



Digital Schools Star Recognition: Program Updates and How to Be a Star!





Sustainable Jersey for Schools



A free, voluntary program that provides tools, training, and grants to New Jersey public schools to help them implement sustainability initiatives and achieve certification.



- Identifies **actions** to become more sustainable
- Provides **tools, resources, and guidance** to make progress
- Provides access to **grants** for schools and school districts
- Recognizes **accomplishments**
- Awards certification to individual schools but requires School Board and district level support

Statistics

2014
Program
Started

67% Districts
Participating

1,223
Schools
Registered



305
Bronze
Certified

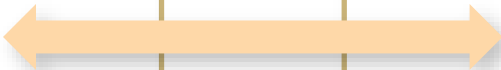


65 Silver
Certified



58 Digital
Schools
Stars

9,864
Actions
Implemented



Statistics current as of 7/17/25



Digital Schools Star Recognition



- Digital School Star Recognition is an element of the Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification program.
- Completion of Digital Schools action counts towards Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification and Digital Schools Star Recognition





Digital Schools Actions Categories



Certification Actions

Digital Learning Leadership



Digital Learning Practices





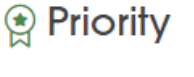
Digital Technology Access





Digital Schools Action Symbols









	<p>This action is a district action and can only be completed through the district application.</p>
	<p>Schools complete this action</p>
	<p>This action must be completed in order to receive certification</p>



Digital Schools Star Requirements



- Must qualify for certification at Bronze or Silver level
- 8 of the 13 Digital Schools action categories.
- Complete one action from each category
- 4 of the actions need to be **Foundational Actions**.
- At least one of the actions must be the Digital Innovative Classroom at the **15-point level**.

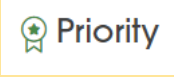


ACTION TYPES:  DISTRICT ONLY  SCHOOL ONLY	
Category - Digital Learning Leadership	
District Commitment to Digital Learning (Certification Priority) 	10-15
Equitable Access to Digital Learning (Certification Priority) 	10-15
Community Engagement (District or School Action)	10
Category - Digital Learning Practices	
Authentic Application of Digital Learning Tools and Content 	10-15
Digital Citizenship (Certification Priority) 	10
Digital Innovative Classroom #1 	10-15
Digital Innovative Classroom #2 	10-15
Personalized Learning and Growing Independent Learners 	15
Professional Growth and Collaboration 	15
Category - Digital Technology Access	
Data Safety and Security Policy 	10
Digital Device Life Cycle Management 	10
Infrastructure 	10
Support for Digital Teaching and Learning 	20



Digital Schools Star Actions



Digital Learning Leadership

- District Commitment to Digital Learning   Priority
- Equitable Access to Digital Learning   Priority
- Community Engagement  





District Commitment to Digital Learning



Focus: District identifies a vision/ plan for Digital learning.

Requirements:

1. Description of Implementation
2. Upload a copy of your districts Digital Learning Vision statement
3. Copy of your Digital Learning Strategic Plan and upload the commitment to Digital learning form



COMMITMENT TO DIGITAL LEARNING SUBMISSION FORM

Action Requirement	Additional Details (Please write directly in the boxes below)
Educators have access to professional learning opportunities that are diverse, customizable, and supported by the latest technologies. They are empowered to investigate, pilot, model new types of innovative instructional technologies and personalized learning strategies	Please provide evidence on how the district assessed educators' professional learning needs related to digital learning and capacity building. Then briefly describe how the district meets teachers professional learning needs by citing relevant sections in documents that you either upload in the online submission form for this action or provide a link to it here.
The district supports digital learning through its: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities, Hardware, Resources, and Infrastructure • Software and Online Resources • Educational Technology Staffing • Maintenance, Service and Support • Technology Resource Acquisition • Equitable Access to Digital Learning 	Please briefly describe how the district accomplishes this and cite the relevant sections in documents that you either upload in the online submission form for this action or provide a link to it here.
The district effectively manages its information/data programs and assets and ensures the security of data systems and integrity and privacy of collected data.	Please briefly describe how the district accomplishes this and cite the relevant sections in documents that you either upload in the online submission form for this action or provide a link to it here.
Digital learning practices and activities are integrated into curriculum.	Please briefly describe how the district accomplishes this and cite the relevant sections in documents that you either upload in the online submission form for this action or provide a link to it here.



