



# Making Progress on Your Certification

February 2024

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# Agenda

1. Certification & Digital Schools Star Overview
2. 2024 Certification Cycle
3. Reviewer Comments
4. Overview of district & school applications
5. Re-Submitting Documentation
6. Tips for Success
7. Green Team Resources
8. Technical Assistance/Questions





# Certification & Digital School Star Application Overview

- Online application for certification has 3 rounds of submissions and reviews

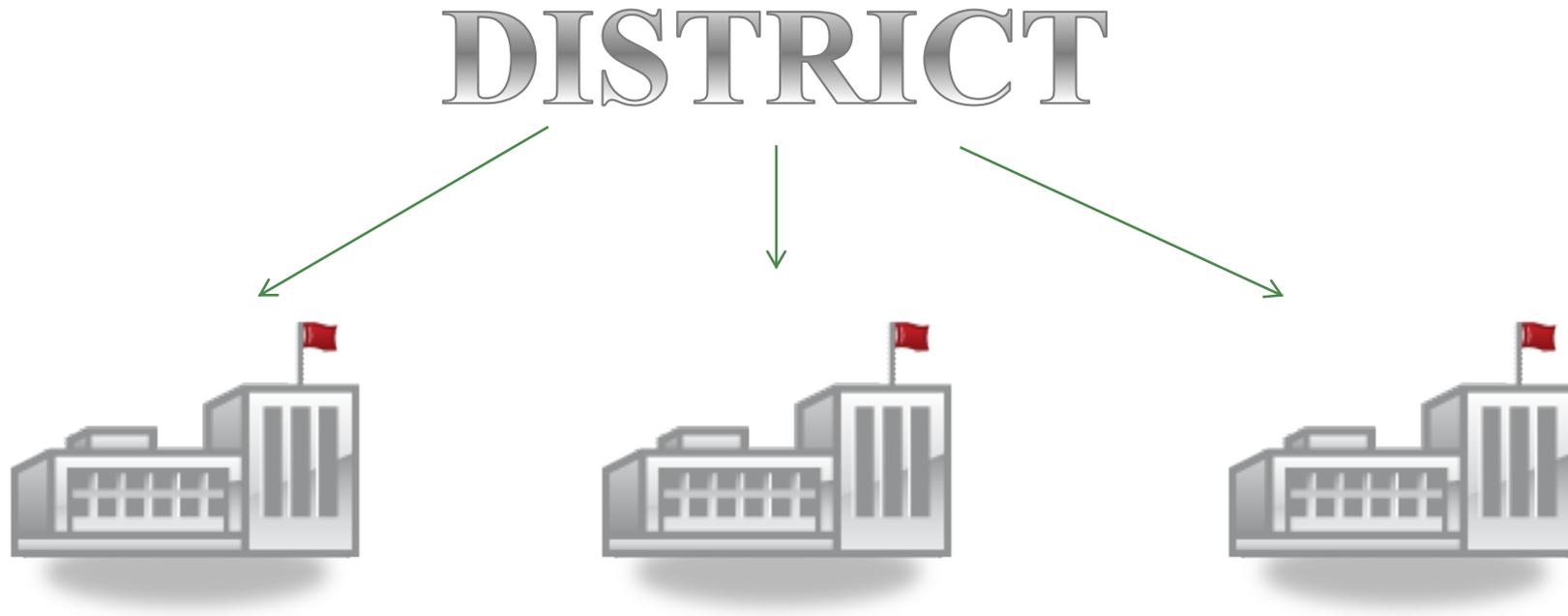
submit applications, but certification and Digital **y awarded to schools**

*Is complete requirements as part of the  
tion*

*it separate Digital Schools Star application  
(checklist) in the final round of the certification*



# District & School Coordination



Points from district actions flow down to all participating schools in the district



# Levels of Certification



- At Least 150 points
- Green team
- 2 out of 14 priority actions
- Actions completed in 6 of 22 categories



- At least 350 points
- Green team
- 3 out of 14 priority actions
- Actions completed in 8 of 22 categories



# Going for a Digital Schools Star?

Be sure to complete the following requirements as part of your certification application:

