



Sustainable Jersey for Schools Grants Program Funded By NJEA: Grantee Quotes

Quotes from \$10,000 Grant Recipients (Listed alphabetically by county)

"We are honored to receive the 2024 Sustainable Jersey Grant, funded by NJEA, which will support our ongoing commitment to sustainability and environmental education at Weymouth Township School. This grant empowers our students and staff to take meaningful action toward a greener future, reinforcing our district's mission to create a positive impact both in our school and the greater community. We appreciate Sustainable Jersey for Schools and NJEA for their support in making this vision a reality." – *Dr. Al Lewis, Superintendent, Weymouth Township School District, Atlantic County*

"At LEAP Academy, sustainability and equity are deeply connected. This generous \$10,000 grant from Sustainable New Jersey enables us to retrofit 11 water fountains into refillable water stations across four buildings, ensuring equitable access to clean, sustainable drinking water for all students, staff, and stakeholders, resulting in thousands of saved water bottles. By reducing plastic waste and promoting reusable alternatives, we are not only protecting the environment but also supporting the health and well-being of our school community." – *Dr. Dawn Fichera, Chief of STEAM, LEAP Academy University, Camden County*

"We are so fortunate to receive this grant from NJEA Sustainable Jersey! Our 4th grade students researched solar panels and renewable energy, so our plan is to build a structure above one of our outdoor classrooms and include various types of equipment that can generate renewable energy. Our students are excited to see this addition to our outdoor classroom and see first-hand how energy is created." – *Scott Lipson, Superintendent/Principal, Delaware Township School, Hunterdon County*

"The Sustainable Jersey grant project, "Greening the Greenhouse" will revitalize the school greenhouse and launch a sustainable agribusiness opportunity for high school students. This grant will provide vital resources to enhance our environmental education program, prepare students for careers in the growing field of sustainable agriculture, and contribute to a healthier, more sustainable future for our community. The grant will fund the renovation of the school's greenhouse, thus improving its capacity to support hands-on learning for students. In addition to modernizing the greenhouse, the initiative will introduce new opportunities for teacher professional development and student learning focused on sustainable agribusiness. The grant will provide students with valuable knowledge and skills that both connect to New Jersey's rich transition in agriculture as the Garden State, and provide a platform for learning about the role of science, technology, engineering and math in modern farming practices and the agricultural business ecosystem. Further, contemporary practice demands a commitment to sustainability education, and this grant will allow us to expand this focus. By empowering students with the tools and knowledge needed to succeed in the sustainable agriculture field, we are equipping the next generation with the skills required to address the pressing environmental challenges we face, alongside addressing food insecurity. The greenhouse revamp will provide students with the opportunity to engage in real-world applications of sustainable agriculture, including growing food with environmentally responsible practices and exploring the economic side of agriculture through hands-on business projects. The program will not only promote sustainability in education but also encourage students to consider careers in agriculture, environmental sciences, and related fields. This project aligns with Sustainable Jersey's mission to foster environmental stewardship, create green schools, and encourage young people to take an active role in improving their communities. The grant supports the launch of the reuse of this facility asset at the high school while building capacity to strengthen the commitment to shaping environmentally conscious leaders who will drive positive change for the planet and their communities. We thank Sustainable Jersey and the NJEA for their leadership in providing the Sustainable Jersey grant and selecting our proposal for funding" – *Michael Kneller, Principal, North Brunswick Township High School, North Brunswick Township School District, Middlesex County*

“This prestigious grant will support districtwide celebratory events and enhance curriculum resources, reinforcing the district’s commitment to fostering a welcoming and supportive learning environment for all students. Having worked closely with our district’s Equity & Diversity Committee, we are incredibly proud of their passion and commitment. These grants will assist us in taking the next step in embedding equitable practices within our classrooms and community.” – *Eliza Cadorette-Rawley, Director of Curriculum, Woodstown-pilesgrove Regional School District, Salem County*

