

Governor Phil Murphy

New Jersey Students Enter First School Year With K-12 Climate Change Education

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New Jersey Officially Becomes the First State in the Nation to Integrate Climate Change Education Across its K-12 Standards

TRENTON – In June of 2020 First Lady Tammy Murphy announced that the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted her initiative to make New Jersey the first state in the nation to incorporate climate change education across its K-12 academic standards. And today, as thousands of New Jersey students enter a new school year, the incorporation of climate change education for K-12 schools begins. This first of its kind curriculum will prepare and propel New Jersey students to the top of the ranks for the thousands of green economy jobs that will be made available in the future.

"New Jersey has the number one public education system in the nation, and our teachers and school administrators are well equipped to prepare our future climate change leaders to take on the climate crisis," **said Governor Murphy**. "Our children are our future, and the lessons New Jersey students will learn with this new curriculum will bring us one step closer to building our green economy and reaching and sustaining 100 percent clean energy in New Jersey by 2050."

"Today marks the first day of the highly anticipated climate change education curriculum in our K-12 school systems, and I cannot be more thrilled about the future for our students and for our state," **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. "New Jersey will be on the forefront of the climate movement, and these new standards will give our children the tools necessary to combat the effects of climate change. We are building the world's next generation of climate literate leaders, including policymakers, historians, teachers, and more, who will discover new ways to address the climate crisis."

"New Jersey will continue to be a national leader in preparing students to address issues related to climate change in the next decade," **said Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. "Our standards provide students with the tools to learn how climate change impacts our society, but how to also work collaboratively with peers and communities to address the issue of climate change."

The New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSL), which outline what is taught in New Jersey's public schools and set the foundation for school districts to craft instruction and curricula, adopted climate change education in 2020. The climate change aspects of the NJSL are designed to prepare students to understand how and why climate change happens and the impact it has on our local and global communities as well as to act in informed and sustainable ways. These standards will be incorporated across seven content areas:

- 21st Century Life and Careers
- Comprehensive Health and Physical Education
- Science
- Social Studies
- Technology
- Visual and Performing Arts
- World Languages

Climate change standards have also been added to the appendices of the Mathematics and English Language Arts guidelines, which are up for review this year.

"It is incredibly important that the next generation has a solid understanding of climate change from a young age," **said Senator Gopal, Chair of the Senate Education Committee**. "Through this curriculum, we can give meaning to the rise of severe weather and extreme temperatures, while offering explanations on how we can address it and what they can do to help."

"Communities throughout New Jersey have already felt the devastating effects of climate change, and we must work together as we respond with efforts to boost our resiliency and better prepare the state for environmental challenges brought on by the warming planet," **said Assemblyman James Kennedy, Chair of the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee**. "Combating climate change requires collective action, and by spreading awareness through education, we prepare future generations to act in the best interest of our planet."

"By incorporating climate change education into the K-12 learning standards, we are providing our students with a meaningful understanding of how human behavior and other factors impact the planet," **said Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt, Chair of the Assembly Education Committee**. "With greater access to education on this subject, New Jersey's young people will be equipped with the tools necessary to recognize the causes and effects of climate change, and make impactful changes."

"Once again, New Jersey is setting an example for the nation when it comes to preparing students to be informed, engaged citizens because of our diverse and inclusive standards and curriculum," **said NJEA president Sean M. Spiller**. "Few issues will have more impact on this generation of students throughout their lives than climate change. What they learn in school starting this year will help prepare them to address this challenging issue now and in the future. We commend First Lady Tammy Murphy for her relentless advocacy on this issue and applaud the Murphy Administration for seeing this through to implementation."

"A key part of public education is to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to be effective participants in shaping the future. The new school year marks a sea change in how we address climate change and sets New Jersey as a national example in efforts to prevent and adapt to climate change," **said Randall Solomon, Director, Sustainable Jersey**.

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Trenton, NJ 08625
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