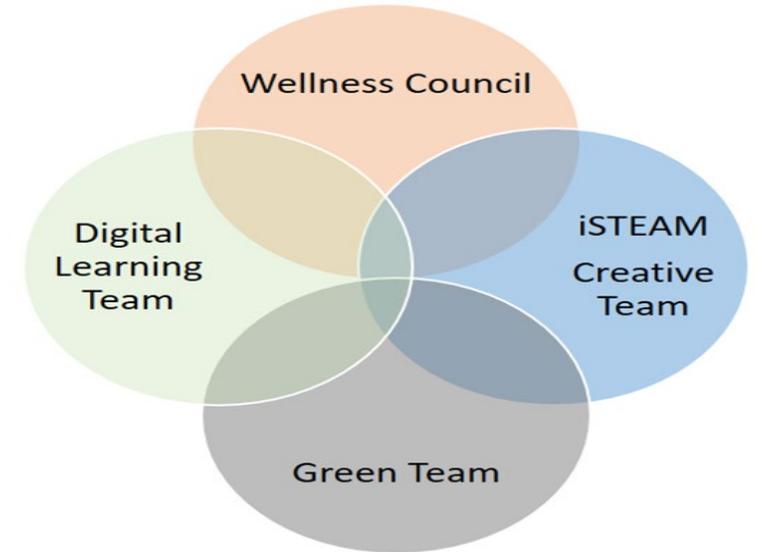
- Complete at least **8 Digital Schools actions** in the **3 Digital Learning categories**. Of the 8, **4 must be Foundational actions**.
- The 8 actions must include **at least one from each category**.
- **At least one action must be the Digitally Innovative Classroom at the 15-point level.**





# Digital Schools Star within Bronze or Silver Certification

- **Green team** - existing team may also serve as green team



- **Priority actions** - need 2 for bronze; 3 for silver)



There are 3 priority actions with a Digital Schools focus

- **Action categories** – need 6 for bronze; 8 for silver



Digital Schools focused actions are located in 3 categories



# 2024 Certification Cycle

- **January 12** – Initial Application Deadline
- Late February – Reviewer Comments
- **March 22** – Second Submission
- Early May – Reviewer Comments
- **June 13** – Final Application Submission
- Late August – Certified Schools Notified
- **October** – Certified Schools Celebration

## 2023 Awards



**Jersey City Public Schools**  
*All schools Bronze Certified*



**Franklin Township Public Schools**  
*5 schools Bronze Certified, 1 Silver Certified, 1 Digital Schools Star*



# Application Unlocked Email

All users notified by email when application is unlocked and ready for editing.

## Your Application is Now Unlocked!

From: Sustainable Jersey for Schools

To: All application users

Dear School/District Applicant:

Thank you for submitting a Sustainable Jersey for Schools application. We have completed the first round of reviews. Based on past certification cycles, **it is typical that only a small percentage of actions get approved after the first round**. There are two more review rounds in this application cycle.

**Application Information**

**Webinar**

**Process to Resubmit**

**Action Submission Tips**

**Confirm Your Contacts:** Update District/School Profile and Manage Users

**List of Must Revise Actions**

The background is a solid bright yellow. There are four circular shapes with diagonal stripes. One is in the top left, one in the top right, and one in the bottom left. The top-left and top-right circles have orange and white stripes, while the bottom-left circle has teal and white stripes.

# Application Demo



# Accessing the Dashboard

- Click  → Login
- Click on left hand side →
  
- You will go to a page that lists the districts and/or schools that you are linked to
- Go to **Update Profile** and **Manage Users** to make sure that all contacts are up to date

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## District and School Dashboards

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! Test School C (Camden)	
<b>Update Application</b> Update your existing certification application	→
<b>Update Digital Schools Star Application</b> Update your existing Digital Schools Star application	→
<b>Update School Profile</b> Update the primary contact, secondary contact, and certification report "introduction"	→
<b>Manage School Users</b> Manage School owners and contributors	→
<b>Download Resolution</b> Click to download school resolution	→

Rectangular S



# Reviewer Feedback

- Reviewers read the submissions and provide feedback. Actions are marked “Approved” or “Must Revise.”
  - Must Revise feedback will summarize what needs to be addressed to have the action approved.
  - Feedback is at the bottom of the action submission page or top of the application.
- Feedback on Not Approved actions from a previous submission can be found by clicking “Show Archived Comments” at bottom of action submission page.

