



# Digital Schools Star Recognition: What's New and What's Next!

March 26, 2026



# Digital Schools Star Recognition

Pursuing Digital Schools Star Recognition encourages school personnel at all levels to collaborate in improving the integration of technology across:



Planning and  
decision making



Professional  
development and  
teacher support



Curriculum  
development and  
instruction



School systems





# Digital Schools Star Recognition Categories



## Digital Learning Leadership

Strategic planning and vision for digital integration.



## Digital Learning Practices

Implementing effective digital tools and pedagogy.



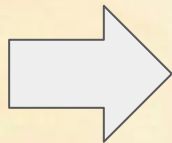
## Digital Technology Access

Ensuring equitable access to devices and connectivity.



# What's New?

Community Engagement



Engaging Families and Communities in Digital Learning

Professional Growth and Collaboration



Professional Growth and Collaboration in Digital Learning



# 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**



# Engaging Families & Communities in Digital Learning



Focus: School collaborate with parents and community organizations to support Digital Learning Goal.

Requirements:

- Implementation Description
- Documentation of parents' involvement in planning and executing two digital learning events or workshops.

Extra points:

- Documentation of two community-hosted events partnered with schools to support digital learning goals.

## Family Tech Night & Digital Workshop



<b>School Name:</b>	
<b>District:</b>	
<b>School Year:</b>	
<b>For 10 points: School-Sponsored Events for Parents or Families</b>	
<b>Name and Date of Event 1</b>	
<b>Event Description</b>  <i>Provide a brief description of the event and how it supports the school's digital learning goals.</i>	
<b>Parent Involvement in Event Planning</b>  <i>Provide a brief description on how parents were involved in planning for the event.</i>	

**Evidence of Parent Involvement in Planning**

*TWO pieces of documentation required*

Acceptable evidence includes:

- Planning meeting agendas, sign-in sheets, and minutes showing parent participation
- Parent surveys and summaries reflecting input used in decision-making
- Email communications documenting parent input
- Invitations to serve on planning committees
- Materials given to parents at meetings
- Other, please describe

*Highlight your two pieces of documentation and provide links to the documents or the name of the files uploaded in the action submission.*

<p><b>Evidence of Parent Participation</b></p> <p><i>TWO pieces of documentation required</i></p>	<p>Acceptable evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Photographs from the event</li><li>• Event program or final agenda</li><li>• Copies of materials distributed to participants</li><li>• Social media posts or website announcements</li><li>• Feedback surveys and summaries</li><li>• Other, please describe</li></ul> <p><i>Highlight your two pieces of documentation and provide links to the documents or the name of the files uploaded in the action submission.</i></p>
<p><b>Feedback and Takeaways</b></p> <p><i>Describe how feedback on the event was collected from families (e.g., surveys, discussions, follow-up emails) and summarize key takeaways for future events.</i></p>	

## Additional 5 points: Community Sponsored Events

Name and Date of Event 1

### Event Description

*Provide a brief description of the event hosted by the community organization, the school's collaboration with the host, and how the event supported the school's digital learning goals.*

### Documentation

***TWO** pieces of documentation required*

Acceptable evidence includes:

- Event flyers, agendas, or programs
- Planning meeting agendas or minutes
- Email correspondence with community partners
- Photographs from the event
- Copies of co-created materials or resources shared at event
- Social media posts or website announcements

*Highlight your two pieces of documentation and provide links to the documents or the name of the files uploaded in the action submission.*





# What is the difference?

## Community Engagement

- Schools are a main source of determining the goals and planning events for the district
- 10 examples of events shared with parents and community
- No submission form
- Not a variable point action
- District and School action

## Engaging Families and Communities in Digital Learning

- Parents are actively involved in events that help to achieve the digital learning goals
- Community organizations are able to support the digital learning goals
- Submission form
- Variable point action
- Only school action

# Professional Growth and Collaboration

Focus: Support educators in professional digital learning growth

Requirements:

- Implementation Description: Short summary of submitted documentation and its link to annual district/school goals.
- 5 samples of teacher digital learning goals from Individual Professional Development Plans (across grades/content areas).
- 5 samples of attendance/completion certificates from digital technology professional learning (in-district, off-site, or virtual).
- Evidence of educators' virtual collaborations in personal learning communities.
- At least three examples of how teachers applied their learning.





