



# STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**For Immediate Release**

**Date:** November 14, 2024

**Contact:** [Michael Yaple](#)

(609) 376-9072

## Murphy Administration Awards \$800,000 in Grants for New Jersey Teacher Apprenticeship Program

**Trenton, NJ** – The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) today announced the award of \$800,000 to launch the New Jersey Teacher Apprenticeship Program, an initiative to support the pipeline of classroom aides and paraprofessionals who want to become certificated teachers.

Through the program, Ramapo College and Rutgers University in New Brunswick each will receive \$400,000 in grant funding to collectively partner with eight school districts, jointure commissions, and special services school districts. Staff from the New Jersey Departments of Education and Labor & Workforce Development will regularly work with Ramapo and Rutgers to visit the school districts to provide needed support for the apprenticeship programs.

“In New Jersey, we have committed to bolstering our teacher workforce and ensuring our classrooms are staffed by the very best professionals because our students deserve nothing less,” **said Governor Phil Murphy**. “The Teacher Apprenticeship Program will be a game changer, helping to break down barriers to entry for paraprofessionals and classroom aides who want to become certified teachers and have already proven their passion for teaching the next generation.”

Supported by funding appropriated in the Fiscal Year 2024 state budget, the grants will fund programs designed to streamline a pathway for full-time educational support professionals – i.e., paraprofessionals and instructional aides working in the classroom – to earn their teaching certificate. Funding will be used to offset the costs associated with tuition, books and materials, mentorships, and structured on-the-job training.

“It’s vital that we support the paraprofessionals and classroom aides in our educational system. Many of these professionals have worked tirelessly in classrooms for years and aspire to earn their teacher certification – but they face obstacles such as the cost of tuition and availability of programming,” **said Kevin Dehmer, Acting Commissioner of Education**. “This apprenticeship program will help clear the hurdles they face so they can achieve their goal of becoming a licensed New Jersey teacher, while also helping to meet the need for teachers in our school districts.”

“The Teacher Apprenticeship Program will provide critical support to paraprofessionals as they become certified teachers by covering the costs of their tuition, learning materials, and integrated on-the-job training,” **said Robert Asaro-Angelo, Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development**. “This apprenticeship program carves out a career pathway for the next generation of professional educators who will lead New Jersey classrooms and deliver quality education to our students.”

Grant Recipient	Partner School Districts
Ramapo College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bergen County Special Services School District, which offers specialized education programs for students with learning needs and behavioral challenges; and</li> <li>○ Morris Union Jointure Commission, a regional collaborative school district providing services to 30 constituent school districts.</li> </ul>
Rutgers – New Brunswick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bound Brook School District;</li> <li>○ Camden County Educational Services Commission, which provides services to districts in the region, including paraprofessional services;</li> <li>○ College Achieve Paterson Charter Schools;</li> <li>○ iLearn Schools, which operates four charter schools in New Jersey;</li> <li>○ New Brunswick Public Schools; and</li> <li>○ Roselle Public School District.</li> </ul>

Paraprofessionals taking part in the program can typically earn their state teaching certification in two to four years, depending on their level of experience and education when beginning the program. The program targets fields that have been disproportionately impacted by staff shortages, such as special education, science, math, English as a second language, and bilingual education.

The New Jersey Teacher Apprenticeship Program was established based on the initial recommendations of Governor Murphy’s [Task Force on Public School Staff Shortages in New Jersey](#), created in November 2022 to recommend innovative approaches to increase the number of K-12 teachers and support staff in the state.

The New Jersey Teacher Apprenticeship Program dovetails with other Murphy Administration initiatives to support paraprofessionals. This includes [legislation](#) signed in January 2024 to authorize an alternate route to expedite teacher certification of people working as paraprofessionals in school districts. A key component allows a paraprofessional's relevant time in the classroom to count toward teacher certification requirements – which was also a recommendation of the Task Force on Public School Staff Shortages.

Earlier this year, the NJDOE awarded Paraprofessional Program [grants](#) to support district programs that provide tuition assistance and educational support for education support professionals seeking to become a certificated teacher in an area with the greatest staff shortages. The grant directly funded programs in Paterson and Passaic City.



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