**Reviewer Feedback**  
No feedback has been published.  
[Show archived comments](#)

**55 PUBLISHED COMMENTS**  
**0 UNPUBLISHED COMMENTS**  
**82 ARCHIVED COMMENTS**



# Reviewer Comments

## Prerequisite Not Met

- Action submission is sufficient for approval, but the prerequisite action has either not been submitted for or has been marked “Must Revise”.

## Actions with Prerequisites

- *Strategic Plan Implementation of Green Initiatives* (Prerequisite: Green Enhancement of District Strategic Plans)
- *Design, Build or Certify New Construction & Major Renovations to Green Standards* (Prerequisite: Green Building Policy)



# Application – “Living Document”

## Application Overview

**! Test School C (Camden) Certification Application**

Status: **AWAITING UPDATES**  
 Reviewer Feedback: [7 comments](#)

[Details and history](#) [Help](#)

## Search Features

**Search Actions**

Type in a word(s) to identify all actions with that word(s) in the title

To identify actions by status, check the desired box or boxes below. The Action Totals box at right will also reflect only those actions selected. Click on the Clear Search button to return to the full action listing.

Planned
  Completed
  Must Revise
  Not Approved
  Approved
  Expired

Click a box below to open all the actions with that attribute. Clear Search before selecting a different box.

Mandatory
  Priority
  District Only
  School Only
  Collaboration

Digital Schools

[Search Actions](#) [Clear Search](#)

## Action Listing

[↑ BACK TO TOP](#)

**Digital Learning Practices**

**Authentic Application of Digital Learning Tools and Content**

**10 Points** [Must Revise](#)

School Only  Digital Schools

• THIS ACTION HAS VARIABLE POINTS: 10, 15 • LAST UPDATED 02/09/21

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**Digital Citizenship**

**10 Points** STATUS: UNPLANNED

Priority  District Only  Digital Schools

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**Personalized Learning and Growing Independent Learners**

**15 Points** [Must Revise](#)

School Only  Digital Schools

• LAST UPDATED 02/09/21

**Certification Criteria**

Required	1
Priority	2
Points	150
Categories	6

Show requirements for:

BRONZE  SILVER

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**Action Totals**  
(Completed, Approved)

DISTRICT  SCHOOL  BOTH

Required	1/1
Priority	2/14
Total Points	190/1360
Categories	8/22
Total Actions	16/104

## Point Calculations



# District Application Overview

Click “Details and history” to see:

## ! Test District B (Camden) Certification Application

Status: **AWAITING UPDATES**  
Reviewer Feedback: [7 comments](#)

**Details and history** | [Help](#) | [View School Applications](#)

<b>Current Status</b> This application is <b>AWAITING UPDATES</b>	<b>AWAITING UPDATES</b>
<b>Application History</b> This applicant has applied <b>0</b> times	
<b>Reviewer Feedback</b>	<b>7 PUBLISHED COMMENTS</b> 0 ARCHIVED COMMENTS

**View school applications:** District users can view the applications of their schools

**Current status:** Awaiting Updates applications have been reviewed and can be submitted again

**Check on reviewer feedback**

**Help:** links to *Application User Guide* and *Master Action Tracking Spreadsheet*



# School Application Overview

Click “Details and history” to see:

## ! Test School C (Camden) Certification Application

Status: **AWAITING UPDATES**  
Reviewer Feedback: [7 comments](#)

[Details and history](#) [Help](#)

<b>Current Status</b> This application is <b>AWAITING UPDATES</b>	<b>AWAITING UPDATES</b>
<b>Application History</b> This applicant has applied <b>0</b> times	
<b>Reviewer Feedback</b>	<b>7 PUBLISHED COMMENTS</b> <b>0 ARCHIVED COMMENTS</b>
<b>Digital Schools Star Application</b>	<b>IN PROGRESS</b> <a href="#">VISIT APPLICATION</a>
<b>District Application</b> ! Test District B	<b>IN PROGRESS</b> <a href="#">VISIT APPLICATION</a>

**Get help:** links to *Application User Guide* and *Master Action Tracking Spreadsheet*

**Current status:** Awaiting Updates means the application has been reviewed and unlocked. It should be updated before being submitted for another review.