“We promise every student a future by ensuring that equity and inclusion are essential practices in our district. This grant empowers us to further embed these values, allowing every student to be recognized and celebrated.” – *Dr. Dr. Christopher Meyrick, Superintendent, Woodstown-pilesgrove Regional School District, Salem County*

“On behalf of the Franklin Township School Community, many thanks to the Sustainable Jersey for Schools organization and the NJEA for the Sustainable Jersey Grant award. This grant will allow Vice Principal Mr. Rod Brundidge and the Green Team of Franklin High School to create an outdoor learning center in the courtyard area of the high school facility. This living laboratory will allow for expansion of the Green Team’s sustainable initiatives; create a space for quiet reflection and other SEL activities for FHS students as well as provide an opportunity for FHS teachers to conduct full class activities outdoors. Our teachers look forward to working with the Somerset Parks Commission Naturalists to ensure that the Franklin High School outdoor learning center project brings learning to life for our Franklin Warriors.” – *Dr. John A. Ravally, Superintendent, Franklin Township Public Schools, Somerset County*

“We are beyond excited and grateful to the Sustainable Jersey for Schools Program and NJEA for the recognition and award for our project “Outdoor Learning and Growth Pavilion.” For many years we have tried to get the outdoor classroom off the ground. A makeshift space was created and a google signage form was generated to control what we thought was going to have a high participation rate. It was rarely used and if so, by the same staff members. The Green Team continued to have the Outdoor Classroom idea on the monthly agenda because we felt that by having classroom resources for teachers at the location, Wi-Fi, a broader seating area, landscape and making it seasonal with a roof, staff interest will grow.

The grant will allow Somerset County Vocational and Technical High School to create a multi-use outdoor space that will provide an area for academic learning, incorporate SEL practices, and promote awareness of sustainability and the environment. In addition to seating and classroom materials, features will include a shade structure, permeable surfaces, rain barrels, bat boxes and weather observation equipment as well as student seating and work spaces. A butterfly/pollinator garden will create a space for positive student development and alleviate stress by providing a calming setting on campus.

It is our intent to engage the entire SCVTHS school community in the process of developing and future use of our Outdoor Classroom. As a Vocational-Technical High School, we have access to a variety of resources that are inherent in the shop classes taught on our campus. We plan on collaborating with faculty and students in Agricultural Science to develop a plan for the sustainable and environmental aspects of the space and to assist with implementation and maintenance of the design’s natural elements. We will work with Carpentry and Welding classes to create storage spaces and other features of the classroom that will utilize sustainable and recycled materials. We will also engage the services of our Graphic Arts department to provide promotional materials and other items for use in the space.

In order to create buy-in and to develop a sense of community around the project we are surveying all members of the faculty to ascertain what elements of the classroom they will use in their instruction, and to solicit ideas for additional materials and uses for the space. We are also collaborating with staff and administration to assist in the

development of the plan, oversight of installation of the elements of the project, management and scheduling of the Outdoor Classroom space, and promotion of the space and its value to the school and community.” – *Hector Montes, Principal, Somerset County Vocational & Technical High School, Somerset County Vocational And Technical Schools, Somerset County*

“We are incredibly grateful for this grant from Sustainable Jersey for Schools, which will help us transform an underutilized space behind Franklin School into ‘The Franklin Hub’—a vibrant, welcoming, and accessible outdoor learning and community space,” said Franklin principal Dr. Paul Duncan. “Thanks to the generosity of the Franklin PTO and Project Playground, an entire section of accessible playground equipment is already in place. This grant will support the creation of an outdoor classroom and meeting space, serving as the cornerstone of the Franklin Hub. The project will also feature a large, student-designed mural celebrating sustainability, diversity, and inclusion, with the school’s motto: ‘I Belong. You Belong. We Belong.’ In collaboration with our community partners, we are excited to unify the playground, outdoor classroom, and Habitat Garden, fostering inclusivity, learning, and connection among our students.” – *Dr. Paul Duncan, Principal, Franklin Elementary School, Westfield Public Schools, Union County*

