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Verona Public Schools to Plant Trees with \$51,705 Trees for Schools Grant

Verona Township, NJ – Verona Public Schools was awarded a \$51,705 Trees for Schools grant to cover costs associated with the purchase and planting of trees, including planning, site preparation, watering, monitoring, and maintenance over a three-year period.

“We are incredibly grateful to receive the \$51,705 Trees for Schools grant. This funding will enable us to plant trees that not only enhance the beauty of our campuses but also play a crucial role in mitigating the urban heat island effect and reducing the impacts of rising temperatures due to climate change. By increasing our green spaces, we will help filter stormwater runoff, improve air quality, and reduce the state’s carbon footprint. This investment in our district’s green spaces will not only enhance the environment but will also provide our students with hands-on opportunities to learn about sustainability and the importance of environmental stewardship. By fostering a deeper connection with nature, we are helping to shape the next generation of eco-conscious leaders. We are excited to watch this project grow and thrive alongside our students.” -Diane DiGiuseppe, Superintendent of Schools

The Trees for Schools program is a joint effort of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Sustainable Jersey, and The College of New Jersey. Funded by Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) auction proceeds, the Trees for Schools grant program will plant more than 4,500 trees at public schools, colleges, and universities across the state. These grants are part of the second round of funding through the program; the first round of grants was awarded in 2023 and resulted in the planting of nearly 3,000 trees at 33 school campuses.

“The planting of trees in urban areas is an incredible tool in our work to mitigate the impacts of climate change,” **Commissioner of Environmental Protection Shawn M. LaTourette said.** “Expanding tree canopies at school campuses will make it easier for students, staff, and residents to find shade on hot days while providing numerous environmental benefits. My DEP colleagues and I are proud to support this work to promote the importance of trees in fighting climate change.”

“The Trees for Schools grants make local sustainability real, practical, and achievable,” **said Randall Solomon, director of Sustainable Jersey.** “Congratulations to the schools, colleges, and universities that have been awarded a grant. They are stepping up, taking advantage of resources, and showing that meaningful climate action isn’t an abstract idea. It’s happening now, in communities across New Jersey. We look forward to working with these schools to expand their tree canopy and provide students with rich educational opportunities and a vital connection to nature.”

The tree planting projects will increase shade coverage to mitigate the effects of rising temperatures due to climate change, enhance the beauty of school campuses, mitigate and filter stormwater runoff, and reduce the state’s carbon footprint.

The Trees for Schools grant recipients will now work with the project team to develop their tree project design and will participate in tree-planting workshops. The tree plantings are scheduled for spring 2026. For more information visit: <https://bit.ly/TreesforSchools>.

Verona Public Schools is a high-performing, student-centered district located in Essex County, New Jersey, serving approximately 2,200 students across six schools. Committed to academic excellence, innovation, and whole-child development, the district provides a rigorous, inclusive educational experience that prepares students to be critical thinkers, lifelong learners, and responsible citizens. Through strong community partnerships, dedicated staff, and a focus on equity and continuous improvement, Verona Public Schools fosters a safe and supportive environment that enables all students to thrive.

#NJTreesforSchools

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