**Check on reviewer feedback:** Once you have submitted your application it has been reviewed

**Go to Digital Schools Star application**

**Visit District application:** School users can view the application of their district



# Action Statuses

<p><b>Onsite Renewable Generation System - Geothermal</b></p> <p>10 Points</p> <p>School Only</p> <p>Unplanned</p>	←	Default unless changed by user
<p><b>Onsite Renewable Generation System - Solar</b></p> <p>30 Points</p> <p>School Only</p> <p>THIS ACTION HAS VARIABLE POINTS: 5 — 40 • LAST UPDATED 02/09/21</p> <p>Completed</p>	←	Changed by user to indicate the action submission should be reviewed when the application is submitted
<p><b>Digital Learning Leadership</b></p> <p>Community Engagement</p> <p>10 Points</p> <p>Digital Schools</p> <p>LAST UPDATED 02/09/21</p> <p>Must Revise</p>	←	Action reviewed in the current cycle and needs revision to be approved
<p><b>Green Infrastructure Assessment &amp; Plan</b></p> <p>10 Points</p> <p>School Only</p> <p>LAST UPDATED 08/02/18</p> <p>Not Approved</p>	←	Credit not awarded in previous application cycle
<p><b>Green Infrastructure Installation</b></p> <p>10 Points</p> <p>School Only</p> <p>EXPIRES ON 08/31/21 • LAST UPDATED 08/13/18</p> <p>Approved</p>	←	Approved points count towards certification. Note when points expire.
<p><b>Student &amp; Community Outreach</b></p> <p>Green Team</p> <p>10 Points</p> <p>Required</p> <p>THIS ACTION HAS VARIABLE POINTS: 10, 15 • LAST UPDATED 08/31/18 • EXPIRED ON 08/31/18</p> <p>STATUS: EXPIRED</p>	←	Previously received credit, but due to shelf life of the action, points are no longer counted in application
<p><b>Community Education &amp; Outreach</b></p> <p>10 Points</p> <p>Priority School Only Collaboration</p> <p>LAST UPDATED 07/14/15</p> <p>Planned</p>	←	Changed by user to indicate it will or has been worked on



# Action Information

<b>! Test District B (Camden) Application for Certification</b>	
Action Submission: <a href="#">Professional Development for Sustainability</a> ← View action description	
<b>Directions</b> Please complete this form to submit this action as part of your application by following these steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Indicate the <b>requested points</b> for variable point actions.</li><li>• Enter <b>Description of Implementation</b>, no more than 300 words.</li><li>• Upload supporting documentation.</li><li>• Click <b>Save Action Submission</b> button at the bottom of the page.</li><li>• Once updates are finished, mark the action <b>Completed</b> so points are calculated in your point totals to submit the application for certification.</li><li>• Click <b>Save Action Submission</b> button at the bottom of the page.</li></ul>	
<b>Status</b> Current action submission status: <b>Completed</b>	Completed ▾ ← Update status
<b>Requested Points</b> Point level requested for this submission	10 ▾ ← select point level if variable point action
<b>Schools working on this action</b> The number of schools in this district who have begun working on this action.	0 ←

If **district application** and a “**both**” action, you will see how many schools in the district are working on the action. Districts should **not change the status** of an action if schools are working on it without consulting the schools first. The district submission will override the schools.



# Variable Point Actions

**! Test District B (Camden) Application for Certification**

**Action Submission: Professional Development for Sustainability**

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**Directions**

Please complete this form to submit this action as part of your application by following these steps:

- Indicate the **requested points** for variable point actions.
- Enter **Description of Implementation**, no more than 300 words.
- Upload supporting documentation.
- Click **Save Action Submission** button at the bottom of the page.
- Once updates are finished, mark the action **Completed** so points are calculated in your point totals to submit the application for certification.
- Click **Save Action Submission** button at the bottom of the page.