Equitable Access to Digital Learning



Focus: Districts to show how they provide Wifi and Digital Learning access to all students

Requirements:

1. Description of Implementation
2. Upload samples of student, parent and community surveys
3. Upload a report that quantifies identified digital device and connectivity gaps. Show the solutions that were made and provide a comparison of before and after to demonstrate of the gaps were addressed

ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS WITHOUT INTERNET ACCESS AND WITHOUT DEVICE FOR REMOTE LEARNING

A	B	C	D	E
3-16-2020 INTERNET ACCESS			8-3-2020 INTERNET ACCESS	
Row Labels	Count of Student Number		Row Labels	Count of Student Number
NO	116		NO	103
YES	5,532		YES	5,397
Grand Total	5,648		Grand Total	5,500
3-16-2020 COMPUTER ACCESS			8-3-2020 COMPUTER ACCESS	
Row Labels	Count of Student Number		Row Labels	Count of Student Number
NO	59		NO	54
YES	5,589		YES	5,446
Grand Total	5,648		Grand Total	5,500
Row Labels	Count of Student Number		Row Labels	Count of Student Number
3-30-2020 Internet			9-30-2020 INTERNET ACCESS/HOT SPOT ISSUED	
NO	22		NO	0
YES	5,626		YES	5,522
Grand Total	5,626		Grand Total	5,522
Row Labels	Count of Student Number		Row Labels	Count of Student Number
3-30-20 COMPUTER ACCESS - LOANER PROVIDED			9-30-2020 COMPUTER ACCESS 1:1 DISTRICT ISSUED	
NO	0		NO	0
YES	5,648		YES	5,522
Grand Total	5,648		Grand Total	5,522
STUDENT ROSTER 3-16-2020		STUDENT ROSTER 8-3-2020	STUDENT ROSTER 9-30-20	PIVOT



Community Engagement



Focus: Districts encouraging community involvement and community stakeholders in the district Digital Learning vision

Requirements:

1. Description of Implementation
2. Upload communication plan to show the district's Digital Learning vision, practices procedures
3. Upload 10 samples of district/school communications that show the implementation of the communications using 3 different media channels and targeting 3 different stakeholder groups (staff, parents, community)

**Essex County Schools of Technology
Parents Let's Chat (Zoom Meeting)**

OPEN FORUM..!



Topic: How can we navigate through these difficult times? Part 11

Let's Continue Our Conversation!!!!

Date: Monday June 15, 2020

Time: 5 pm

Guest Speakers: Dr. James Pedersen, Superintendent

Special Guest Speaker: Eugene Napoleon, Inspirational Speaker

See information below for link to join our forum!!

Topic: My Meeting

Time: Jun 15, 2020 5:00 PM



Digital Schools Star Actions



Digital Learning Practices

- Authentic Application of Digital Learning Tools and Content- **NEW UPDATES** 🏠
- Digital Citizenship 🏛️
- Digital Innovative Classroom #1 & #2 🏠
- Personalized Learning and Growing Independent Learners- **NEW UPDATES** 🏠
- Professional Growth and Collaboration 🏠





Authentic Application of Digital Learning Tools and Content

Revised Submission Requirements

Rationale:

- Clearly define and assess what authentic learning looks like in schools and in the classroom.
- Provide guidance and identify how emerging technologies can create more opportunities for authentic learning.
- Identify the roles of administrators and teachers in fostering authentic learning experiences for students.

- ❑ New and updated submission forms for school implementation and classroom implementation
- ❖ Authentic Application Administrative Form
- ❖ Authentic Application Teacher Form
- ❑ Submit 3 examples of authentic learning (Summative assessments, projects, instructional practices)
- ❑ Authentic Learning Reflection tool

***Updated resources and streamlined action information**



Categories

- **Schoolwide Alignment and Planning**
- **Staff Support and Professional Development**
- **Digital Tools and Infrastructure**
- **Assessment and Impact**



Authentic Application of Digital Learning Tools and Content Administrative Form

Action Requirement*	Response (Please write directly in the boxes below)**
Schoolwide Alignment and Planning <i>Describe how your school aligns curriculum, technology, and professional learning to support authentic digital learning, based on the needs of the students in your school.</i>	
Staff Support and Professional Development <i>List the professional development opportunities your school offers to support staff in implementing authentic, experiential digital learning experiences</i>	
Digital Tools and Infrastructure <i>List key digital tools used school-wide and explain how they support engagement, collaboration, or real-world connections.</i>	
Assessment and Impact <i>Describe how authentic learning is assessed and shared, including how staff and students use reflection or revision.</i>	

** If uploading documents in the online submission form or linking them here, please cite the relevant sections (page numbers, paragraphs, table/spreadsheet cells) that support this requirement.



