



For Immediate Release

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New Jersey Department of Education Announces Award of Federal Mental Health Service Professional Grant

Trenton, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) today announced that New Jersey has been awarded a federal Mental Health Service Professional Grant to help schools expand access to mental health services and strengthen the pipeline of highly qualified school psychologists. The NJDOE will receive \$1.25 million annually over the next four years, totaling \$5 million through 2029.

The grant will support programs that increase mental health resources in schools by lowering student-to-school psychologist ratios, recruiting and retaining qualified providers, and building a sustainable workforce to meet long-term needs. Funding will also help schools in rural and high-need areas deliver evidence-based interventions and provide early support for students.

“We know that students learn best when they feel safe and supported,” **said Governor Murphy**. “The mental health of our students is just as important as their academic success. This grant allows us to strengthen the pipeline of school psychologists and expand access to the support that children need to thrive. By deepening partnerships between our schools and higher education institutions, we are making a long-term investment in student well-being and building a stronger, more resilient education system for the future.”

“We have been consistent in our intense focus on mental health because we know how critical it is for student success,” **said Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer**. “This grant allows us to take real steps toward lowering student-to-psychologist ratios and providing timely, evidence-based support. Our partnerships with higher education will help us grow the next generation of school-based mental health professionals and deliver resources where they are needed most.”

To address continuing student mental health challenges and staffing shortages, the NJDOE will work with higher education partners to recruit, train, and place graduate-level school psychology candidates in high-need districts, including rural communities. The project will fund paid internships, reimburse supervisors for mentorship, and provide advanced study tuition assistance contingent upon a service commitment of at least two years in those districts after graduation. The goal of the program is to expand the number of credentialed school psychologists statewide by creating supported pathways into long-term employment.



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