---

<b>Status</b> Current action submission status: <b>Completed</b>	Completed ▾
<b>Requested Points</b> Point level requested for this submission	10 ▾
<b>Schools working on this action</b> The number of schools in this district who have begun working on this action.	0

- User selects point value supported by the documentation as part of the submission from the drop down menu
- Reviewer confirms point value selected or changes based on review of the documentation



# Description of Implementation

Input a short summary of what was accomplished and the impact it had or will have on the district and/or school.

**Description of Implementation**

In the text box below, please provide a short summary (300 word maximum) of what was accomplished and the impact it had or will have on the school community. Include relevant references to the uploaded materials. **If updating a previous submission, please remove any outdated or unnecessary information.**

This is where you describe what you did for this action.

Save Action Submission



Be sure to save action submission at bottom of page after making any changes



# Upload Supporting Documentation

**Document Title**  
Enter the name of your document

Choose File No file chosen Attach File

TYPE	TITLE	UPLOADED ON	DELETE
word	<a href="#">Accessible Communications Report to Board</a>	3/9/2020 at 07:21 PM	X

Save Action Submission

Select the file from your computer to upload

- *Many types of files can be uploaded, up to 50MB*
- *You can type a new name that describes the document*

Once successfully uploaded the file will appear in the box below

Be sure to save action submission after making any changes

Easily remove files by clicking "X" under Delete



# Calculating Points

Use the **Action Totals** counter in the right column to track your point totals.

*The counter defaults to show total of Completed and Approved points. In school applications it also defaults to show points from both the district and your school application.*

View point totals for actions with different statuses by checking the desired boxes under Search Actions

**Action Totals**  
(Completed, Approved)

DISTRICT  SCHOOL  BOTH

Required 1/1

Priority 2/14

Total Points 200/1360

Categories 9/22

Total Actions 17/104

**Search Actions**

Type in a word(s) to identify all actions with that word(s) in the title

To identify actions by status, check the desired box or boxes below. The Action Totals box at right will also reflect only those actions selected. Click on the Clear Search button to return to the full action listing.

Planned  Completed  Must Revise  Not Approved  Approved  Expired

Click a box below to open all the actions with that attribute. Clear Search before selecting a different box.

Mandatory  Priority  District Only  School Only  Collaboration

Digital Schools

Search Actions Clear Search



# Preparing to Re-submit District Application

- Once you have finished working on an action, mark it as “Completed”
- There are **no** minimum requirements districts must meet to submit an application
- When ready to Submit Application for Review, press the yellow button:
  - Confirm submission pop-up – click Request Review.
  - All users linked to application will receive an automatic email about submission
- Users are locked from editing Approved and Completed actions until review is complete

**Action Totals**  
(Completed, Approved)

Required	0/1
Priority	1/9
Total Points	10/630
Categories	1/22
Total Actions	1/49

**Submit Application for Review**

**Confirm Review Request**

Please note that once you have submitted the application for review, the application will be locked and you cannot make any changes to your completed actions. Do you want to submit the application now?

**Request Review** **Cancel Review Request**



# Yes, You Can Drop Actions or Add New Actions!

- Actions may be dropped and added to application as you progress through the 3 rounds of the cycle.
- If you no longer think you can successfully complete an action then leave it as “Must Revise.” Only actions with the status “Completed” will be reviewed when the application is submitted.
- You may add new actions to your application in the second or third round of the cycle. Mark them as “Completed” before submitting.



