

Governor Phil Murphy

ICYMI: Murphy Administration Awards \$2 Million in Teacher Climate and Culture Innovation Grants

05/6/2024

Trenton, NJ –The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) today announced the award of nearly \$2 million in grant funding designed to enhance teacher climate and culture by supporting districts in developing and implementing strategies to reclaim teacher time. The grants will aid districts in reducing administrative paperwork and streamlining other tasks that pull educators away from the classroom. Eighteen school districts are being awarded Teacher Climate and Culture Innovation Grants, established as a key recommendation of Governor Murphy’s Task Force on Public School Staff Shortages.

“Teachers have one of the most important and challenging jobs in our society, playing an integral role in the lives of young learners and setting them on course for lifelong success. Doing our part to uplift our educator workforce not only signals our appreciation of their hard work, but it also directly benefits our students,” **said Governor Phil Murphy**. “This grant program is yet another innovative measure to combat burnout in the teaching profession, allowing educators to focus their time and attention on what matters most – educating and inspiring the next generation.”

“We know that in order to attract and retain quality teachers, we need to help school districts foster a positive climate and culture in the workplace,” **said Kevin Dehmer, Acting Commissioner of Education**. “Our goal is to work with school districts to discover those practices that can reduce administrative bureaucracies, streamline operations, and give educators more time to focus their efforts where they can have the greatest impact: the classroom.”

The Teacher Climate and Culture Innovation Grant Program will support schools with efforts such as:

- Developing policies and procedures designed to streamline administratively burdensome aspects of the teacher-evaluation process;
- Leveraging Artificial Intelligence technology to assist with functions such as outside communications and lesson planning;
- Creating a “library” of ready-made instructional materials and model lesson plans that other teachers can readily access, thereby reducing the time educators spend exploring and researching such materials for their lessons; and
- Moving away from weekly lesson planning, where teachers submit lesson plans every week for an administrator’s review, toward submitting unit plans that achieve the same goal but may be submitted every several weeks instead.

The 18 school districts receiving Teacher Climate and Culture Innovation Grants are tasked with measuring the effectiveness of the innovative practices, programs, and policies to reclaim teacher time in order to help the Department share and replicate them statewide.

“We are glad these grants have been awarded and look forward to seeing the real-world benefits for educators and students alike,” **said NJEA President Sean M. Spiller**. “By working in close cooperation with their local unions, these


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18 districts will have the opportunity to innovate in ways that reduce paperwork, create greater opportunities for professional collaboration, and improve working conditions so that educators have more time to focus on meeting the needs of every student. Most importantly, all districts will have the opportunity to learn from what works in these 18 districts so that all students and educators in New Jersey can benefit from this smart investment.”

The grant program will run until February 28, 2025. Awards, which ranged up to \$200,000, were based on the number of teachers in the district and prioritized to ensure all regions of the state were represented in this opportunity.

Award recipients include:

Region/County	District	Award
Northern Region:		
Bergen County	Northern Valley Regional	\$125,000
Bergen County	Saddle Brook Township	\$125,000
Essex County	Newark	\$200,000
Warren County	Greenwich Township	\$74,993
Central Region:		
Middlesex County	Dunellen	\$125,000
Middlesex County	North Brunswick Township	\$86,626
Middlesex County	Old Bridge Township	\$199,998
Monmouth County	Freehold Regional High School District	\$200,000
Somerset County	Franklin Township	\$200,000
Somerset County	Hillsborough Township	\$199,410
Southern Region:		
Camden County	Collingswood	\$125,000
Gloucester County	Delsea Regional High School District	\$125,000
Gloucester County	Elk Township	\$75,000
Gloucester County	Gateway Regional School District	\$33,137

Region/County	District	Award
Gloucester County	National Park Borough	\$24,632
Gloucester County	Wenonah	\$23,513
Gloucester County	Westville	\$24,992
Gloucester County	Woodbury Heights	\$24,992
	Total:	\$1,992,293

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