

Governor Phil Murphy

Murphy Signs Legislation Awarding a Second Round of Securing Our Children's Future Bond Act Grants to Schools

07/29/2022

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed A4224/S2830 and A4225/S2831 into law, awarding school districts and county colleges a second round of grant funding through the Securing Our Children's Future Bond Act (SOCFBA). The grants will fund improvements to and enhancements of career and technical education (CTE) programs in county vocational-technical school districts (CVSD) and county colleges throughout the State. Funds from the SOCFBA must be used to directly expand CTE program enrollment through constructing and/or expanding classrooms, laboratories, libraries, computer facilities, and other academic structures that will provide direct benefits to students.

"Funding that aids our career and technical education programs in county vocational-technical school districts and county colleges will give New Jersey students the skills they need to stand out in a competitive job market," said **Governor Murphy**. "New Jersey is the top ranked state in the nation for public school education and I will continue to put pen to paper on legislation, like these two bills, that will help keep us on top."

The second round of grants, which the Governor transmitted to the Legislature for approval in May, will total nearly \$57 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.

With this second round of funding, the State has awarded over \$305 million in CTE projects. The first round of grant funding for CVSDs and county colleges totaled nearly \$250 million and was awarded last summer. The SOCFBA is supported by \$500 million in bonds approved by New Jersey voters in November 2018 to expand county college and vocational school CTE programs, enhance K-12 security, and support water infrastructure improvements in New Jersey schools.

"The Securing Our Children's Future Bond Act has helped further our mission to provide equitable access to career and technical education programs throughout our state," said **Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. "The range of projects from the selected county vocational technical schools are innovative and align with high-demand careers in New Jersey. Our students will be ready for the careers of the future."

"Equipping students with industry-valued credentials through authentic learning experiences in high-demand fields is critical in today's world," said **Dr. Brian K. Bridges, Secretary of Higher Education**. "These grants will enable our institutions to rise to the challenge of ensuring our students receive the best possible preparation for success in the global economy."

"The signing of these bills marks an important continuation of investments to boost opportunities for training and experiential learning that will support New Jersey's next generation of skilled-labor," said **Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin**. "Making sure we maintain and boost access to a wide array of educational opportunities, so all students can pursue their interests and fulfill their full potential, helps propel innovation forward. Equipping a robust workforce is about our future and remains critically important to our state's contributions here at home and abroad as we grow and diversify our industry."

A4224/S2830 appropriates \$19,993,837 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.

The second round of the SOCFBA will fund six projects in this category, including:

- Camden County College - \$4,000,000
- Essex County College - \$4,000,000
- Passaic County College - \$3,381,337
- Raritan Valley Community College - \$4,000,000
- Rowan College of South Jersey - \$3,750,000
- Sussex County Community College - \$862,5000

A4225/S2831 appropriates \$36,960,028 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), in accordance with labor market demands and economic development goals. 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 second round of SOCFBA will fund six projects in this category, including:

- Burlington (Medford) - \$5,895,488
- Burlington (Westampton) - \$10,416,657
- Cape May - \$14,450,859
- Salem - \$2,250,000
- Hunterdon - \$3,750,000
- Passaic - \$197,024

DOE and OSHE will be announcing additional SOCFBA funding opportunities later this year.

"Career and technical education trains students for a wide range of jobs, such as engineering, architecture, social services, education, hospitality, and performing arts," said **Senator Linda Greenstein**. "As our students prepare for life after college, it is imperative we ensure they are ready to enter the labor market; this money from the 'Securing Our Children's Future Fund' will benefit a number of New Jersey college students."

"Many students begin their post-secondary education at county colleges, and it is vital that we make certain these schools have the resources needed to aid and elevate the learning experience," said **Senator James Beach**. "This law (S-2830) is a critical asset in ensuring that our county colleges are able to deliver a world-class career and technical education to our students."

"Our vocational schools provide a unique source of education, allowing students to receive both academic and technical education while learning the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in their field of work," said **Senator Vin Gopal**. "The funds made available under this law (S-2831) will ensure that our vocational students continue to receive a quality education that will fully prepare them for careers beyond graduation."

"Giving New Jersey county colleges all of the tools necessary to deliver competitive career and technical education opportunities to students is critical," said **Assembly members Gabriela Mosquera, Roy Freiman and Mila Jasey, sponsors of A-4224**. "Whether these students choose to continue pursuing higher education or enter the workforce after leaving our county colleges, the 'Securing Our Children's Future Fund' ensures they are prepared and ready to succeed."

"With the 'Securing Our Children's Future Fund', we are equipping New Jersey's vocational schools with the resources necessary to teach job-ready skills to students across our state," said **Assembly members Sadaf Jaffer, Herb Conaway and Clinton Calabrese, sponsors of A-4225**. "This is an investment in our workforce, and it will benefit countless students at New Jersey vocational schools now and for years to come."

"New Jersey's Community Colleges are grateful to Governor Murphy and the Legislature for making a \$20 million investment in educating and training the next generations of New Jerseyans for high-tech, high-wage jobs. The counties served by the six colleges that received funding stand to benefit through a better trained workforce, greater opportunities for residents, and healthier communities," said **Aaron Fichtner, President, NJ Council of County Colleges**.

"On behalf of New Jersey's 21 county vocational-technical school districts, we thank Governor Murphy for this investment in career and technical education," said **Jackie Burke, Executive Director, NJ Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools**. "There is huge demand from students, parents and employers across the state for career-focused educational opportunities that prepare high school students for high-paying jobs in key industries right here in New Jersey. These grants will enable county vocational-technical schools to expand facilities and add technical programs that address New Jersey's skills gap and launch students into successful careers."

Governor Phil Murphy

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