STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: April 5, 2023

To: Local Educational Agency Leads

Route To: Assistant Superintendents, Supervisors/Directors of Instruction, Principals and K-5 Teachers of Science

From: Jorden Schiff, Ed.D.
Acting Assistant Commissioner
Division of Teaching and Learning Services

Deadline: May 1, 2023

OpenSciEd Elementary Field Test: Opportunity

School Districts are invited to identify teams of teachers to field test the new set of science instructional materials (grades K–5). Led by a group of state education agencies, school districts, classroom educators, and science curriculum developers will collaborate to create research-based, open-source science instructional materials that align to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Science (NJSLS–S). The long-term vision is to ensure every science teacher can access and download free standards-aligned instructional materials and supporting professional learning materials. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) will provide each participating school district with a total of up to $9,000 to offset the cost of substitute teachers and to provide stipends for teacher participation.

OpenSciEd is a project of the National Center for Civic Innovation that brings together science education leaders from partner states, expert curriculum developers, national education leaders and classroom teachers to develop, release, and support a complete set of robust, research-based, openly licensed K-12 science instructional materials and associated professional learning resources. The NJDOE has been a member of the OpenSciEd State Steering Committee since 2018.

The elementary program is funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Walton Family Foundation.

Each six-person team needs to be comprised of one teacher from each grade (K-5) who can commit to attend all professional learning experiences, field test two units each year, and provide data and feedback on the units. The field testing will be conducted for two years. Detailed descriptions of participation benefits and commitments of each partner in the field testing are on the appendix attached to the bottom of this memo.

The teams will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Region of the state the school is located; North, Central or South
- Urban, suburban, or rural school
- Demonstrated commitment to science education as evidenced by the time allocated to science education per week and the quality and duration of science professional learning that the educators have participated since 2014

Applications will be accepted until May 1, 2023. The application form is available online.

Contact Information
Thank you for considering this opportunity to participate in the OpenSciEd elementary field test. For more information or if you have questions, please contact Michael Heinz at Michael.Heinz@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group

Appendix

Benefits and Commitments

Benefits to Participating Teachers and Students

All participating teachers will:

- Receive free professional learning to support use of the instructional materials and deepen their knowledge of instructional shifts needed to realize the vision of the *Framework* for equitable teaching and learning.
- Have opportunities to provide feedback to developers as they revise the materials.

All students will:

- Experience meaningful and engaging science teaching organized around investigating natural phenomena.
- Use the science and engineering practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas together to develop deep conceptual understanding.
- Have opportunities to improve the materials by giving feedback to developers.

Expectations of District Staff, Principals, Teachers, OpenSciEd and the New Jersey Department of Education

District Staff will:

- Identify potential schools and teachers to participate. Each team of 6 must include at least one educator from each grade, K-5, and an administrator.
- Ensure that field test educators have the materials and supplies necessary to field test each instructional unit.
- Support data collection by ensuring all district-level data collection policies and procedures are followed.

Principals will:

- Help identify and recruit field test teachers. Each team of 6 must include at least one educator from each grade, K-5, and an administrator.
- Enable teachers to participate in all required professional learning activities including securing substitute coverage for four days across two years.
- Support teachers in implementing the units as intended, ensuring teachers have adequate science instructional time to teach the units during the field test windows and working with district staff to ensure teachers have the necessary equipment and supplies.

Teachers will:

- Participate in the field test of four units across two years: summer 2023 through spring 2025
    - Round 1 field test window: Fall 2023
    - Round 2 field test window: Spring 2024
    - Round 3 field test window: Fall 2024
    - Round 4 field test window: Spring 2025
- Participate in all professional learning experiences that happen each year and plan for necessary substitute coverage for the winter professional learning days:
    - **Summer professional learning**: Three days of in-person professional learning in August 2023.
    - **Winter professional learning**: Two days of in-person professional learning dates TBD.
    - **During-unit professional learning:** Three interactive, professional learning sessions (2 hours each, either in-person or online) in both the fall and winter.
- Implement two units as designed each year. Each unit takes 6-10 weeks to implement and addresses 2-6 performance expectations (standards). The timing of teaching the units will vary based on each field test teacher's daily school schedule for teaching science.
    - In grades K-2, lessons are designed to take 60 minutes, and each unit is composed of about 10 lessons.

    - In grades 3-5, lessons are designed to take 90 minutes, and each unit is composed of about 15 lessons.
    - Lessons in both K-2 and 3-5 are designed to be broken up across multiple days to fit into different schedules.
- Provide feedback through a 15-minute online survey administered at the end of each unit. In addition, give feedback through 1 of the 3 methods below, based on a sampling plan administered by the OpenSciEd field test team, for an estimated total commitment of about 1 hour per unit.
    - **Interviews:** At the end of each unit, a sample of teachers will be interviewed about their perceptions of the curriculum and recommendations for improvement.
    - **Student Work Samples:** At the beginning and end of each unit, a sample of teachers will gather and submit student work.
    - **Student Exit Tickets:** At the end of specific lessons, students in a sample of teachers' classes will complete exit tickets to understand students' perceptions of and engagement with the units.

OpenSciEd will:

- work with district leadership to seek approval for all data collection, and
- maintain ongoing communication with participating district and school staff so they understand the expectations of the field test.

New Jersey Department of Education

- Provide $1,600 per team member offset the cost of substitute teachers and to provide stipends for field test educators and
- Provide feedback to the OpenSciEd instructional materials and professional learning design teams.
- Assist in troubleshooting challenges.