# Why Actions are Not Approved

Pitfall	How to Overcome
<b>Action documentation completion date is outside the shelf life of the action</b>	Review the Introduction and “What to Submit” sections of the action to find the shelf life of eligible activity and documentation (i.e. how old can they be and still qualify to earn points). Only submit documentation that falls within this period. <b>Remove outdated documentation from previous submissions</b>
<b>Proper documentation not submitted</b>	Ensure that the documentation uploaded fulfills the requirements outlined in “What to submit”
<b>Misinterpretation of Action Goals or Submitting under Wrong Action (<b>check for new actions</b>)</b>	Closely read the “What to Do” and “What to Submit” portion of the action to ensure that what you plan to submit is in line with the intent of the action. <b>Re-check even if action had been previously approved since requirements may have changed.</b>
<b>Seeking credit for same initiative under more than one action</b>	Any initiative may only be submitted under one action, even if it fulfills the requirements of more than one action. Review the entire application to spot duplication
<b>Failure to conduct outreach/education component required for many actions</b>	Read beyond the action’s title, paying close attention to the “What to Do” and “What to Submit” sections
<b>Failure to complete the prerequisite action</b>	Check the Introduction and the “What to Submit” section for prerequisites, and make sure that any required are completed by the final application deadline.



# Additional Tips

- Do not resubmit an action if it has not been updated (unless it is needed to get the submit button to turn yellow)
- You may need to combine multiple documents to stay within the 6 document limit
- Save online documents or webpages as PDFs if long term availability is uncertain or access is blocked by password or paywall





# Be Ready for the Limelight!

*Once you are certified your information becomes publicly accessible on the website*

- Inspire others! Tell a story in your narrative
- Remove sensitive information before uploading your documentation
- Remove irrelevant or outdated documentation
- Only upload parts of documents that are needed (e.g. not the entire policy handbook)
- Name your documents when uploading



# District and School Collaboration

- District actions are not required for certification but are helpful in meeting the requirements for bronze or silver certification
- District actions **are needed** to complete the requirements for the **Digital Schools Star**
- There should be coordination between those working on the district application and those working on school applications
- Determine at what level “Both” actions will be completed (If an action status is changed from “Unplanned” in the district application, then schools are shut out from doing that action in their applications)
- District application needs to be completed in same time frame as school applications
- District applications must be submitted to have actions completed by district reviewed





# Green Team – Mandatory Action

Your **Green Team** action must be approved at the District or School level in order to become certified!

WHAT TO SUBMIT:

- Letter Establishing the Green Team
  - ✓ ***The letter must identify at least two green team members selected by the local building union leadership for a School Green Team or by the district union leadership for a District Green Team***
- Green Team Annual Report with 4 meeting dates

Green Team Resources

Creating a Green Team

Working on Certification

Promoting Your Green Team

Presentations

Resource Library

Publications

### Green Team Resources

#### Creating a Green Team

Learn what you need to know when establishing a green team.

Read More

#### Working on Certification

View resources to help green teams achieve certification.

Read More

#### Green Team Promotion

Read helpful tips on how to promote the work of your team.

Read More

#### Apply for a Grant

Find out about Sustainable Jersey for Schools grants to help complete actions.

Learn More

Check out Green Team Resources at:  
<https://www.sustainablejerseyschools.com/resources/green-team-resources/>

### Quick Start Resources

#### Application User Guide

This document provides step-by-step guidance on all aspects of the Sustainable Jersey for Schools Dashboard, School Dashboard and online certification application. It covers the online application, updating the District or School profile, and managing the account.

Download Application User Guide

#### Master Action Tracking Spreadsheet

This spreadsheet provides an inventory of program actions, all requirements, look back and approval periods, resubmission point values. It is a great tool to help a green team identify what has been completed by the district or the school. The spreadsheet can also be used to track progress in completing actions and hopes to pursue. It can also be used to track progress in compiling the required documentation.

Download the MATS

#### Sustainable Jersey for Schools Brochure

This brochure lists all of the actions in the program and the general requirements. It is an excellent resource for green team meetings.

### Sustainable Jersey for Schools Registered Logo

When your school is registered with Sustainable Jersey, you can have access to the Sustainable Jersey for Schools registered logo. The logo should be used in accordance with Sustainable Jersey for Schools logo guidelines.

To request a registered logo, email [schools@sustainablejersey.com](mailto:schools@sustainablejersey.com).



### Sustainable Jersey for Schools Certified Logo

Each certified school receives a customized certified logo that includes its name. Logos are customized for bronze and silver certification.

The logo is emailed to all green team members with access to their school's certification application at the time of certification.