Authentic Application of Digital Learning Tools and Content Teacher Form

Teacher:	
Grade Level:	
Content Area:	
Lesson/Project Rationale <i>Use the Authentic Learning Reflection Tool to guide your rationale and describe how the assessments, projects, or lessons uploaded demonstrate:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Real-world relevance• Student agency• Effective digital tool integration• Cross-curricular depth• Student reflection, assessment, and documented impact	
Please include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct links to lesson/project files (e.g., Google Docs, Slides, pictures, podcasts, or websites) <i>Ensure that your combined submission includes three different content areas across all team/grade contributions.</i>	

** If uploading documents in the online submission form or linking them here, please cite the relevant sections (page numbers, paragraphs, table/spreadsheet cells) that support this requirement.

Categories

- **Teacher/Class Information**
- **Lesson and Project Rationale**
- **Direct links/ Evidence**
- **3 Content Areas**

Authentic Learning Reflection Tool

Criteria	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Real-World Relevance	Tasks are mostly theoretical or disconnected from real-life applications.	Tasks include simulated scenarios, but real-world application is limited.	Students work on meaningful, real-world problems connected to community, society, or global issues.	Students take initiative in addressing current, real-world challenges using innovative methods and tools. Work is shared with authentic audiences and may lead to measurable community or global impact.
Student Agency and Role	Students follow teacher-directed steps with limited input or ownership.	Some opportunities for student choice in tasks or products.	Students have voice and choice in topic selection, tools, and product format.	Students take on authentic roles (e.g., designer, researcher, advocate) and co-create learning experiences driven by their voice and choice.
Digital Tool Integration	Digital tools are used as substitutes (e.g., digitized worksheets).	Some tools enhance instruction (e.g., interactive slides, videos).	Tools are used to transform learning (e.g., creating, simulating, coding, collaborating).	Students leverage digital tools in original and innovative ways to collaborate, publish, or create products that engage real audiences beyond the classroom context.
Cross-Curricular or Disciplinary Depth	Lessons are limited to a single content area with minimal integration.	Some interdisciplinary connections, but siloed instruction.	Authentic learning connects naturally across disciplines with co-planned lessons.	Learning is fully integrated across disciplines with team teaching, real projects, and cross-subject outcomes.
Reflection, Assessment & Impact	No student reflection or clear assessment of learning.	Informal feedback or teacher assessment is present.	Students reflect on their learning and are assessed through authentic tasks (e.g., presentations, portfolios).	Students assess their own growth, present to real audiences, and revise based on feedback. Learning impact is documented with clear evidence..



Personalized Learning and Growing Independent Learners

Revised Submission Requirements

Rationale:

- Personalized learning in the classroom results from several key factors: administrative planning and support, effective teacher implementation, and student agency and choice. These elements must be clearly reflected in the action.

- **Administrative form**- outlining school vision for personalized learning and strategic plan
 - **Two Teacher forms**- provide evidence of personalized learning in the classroom practice
 - Lesson/Project Rationale
 - Lesson Plan/ Instructional practice/Assessment
 - Data and Evidence
 - Teacher reflection
- * Updates to resources and language**



Categories

- Schoolwide Alignment and Planning
- Staff Support and Professional Development
- Digital Tools and Infrastructure
- Assessment and Impact



Personalized Learning and Growing Independent Administrative Form

Action Requirement*	Response (Please write directly in the boxes below) **
<p>Schoolwide Alignment and Planning</p> <p><i>Explain your school's vision and philosophy regarding personalized learning, and describe how curriculum and technology are strategically aligned to support it. Highlight how these elements are tailored to meet the specific needs of your students, and include any relevant data or statistics that demonstrate those needs.</i></p> <p><i>(provide examples at least 2 content areas in your description)</i></p>	
<p>Staff Support and Professional Development</p> <p><i>Describe the professional development opportunities your school offers to support teachers in implementing personalized learning tailored to students' needs, and in effectively using digital tools to enhance this approach.</i></p>	
<p>Digital Tools and Infrastructure</p> <p><i>List key digital tools used school-wide and explain how they support personalized learning environments.</i></p>	
<p>Assessment and Impact</p> <p><i>Describe how the school's strategic plan for personalized learning is evaluated and communicated, including how staff and students engage in reflection and revision.</i></p>	

** If uploading documents in the online submission form or linking them here, please cite the relevant sections (page numbers, paragraphs, table/spreadsheet cells) that support this requirement.