Select Quotes from Select \$2,000 Grant Recipients (Listed alphabetically by county)

“The Tabernacle Township School District is ecstatic to receive this grant from Sustainable Jersey that will enable us to provide our students with a new sensory experience on our elementary school playground. This new outdoor music equipment will aid in our goal of ensuring that our playground is an inclusive environment that benefits all students. We greatly appreciate the continued support of Sustainable Jersey!” – *Shaun Banin, Superintendent, Tabernacle Township School District, Burlington County*

"I extend heartfelt congratulations to Henry C. Beck Middle School for being awarded a 2024 Sustainable Jersey Grant funded by NJEA. This recognition is a testament to the school’s dedication to sustainability and environmental stewardship. We are truly proud of this achievement and grateful to NJEA and Sustainable Jersey for their support." – *Dr. Kwame Morton, Sr. Superintendent, Cherry Hill Public Schools, Camden County*

“We are excited and grateful to accept this grant which will help bring our environmental education vision to life at Henry C. Beck Middle School. This will give us the opportunity to explore new projects that provide social and emotional learning opportunities as well as supporting sustainable practices. Thank you Sustainable Jersey for Schools for helping us make a lasting impact on our students and our environment.” – *Ninh Nguyen, Assistant Principal, Henry C. Beck Middle School, Cherry Hill Public Schools, Camden County*

“Merchantville School is incredibly grateful to receive the NJEA grant, which will play a crucial role in enhancing our bee habitat and pollinator garden. This grant will not only support the growth of Leafcutter and Mason Bee populations but also help us implement sustainable practices like the installation of a rain barrel to conserve water. It’s inspiring to see our Green Team and Garden Club working together to create an environment that fosters biodiversity and teaches students the importance of conservation. This project is a wonderful step toward building a greener, more sustainable future for our school community.” – *Sherry Iannucci, Technology Teacher, Merchantville Elementary School, Merchantville School District, Camden County*

“The Bloomfield Green Team will be working in cooperation with our Industrial Arts department to construct a protected area for our composting pilot program at Bloomfield High School. The Bloomfield High School Green Team and Biology club will work in conjunction with the cafeteria staff to compost the food scraps produced in the cafeteria. The subsequent compost material will be transferred to the BHS garden which is used for growing vegetables in the spring and summer months. By establishing this program, BHS hopes to lower its carbon

footprint and increase its sustainability.” – *Christopher Jennings, Principal, Bloomfield High School, Bloomfield Board of Education, Essex County*

“Our team has worked incredibly hard to partner with the community on sustainability. The work has attracted a wide range of students, and they have done amazing work. From helping parents understand what idling can do to air quality, to reducing food waste, and creating policy. Our teachers have empowered our RVS students to make the world better. I am incredibly proud of our green team and the teachers who lead these initiatives.” – *Melissa Stager, Ed.D, Superintendent, Clinton Township School District, Hunterdon County*

“We are thrilled to be awarded this grant and want to extend our heartfelt thanks to our dedicated team for their hard work and commitment. We are excited to partner with GoHunterdon to develop and implement a traffic garden that will enhance the safety and citizenship of our students.” – *Jesse Lockett, Principal, Copper Hill Elementary School, Flemington-Raritan Regional School District, Hunterdon County*

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"Sustainable Jersey for Schools and PSE&G have been steadfast in their support of our schools. Our district has been able to develop innovative student experiences with the grant funding. These experiences cultivate student inquiry, creativity, and innovation - all necessary skills for life in and beyond school. We are immensely grateful for their support." – *Dr. Jonathan Hart, Superintendent of Schools, Readington Township School District, Hunterdon County*