# Check out Spotlights & Examples

Many actions have **spotlights** – selected by Sustainable Jersey as models. Find spotlights towards the bottom of the action description.

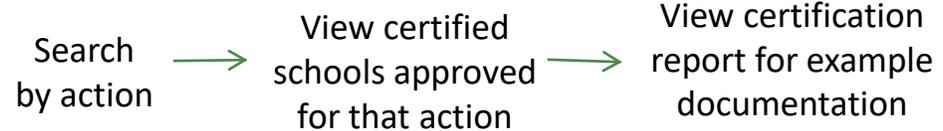
**Healthy Food Choices Beyond the Cafeteria**  
10 Points | School | District | Print

**Why is it important?**  
**Spotlight: What New Jersey schools are doing**  
Bergenfield High School, Bergenfield Public Schools  
Bergenfield Board of Education has adopted and implemented the comprehensive Wellness Policy which endeavors to create and pro choices by our students in their personal, academic, development spheres. The policy outlines the District's approach to ensuring envi opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physica throughout the school day. To view Bergenfield High School's appr submission click [here](#).

**Montclair Public Schools**  
Montclair parents worked with school administrators, teachers, and for Health Foundation to come up with [The Montclair Food Guide F](#). The guide provides options for snacks, parties, and events at schoo "commonsense" approach sets down a 70/30 guideline: 70% of the coming from a healthy-choice selection and 30% from less nutritio including sweets. School snack choices are grouped into three cat on their relative nutritional value: Green Light, Yellow Light, and Red fruits and vegetables, whole grain items, low-fat dairy and non-sod occupy the "Green Light" category, and can be offered to students Processed fruits with some added sugar; products without whole gr added sugar such as pretzels, crackers and cookies; and flavored yogurt products are in a "Yellow Light" category that are to be offer

**What to submit to earn points for this action**  
**Spotlight: What New Jersey schools are doing**

Use the Participating Schools Map to find **examples** of documentation from certified schools



**Filter This Map**  
Filter | Reset

**By Certified Action**

- District Sustainability Policy
- Professional Development for Sustainability
- Green Enhancement of District Strategic Plans
- Strategic Plan Implementation of Green Initiatives
- School Community Asset Mapping**
- School District Foundation

**Cranbury School (Middlesex)**  
Certification Level: Bronze  
Certified On: August 05, 2020  
Total Points: 295  
Certification Report: [View Report](#)  
Applicant Profile: [View Profile](#)



# Partner With Your Municipal Green Team

## Look for Collaboration Actions

- Community Education & Outreach
- Green Fair
- Green Your Green Fair/School Event
- Civic & Stewardship Activities
- Recycling Non-Mandated Materials
- School Community Asset Mapping
- School Gardens
- Anti-Idling Education & Enforcement
- Safe Routes to School Policy
- Pedestrian & Bike Safety and Promotion
- School Travel Plan for Walking & Biking

Look up your town on the Sustainable Jersey Municipal Program website to get contact information:

<https://www.sustainablejersey.com/certification/search-participating-municipalities-approved-actions/>





# Make a Plan for Moving Forward

- Submit by March 22 to get feedback before final June deadline
- Focus on completing your **Green Team** Action
- **2 Priority Actions** for bronze / **3** for silver
- Then review remaining actions to determine which actions you are close to completing by the final deadline. **Shoot first for Bronze 150 then for the stars**
- Identify the outstanding items needed for each action to meet the submission standard
- Pursue new actions if needed
- Add additional contributors to your dashboard to help with the documentation



# Going for a Digital Schools Star?

- Schools will need help from their districts!
- Complete the Digital Schools Star requirements in your certification application.
- Complete the mandatory Green Team action, and any other actions needed to meet bronze or silver certification requirements.
- **Schools** – Don't forget to submit the separate Digital Schools Star application in the final round of the application cycle.



# Next Certification Application Deadline:

**March 22  
at 11:59pm**



# Thank You

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609-771-3427

# Sustainable Jersey for Schools Underwriters and Sponsors

## Program Underwriters



## Corporate Sponsors



\*Digital Schools Underwriters and Sponsors