effects of lead. Ensuring our schools have the resources they need to minimize or prevent lead exposure will help them protect the health and well-being of our children."

The first round of the SOCFBA will fund 26 proposed projects. These grants will be administered by the DOE. The second round of grant funding will be issued following lead testing results required during the 2021-2022 school year.

For the list of round-one projects in this category, click here

(https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20210528/fa/6c/cb/76/82cfa902525ddce869df1c90/5.28_Water_Infrs_Table.pdf).

A-5888/S-3961 (DeAngelo, Armato, Quijano, McKnight/Cunningham, Ruiz) - Appropriates \$26,456,996 for County College CTE Projects

The SOCFBA allocated funds for county colleges to construct or expand classrooms, laboratories, libraries, computer facilities, and other academic structures to increase CTE program capacity.

"We need to expand our educational programs surrounding vocational and job-ready skills," **said Assemblyman Wayne DeAngelo.** "There is a great demand for technically-trained and skilled workers in New Jersey, but not enough students are graduating with the expertise and skills required. We need to educate students on their projected fields of work and help them become employed."

"Students need to be given the ability to train in subjects that encompass the future needs of business in our communities," **said Assemblyman John Armato.** "This is not an overnight process, and a great deal of funding is required to ensure that those attending county colleges receive the tools and proper education for successful futures."

"This initiative will go a long way toward enabling New Jersey residents to obtain employment in their own communities," **said Assemblywoman Annette Quijano.** "Many graduates are employed in occupations separate from the diplomas they received in college. We need to give people the expertise to graduate and make an immediate impact in the workforce. The first round of the SOCFBA will fund nine proposed projects. These funds will be administered OSHE with the support of the Educational Facilities Authority (EFA).

For the list of round-one projects in this category, click here.

(https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20210528/4d/31/88/5c/3e7c64fbb7526919e79952c7/5.28_CC_CTE_Table_FINAL.pdf).

A-5889/S-3962 (Mazzeo, Zwicker, Johnson, Lopez, Wimberly/Sweeney, Turner, Ruiz) - Appropriates \$222,904,769 for County Vocational School District CTE Projects

The SOCFBA allocated funds for construction projects that support CTE program expansion for County Vocational School

Districts (CVSD). These projects will fund renovation and new construction to increase student capacity in select county vocational CTE programs, including related demolition, site improvements and physical plant upgrades, and furniture and equipment in renovated, reassigned, or new spaces related to county vocational CTE program expansion. Applicants were required to demonstrate that new student seats would be in county vocational CTE programs that prepare students for high-demand, technically skilled careers.

The first round of the SOCFBA will fund 17 proposed projects. These grants will be administered by DOE.

For the list of round-one projects in this category, click here.

(https://d31hzlhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20210701/6e/13/b0/d9/82e9b7195128c1bd79d2be1b/7.2_CTE_CVSD.pdf)

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