



STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Murphy Administration Announces Programs to Boost Student Learning with High Impact Tutoring and RAPID Learning Acceleration Professional Development Programs

Trenton, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) today announced the launch of three critical initiatives designed to promote academic recovery and accelerate learning. The initiatives will focus on evidence-based strategies that can help schools close achievement gaps caused or exacerbated by COVID-19-related disruptions to the learning environment and the shift to remote instruction. These programs will prioritize elementary age students, consistent with evidence-based research demonstrating that elementary-age students experienced more significant developmental setbacks during the pandemic.

“As a state that prides itself on delivering the high-quality education our children deserve, addressing the effects of learning loss on our students’ progress remains a top priority,” **said Governor Phil Murphy**. “These programs are another component of our ongoing efforts to comprehensively address the mental, emotional, and educational needs of young people throughout our state. We will continue to take a holistic approach to supporting the academic success and overall well-being of New Jersey’s students.”

“The academic challenges facing New Jersey students reflect those faced by students throughout the nation as a result of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic,” **said Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. “These High Impact Tutoring and RAPID educator training programs are strategies that will accelerate our students’ learning and help them achieve greater educational success as we move forward.”

High Impact Tutoring

The New Jersey High Impact Tutoring program begins this week with a 60-day [Request for Qualifications](#) (RFQ) for vendors such as companies, non-profit organizations, and colleges and universities that have the capacity to provide in-depth tutoring services to schools. Under this initiative, the NJDOE seeks participation from organizations that can provide tutoring services at scale, including school districts that offer tutoring or are considering offering tutoring with existing staff.

Eligible vendors will be required to demonstrate that their tutoring services are grounded in evidence-based instructional practices. Tutoring will be prioritized for third and fourth grade students, on an individual or small-group basis. Tutoring will take place no less than twice weekly, for a nine or 10-week period. The NJDOE will also support school districts that have already established tutoring programs in their school community.

Following the establishment of a list of approved tutoring vendors, local school districts can apply to be reimbursed for a share of at least \$17 million in federal funding from the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund that will allow them to contract with pre-qualified vendors. Additional information regarding the allocation of funding is forthcoming that will outline the method through which schools will be prioritized for these funds.

All tutoring staff need to be appropriately qualified with at least 60 semester-hour credits from a nationally accredited college or university and have been thoroughly vetted by the hiring organization. Criminal history background checks will be required, consistent with state law and NJDOE regulations.

RAPID Learning Acceleration Professional Development Programs

Using funding appropriated through the FY23 budget, as well as remaining Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) state-set aside funds, the NJDOE is also launching two programs – RAPID and RAPID-Plus, which are designed to bolster foundational literacy in the elementary grades by providing targeted professional development for educators.

RAPID, specific to early elementary literacy in kindergarten to grade three, will be supported by a \$2 million appropriation from the FY23 budget and approximately \$700,000 in one-time ESSER funding. The NJDOE will solicit a Request for Proposals ([RFP](#)) from qualified individuals and organizations that will be approved to serve as RAPID vendors, providing no-cost training to participating school districts.

RAPID-Plus is a grant opportunity for institutions of higher education to provide professional development targeted to literacy instruction for educators responsible for upper elementary students in grades 4 and 5. RAPID-Plus will be supported by \$3 million in ESSER state set-aside funding.

The NJDOE will enter into an agreement with grantee colleges and universities that have the capacity to provide professional development to New Jersey educators. The Notice of Grant Opportunity for this program will be posted to the NJDOE's website in the coming days.

“Our shared goal is to provide New Jersey's young learners with the tools and resources they need to succeed, especially in light of pandemic-related impacts on learning. The pandemic presented our students with an abundance of new, unprecedented challenges, and we will continue to see the impact for years to come,” **said Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt, Chair of the Assembly Education Committee.** “I appreciate the Department of Education's efforts to bolster student learning with these programs, and I look forward to continuing to work together to accelerate learning recovery.”

“We commend the Administration on recognizing the learning needs across all New Jersey school districts, because of the pandemic, and the actions they are taking to provide students and families with the support necessary to close these learning gaps,” **said Dr. Richard Bozza, Executive Director NJASA.**

“We commend Governor Murphy and the NJ Department of Education on the creation of a high-impact tutoring program to support New Jersey's students in accelerating learning and meeting individual and timely learning needs post-pandemic,” **said Karen Bingert, Executive Director, NJ Principals and Supervisors Association.** “Utilizing tutors with just a few students at a time will complement the learning happening in our classrooms with our state's talented and dedicated teachers, and reinforce critical skills and concepts that will move learning forward continuously. Statewide support and opportunities like this are why New Jersey's schools remain among the very best in the nation.”

“The NJSBA applauds the latest academic recovery initiatives launched today by the Murphy administration” **said NJSBA's Executive Director Dr. Timothy Purnell.** “The high-impact tutoring and early literacy professional development programs detailed here represent meaningful investments in research-based learning supports for the students most significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the academic impacts of the last three years of disrupted learning come into sharper focus, we urgently need to reaffirm and expand our commitment to increasing instructional time and accelerating learning opportunities for students most in need. Today's announcement advances that critical goal. We look forward to working with the Murphy administration on continuing to support districts in providing increased literacy professional development and fruitful partnerships with high-quality tutoring providers.”

“We believe that this tutoring plan will provide much-needed help for some of our most vulnerable students,” **said Betsy Ginsburg, Executive Director of the Garden State Coalition of Schools.**

“It is clear that the pandemic exacerbated existing learning gaps that left vulnerable students, especially those in cities like Newark, further behind,” **said Kyle Rosenkrans, Executive Director, New Jersey Children's Foundation.** “We applaud the administration's commitment to high dosage tutoring, an efficient tool to close those learning gaps because it meets students and families where they are and breaks down barriers to access the support students need to succeed.”