# Professional Growth and Collaboration in Digital Learning



Focus: Creating and Sustaining a culture of self-directed learning and collaboration among education and staff in digital learning

## Requirements:

- Describe how Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are structured in your school
- Evidence of Staff Input in Professional Learning in Professional Growth and Collaboration Submission Form.
- Evidence of Educator-Led Professional Learning or Collaboration
- 3 Educator reflections (written, audio or format)



<b>School Name:</b>	
<b>District:</b>	
<b>School Year:</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b> <i>(provide narrative or link to a document)</i>
<p>Educator Input on their Professional Learning related to Digital Literacy, Technology and Innovation</p> <p><i>Describe how educators provide input on their professional learning related to digital literacy, technology and innovation.</i></p>	
<b>Evidence of Educator Professional Learning Input</b>	<p>Acceptable evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A teacher interest survey</li> <li>• A summary of survey results</li> <li>• Other, please describe</li> </ul> <p>Provide links to the documents or the name of the files uploaded in the action submission.</p>





**Educator-Led Professional Learning or Collaboration**

*Describe two opportunities where educators led a professional learning or collaborative learning session with colleagues related to digital literacy, technology and innovation.*

### Evidence of Materials

*Provide evidence for each professional learning or collaborative learning session related to digital literacy, technology and innovation described in the previous section. Include links to the documents or the names of the files uploaded in the submission.*

#### Acceptable evidence may include:

- Photos or screenshots of the session
- Presentation slides
- Collaborative activity artifacts or notes
- Handouts, or shared resources from the session
- Other, please describe:

### Educator Reflections

*Submit at least **three reflections**, two from educators and one from an instructional leader.*

Reflections may be submitted in written, or video format.

Acceptable examples may include:

- A reflection on engaging in meaningful, collaborative, or self-directed learning within a PLC related to digital literacy, technology and innovation, and how that learning was applied to instruction.
- A reflection on the experience of leading a PLC or supporting a peer learning activity related to digital literacy, technology and innovation.

Provide links to the documents or the name of the files uploaded in the action submission



# What is the difference?

- Provide teacher PDP to show digital learning goals
- Evidence of Professional Learning connected to PDP learning goals (5)
- Virtual collaborations
- Samples applied to learning
- No submission form

- Narrative on PLCs are structured in schools
- Evidence of educator input and contribution to professional learning
- Examples of educators leading professional learning and collaborative sessions
- Reflections for educators on their professional learning
- Submission form



# 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	
<b>Category - Digital Learning Leadership</b>	
District Commitment to Digital Learning (Certification Priority)	10-15
Equitable Access to Digital Learning (Certification Priority)	10-15
Community Engagement OR	10-15
Engaging Families & Communities in Digital Learning	
<b>Category - Digital Learning Practices</b>	
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 OR	15
Professional Growth and Collaboration in Digital Learning	
<b>Category - Digital Technology Access</b>	
Data Safety and Security Policy	10
Digital Device Life Cycle Management	10
Infrastructure	10
Support for Digital Teaching and Learning	20

# What's next?



**District  
Commitment to  
Digital Learning**  
will be updated to  
the **District  
Commitment to  
Digital Integration**



**Equitable Access  
to Digital  
Learning**



**Data Safety and  
Security**



**Support for  
Digital Teaching  
and Learning**

# Sustainable Jersey for Schools Program Refresh



## What is the refresh?

- A strategic update to improve the certification program's usability, clarity, and impact
- Includes streamlined actions, updated resources, and a redesigned website



## When does it happen for schools?

Program refresh for schools  
is planned to begin in 2027



## What does it mean for schools?

- Schools, Stars and Actions that are expiring in 2027 will be extended to 2028
- Opportunity to provide input and help shape the future of the program
- Future updates aim to make participation easier, more focused, and more impactful
- Continued access to grants, technical assistance, and events throughout the transition

Questions?

Inside the...

# SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT





# APPLYING FOR CERTIFICATION IN 2026?

## Submission Deadline:

#1

January 12

#2

March 23

#3

June 15

[bit.ly/Schools2026CertCycle](https://bit.ly/Schools2026CertCycle)

# 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!**



Join Sustainable Jersey For Schools  
Mailing List

Join

*Sign-up button located at the bottom of the Sustainable Jersey for Schools website homepage at [sustainablejerseyschools.com](https://sustainablejerseyschools.com)*



Thank you!

**Rosalie Morillo**  
**Program Manager**  
**Sustainable Jersey**  
**The College of New Jersey**  
[rosalie.morillo@tcnj.edu](mailto:rosalie.morillo@tcnj.edu)