Personalized Learning and Growing Independent Learners Teacher Form

Teacher:	
Grade Level:	
Content Area:	
<p>Lesson/Project Rationale</p> <p><i>Describe how personalized learning is implemented in the classroom, and explain how the submitted assessments, projects, or lessons demonstrate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe how students had opportunities to set goals, make choices, or engage in self-directed learning.</i> • <i>Identify specific digital learning tools and how they were used, and how did they support differentiation or engagement?</i> • <i>Student reflection, assessment, and documented impact</i> 	
Lesson Plan/ Instructional practice/Assessment	



Personalized Learning and Growing Independent Learners Teacher Form

<p><i>Include links to the lesson plan, assessment, or project documentation</i></p>	
<p>Data/ Evidence</p> <p><i>Provide links to three student personalized learning charts</i></p>	
<p>Teacher Reflection</p> <p><i>Provide a short reflection for each chart explaining how the instructional strategy or digital tool used in the lesson supported the student's individual learning path</i></p>	

** If uploading documents in the online submission form or linking them here, please cite the relevant sections (page numbers, paragraphs, table/spreadsheet cells) that support this requirement.



Student Personalized Learning Plan

Guidance: This chart will help you plan, track, and reflect on your learning using strategies and tools that work best for you. Use it to set goals, choose how you'll learn, and see your progress over time.

Student Name:

Grade:

Subject Area:

Date:|

1. Student Profile

Strengths	
Interests	
Challenges	
Learning Preferences	

2. Goals & Standards

Goal Type	Specific Goal (Aligned to Standards)
Academic Goal	
Self-Regulation Goal	
Engagement Goal	

3. Benchmarks

Date to Check	Benchmark Goal	Progress Notes	Next Step

4. UDL Principles in Action

UDL Principle & Guideline	Strategy for Student	Tools/Resources
Multiple Means of Engagement (Recruiting interest, sustaining effort)		
Multiple Means of Representation (Perception, comprehension)		
Multiple Means of Action & Expression (Physical action, expression, executive function)		

5. Student-Directed Learning & Skill-Building

This section allows students to take ownership of their learning by setting personal goals, identifying resources (including digital learning tools), and tracking their progress.

Skill/Area to Develop	Why It's Important to Me	My Action Steps	Resources/Support Needed (Include Digital Learning Tools)	Self-Check Date	Progress & Adjustments

6. Progress Monitoring

Date	Task/Skill	Progress Notes	Next Steps

7. Reflection

Student Self-Reflection:

Teacher Reflection:



Digital Innovative Classroom



Focus: Teachers to showcase their Digital Innovative Classroom and ways in which technology and digital learning is integrated into everyday planning, procedures and instruction.

Requirements:

