



NJDOE News

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55 Districts To Share \$15 Million in Grant Funds for Autism Programs

Fifty-five New Jersey school districts will share \$15 million in state grant funds to establish, expand or enhance public school programs and services for students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Education Commissioner Lucille E. Davy announced today.

Gov. Jon S. Corzine established the competitive grant fund through his Initiative on Autism in the FY07 state budget. The Department of Education received 250 applications for the funding.

"It is essential that students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and their families have access to high quality services and programs that meet their needs. Clearly, many school districts, including the county special services districts and education service commissions, are clamoring for the state's help to offer improved educational services for students with autism," said Gov. Corzine. "Even though the state is still facing severe fiscal constraints, I am very pleased that we have found a way to provide students with autism with more comprehensive and innovative public school options."

Approximately 7,400 New Jersey children between the ages of five and 21 have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. Individuals with autism have marked deficits in attention, imitation, communication, socialization, and motivation – skills that are the foundation for early education. Many districts have seen notable increases in the number of students with autism in recent years.

The 15-month grant program is designed to increase the number of public program options available to students with autism and to encourage districts to work together to develop cross-district programs that will meet the needs of students efficiently and effectively.

"The grant funds will be used to develop comprehensive programs that address the unique behavioral, social and instructional needs of these students," said Commissioner Davy. "I was pleased to see the wide range of quality programs that were proposed by the applicants, including several districts that are using the funds to develop cross-district programs."

The department divided the grant funds into three categories: \$8 million was allocated for new public school programs specifically designed for students with autism, \$5 million was allocated for public school programs that wanted to expand their existing programs to serve more students and \$2 million was allocated for the enhancement of existing public programs.

With the help of these grants, school districts, including county special service providers and education service commissions, will be able to offer some of the most progressive and cutting-edge techniques and services to assist students with ASD. Some specific activities that will occur as a result of these grants are the following:

- Funds will be used to hire additional staff to start new programs or enhance or expand existing programs, including special education teachers, inclusion facilitators, behavior specialists, occupational therapists, speech-language specialists, and classroom aides.
- Some districts are using the grants to upgrade facilities and technology, such as the creation of a sensory room for sensory integration activities and calming sensory learning and play experiences. Furthermore, assistive technology and visual instructional aids will be used by some districts.
- New programs will be added such as social skills programs with opportunities for generalization of skills across all settings, and other new techniques.
- Other activities include intensive professional development for staff.

Each district application received a score based on an evaluation of four components: the statement of need, the project description, the program activity plan and the budget. District requests in each of the three funding categories were filled in descending order of their application scores until all of the available funds were allocated.

In addition to this grant program, Gov. Corzine included an additional \$4.5 million in the FY 2007 budget for The Governor's Initiative: Enhancing and Expanding In-district Program Options for Students with Disabilities. This \$4.5 million was combined with \$4.5 million in federal funds to create a second grant program to address other special education needs, in addition to Autism Spectrum Disorders. DOE is currently accepting applications for this grant program and expects to unveil these grantees in upcoming months.

A list of districts and the amounts they received under the Governor's Initiative on Autism is attached.

The Governor's Initiative on Autism

**Option 1: Establish New Programs
\$8,000,000 - 22 Awards**

District	Amount Requested
Barrington Borough	\$216,448
Bergen County Special Services	\$350,000
Chatham (School District of the)	\$348,184
Edison Township	\$600,000
Franklin Township (Somerset County)	\$146,415
Freehold Regional	\$262,613
Gloucester City	\$681,978
Kinnelon Borough	\$241,101
Lakehurst	\$277,232
Lawrence Township (Mercer County)	\$446,060
Mansfield Township	\$500,000
Maywood	\$350,000
Nutley	\$700,000
River Edge	\$500,000
Rockaway Borough	\$349,104
Roselle Park	\$529,208
Southern Regional	\$350,000
Teaneck	\$500,000
Totowa	\$118,619
West Paterson	\$93,100
Wharton Borough	\$277,378

Woodbury	\$162,560
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**Option 2: Expand Programs and Services
\$5,000,000 - 14 Awards**

District	Amount Requested
Bedminster Township	\$300,000
Camden Co. Educational Services Commission	\$300,000
East Brunswick Township	\$599,931
Flemington-Raritan Regional	\$279,221
Middlesex County Educational Services Commission	\$356,697
Millville	\$199,367
Monroe Township (Middlesex County)	\$300,000
Montclair	\$200,000
Moorestown Township	\$336,272
Northern Burlington County Regional	\$300,000
Old Bridge Township	\$502,475
Passaic City	\$450,000
Sayreville	\$308,629
Vineland City	\$567,408

**Option 3: Enhance Services and Supports
\$2,000,000 - 19 Awards**

District	Amount Requested
Berkeley Township	\$163,000
Blairstown Township	\$37,534
Brigantine City	\$75,000
Camden City	\$224,290

Cape May County Special Services	\$224,973
Closter	\$20,539
East Amwell Township	\$29,950
Haddonfield Borough	\$17,397
Lacey Township	\$164,931
Manalapan-Englishtown Regional	\$206,095
Mercer County Special Services	\$69,850
Middletown Township	\$225,000
Millburn Township	\$45,304
North Brunswick Township	\$215,041
North Hunterdon/Voorhees Regional	\$50,352
Park Ridge	\$81,857
Paterson	\$65,749
West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional	\$65,138
Westville	\$18,000