"We are grateful for the grant and the ability to take this important step towards sustainability at Community Park Elementary School. This grant will help us replace disposable service ware with reusable, reducing waste while teaching our students the value of sustainability." – *Dineen Gruchacz, Principal, Community Park Elementary School, Princeton Public Schools, Mercer County*

"We are grateful for this Sustainable Jersey-NJEA grant, which will help Littlebrook Elementary further our commitment to sustainability. Expanding our collection of reusable wares supports our growing student body while reducing waste and fostering environmental responsibility." – *Luis Ramirez, Principal, Littlebrook Elementary School, Princeton Public Schools, Mercer County*

"We are thrilled to expand our hands-on sustainability initiatives with this grant. These resources will empower students to design, build, and maintain a new composting system, fostering a deeper understanding of environmental stewardship." – *Jason Burr, Principal, Littlebrook Elementary School, Princeton Middle School, Mercer County*

“We are incredibly grateful to Sustainable Jersey for Schools and NJEA for their generous support in making this project a reality. This grant will allow us to revitalize our garden courtyard, creating a vibrant and welcoming space for our students, staff, and community. By adding colorful flowers, decorative statues, upgraded seating, and essential maintenance tools, we are not only enhancing the beauty of our school but also fostering a deeper appreciation for nature and environmental stewardship. This space will serve as a place for reflection, creativity, and connection with the natural world. Thank you for helping us bring this vision to life—we can't wait to see our garden flourish!” – *Jennifer Knapp, Principal, Bartle Elementary School, Highland Park Public Schools, Middlesex County*

“Campbell Elementary School, in Metuchen Public School District, is honored to have been selected to receive a 2024 Sustainable Jersey Grant, which is funded by our partners at NJEA. Sustainable schools play a crucial role in shaping a more environmentally responsible and equitable future. Our efforts at Campbell and in Metuchen are essential for the environment, health, education, and future of society as they provide students with the tools and mindset necessary to live sustainably while creating healthier, more efficient learning environments. We are grateful to have our efforts recognized and pleased to celebrate with our partners.” – *Dr. Vincent J. Costanza, Principal, Campbell Elementary School, Metuchen Public School District, Middlesex County*

“The Bradley Beach School District takes great pride in our commitment to sustainability and continuous improvement. This year, we achieved Silver-level certification—a testament to the collaboration of our Board of Education, teachers, administration, and community. As part of the certification process, our self-survey identified an opportunity to further support our students and staff through active health strategies. Bradley Beach is a walking district just blocks from the beach, and our community equally values both sustainability and healthy habits; our town is also proudly Sustainable Jersey certified. This grant will enable us to bring in a leading expert in health education to provide high-quality professional development for our staff, strengthening our commitment to wellness and sustainability. We are proud to support the work of Sustainable Jersey and will continue to raise the bar for a healthier, more sustainable future.” – *Dr. Michael Heidelberg, Principal/Superintendent, Bradley Beach Elementary School, Monmouth County*

“Greenville School will upgrade a traditional water fountain to include a bottle filler station. This bottle filler will allow students and staff to refill reusable water bottles instead of buying and throwing away plastic bottles. This would be both environmentally friendly as we aim to avoid throwing more plastic into landfills and more cost effective for students, families, and the school community. Additionally, this would increase the health and safety of students, staff, and the school community when utilizing water bottle filling stations verses the traditional water fountains. Greenville School looks forward to making our school as sustainable as possible to ensure a healthy Earth for our children’s future.” – *Danielle Palazzolo, Principal, Greenville School, Howell Township Public School District, Monmouth County*

“We are so excited to receive this Sustainable grant for our school! Adding a Water Bottle Filling Station for our staff and students will lead to improved health not only by increasing the intake of water for our students rather than sugary drinks, but also by improving the quality of the water consumed due to having a filtered system for water bottle filling. We are looking forward to having this in place in our school in the near future!” – *Joseph Fiore, Principal, Land O'Pines Elementary School, Howell Township Public School District, Monmouth County*