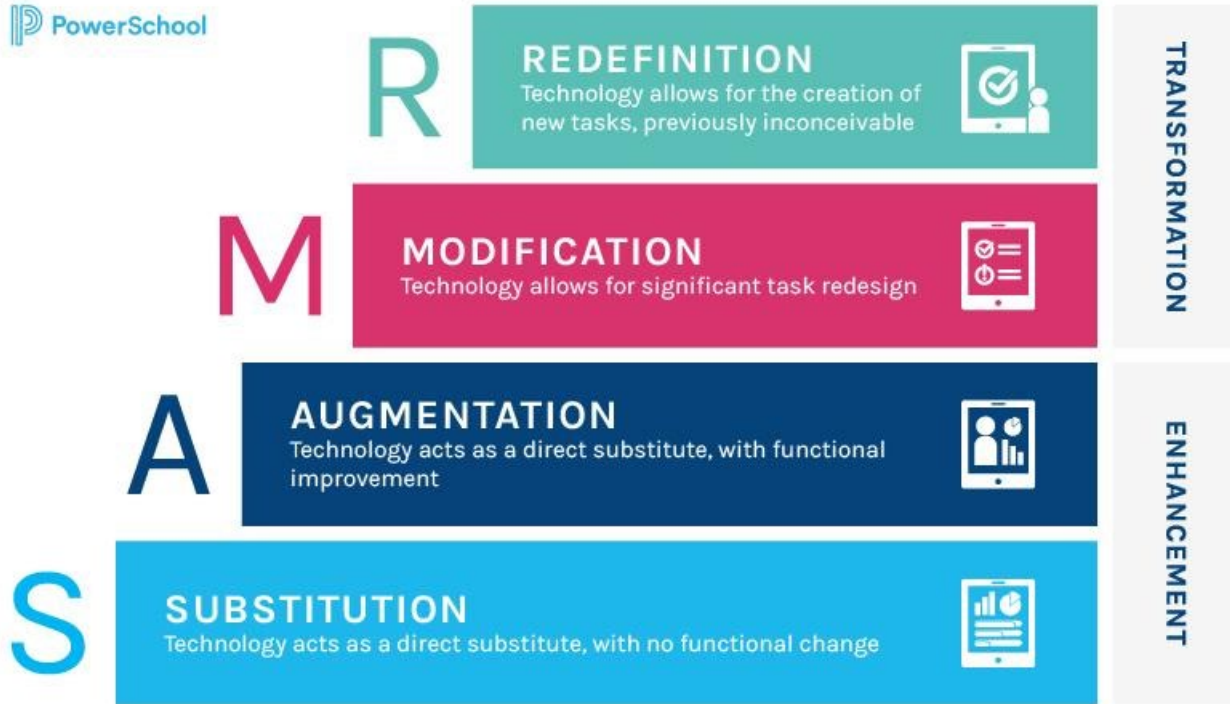
1. Description of Implementation
2. Upload Digital Innovation Form
3. Upload documentation through video, photograph or questionnaire with elaboration on how each document satisfies the category requirement
4. Submissions must satisfy two out of the three rubric categories



Rubric Digital Innovative Classroom

Category	Environment/Procedures (5 points)	Planning, Instruction and Assessment (5 points)	Student Communication and Support (5 points)
Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher demonstrates exceptional utilization of physical space by incorporating innovative technology, maker spaces, or collaborative stations. • These enhancements significantly enhance student leadership and autonomy in their learning process. • Clear evidence is provided of various devices used to manage classroom procedures, engagement, and overall management. • The physical environment fosters active student participation and self-directed learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher demonstrates exceptional utilization of technology and digital tools in lesson planning and development. • The teacher employs a wide range of innovative approaches that substantially engage and comprehensively inform students. • Evidence highlights tools used to identify student needs and adapt instruction. • There are robust opportunities for students to use technology for extended learning beyond the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher excels in using technology to communicate effectively with students on assignments, feedback, and performance. • Evidence demonstrates the use of technology to bridge the gap between student performance and parents. • Various technology tools are effectively used to enhance student-to-student communication and collaboration.
Documentation Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a link to a video of the Digital Innovative Classroom Submission form. <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs of the maker spaces, student digital learning stations & narrative providing context and explaining the photos and the rationale providing context. <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill out the Digital Innovative Classroom Questionnaire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a link to a video of the Digital Innovative Classroom Submission form. <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictures of lesson plans, students participating in engaging activities while using technology and a narrative providing context and explaining each photo and the rationale providing context. <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill out the Digital Innovative Classroom Questionnaire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a link to a video of the Digital Innovative Classroom Submission form. <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide photo evidence of communication with students such as conferencing, communication with parents, or feedback on assignments using digital tools or technology. Provide a description to photos and the rationale providing context. <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill out the Digital Innovative Classroom Questionnaire

Level of Technology Integration





Professional Growth and Collaboration



Focus: providing personalized learning opportunities to staff, virtual communities, reflection on growth in digital tools and learning

Requirements:




1. Description of Implementation – Definition of personalized learning and summary of how school staff plans to use digital tools and resources
2. Upload 5 samples of teacher goals from PDP across grade bands and content areas
3. 5 samples of attendance documentation or certificated of completion from digital PD
4. Evidence of virtual collaboration

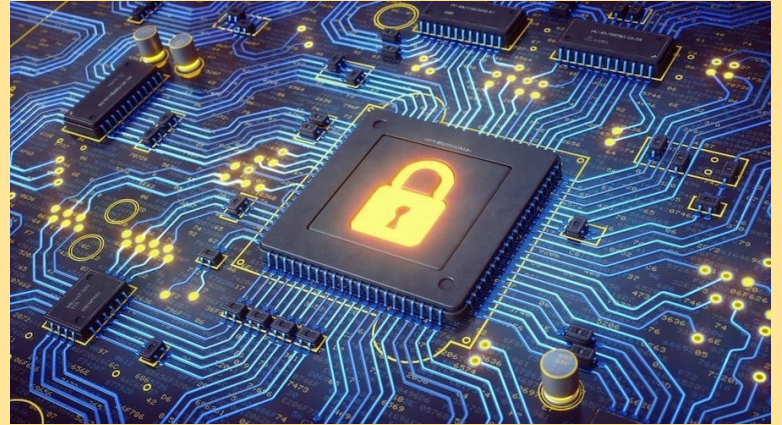




Digital Technology Access



- Digital Safety and Security Policy 
- Digital Device Life Cycle Management 
- Infrastructure
- Support for Digital Teaching and Learning 





Data Safety and Security Policy



Focus: Data protection and privacy

Requirements:

1. Description of Implementation
2. Upload copy of public facing BOE approved Data Safety policy
3. Upload 5 samples or links to internal and external communications about Data Safety and Security Policy

Long Branch Public Schools
Published by Diego G. DeAssis [?] · January 6 · 🌐 · 🌐

At LBPS we are committed to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Click below to read more about our District Sustainability Policy!

STRAUSSESMAJ.COM
ELANOnline District Policies
Sustainability is defined as meeting the needs of the present without...



Digital Life Cycle Management



Focus: Maintaining records and infusing sustainable practices into technology device management

Requirements:

1. Description of Implementation
2. Upload specification sheet for the inventory management solutions including functionality and reporting (include reports)
3. Upload Standard Operating Procedures Manual or Digital Learning Plan or equivalent (digital recycling plan)





Infrastructure



Focus: Broadband, Wifi and assessment process, shows that school does evaluations of performance and network infrastructure

Requirements:

1. Description of implementation a summary on how the district evaluates network hardware and services
2. Upload description of district disaster recovery plan minimizes the lost instructional and business operational time.
3. Upload copies of school level internet access satisfaction survey for teachers, admin, students and parents
4. Summary of areas in need of improved based on survey results





Support for Digital Teaching and Learning



Focus: Providing effective IT support for staff and students, along with reliable support for digital devices across the district.

Requirements:

1. Description of implementation-Summary of process used to evaluate and implement digital learning devices, tools, software etc.
2. Upload examples of internal district service level agreements showing district digital learning support commitments.
3. Upload copies of technology satisfaction surveys for teachers and administrators, students, and parents.





What is your school/district already doing?



ACTION TYPES: DISTRICT ONLY SCHOOL ONLY	
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District Commitment to Digital Learning (Certification Priority)	10-15
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Data Safety and Security Policy	10
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Questions?



APPLYING FOR CERTIFICATION IN 2026?

Submission Deadline:

#1

January 12

#2

March 23

#3

June 15

bit.ly/Schools2026CertCycle



2026

SCHOOLS CERTIFICATION

FALL WEBINAR SERIES



SEP.24



OCT.1



DEC. 4

Register: bit.ly/SJSFallCertWebinars

Are you signed up for the Sustainable Jersey for Schools mailing list?

Bi-weekly emails with program updates, new funding opportunities, partner event information, and more!



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Sign-up button located at the bottom of the Sustainable Jersey for Schools website homepage at sustainablejerseyschools.com



SUSTAINABLE JERSEY GRANTS PROGRAM



2025-2026 Cycle Currently Open!

FOR WHO?

New Jersey **public** school district or school affiliated with **NJEA** that is **participating** in Sustainable Jersey for Schools

FOR WHAT?

\$2,000 and **\$10,000** grants for sustainability projects

FOR WHEN?

Grants will be awarded in **late March 2026** and have a **12-18 month** performance period to complete the project

LEARN MORE

Visit our website at bit.ly/SJSNJEAgrants to learn more and apply

Online applications due by 11:59pm on October 31, 2025