

APPENDIX H

Sustainable Practices and STEM Education

Since 2011, the New Jersey School Boards Association has made a commitment to advancing environmentally and financially sustainable practices in our schools, as well as STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education.

As part of NJSBA dues, school boards can take advantage of professional development and on-site consultation that address the following:

- **Sustainable practices** that focus on a whole-school approach to improving health, lowering operational costs, and advancing student achievement.
- **Integrative STEM (iSTEM)** design, development and delivery strategies that increase student engagement and problem-solving skills.

NJSBA and its fund-raising arm, the Educational Leadership Foundation of New Jersey, have acquired grants, corporate sponsorships and contributions totaling over \$850,000 to provide research, professional development and support for iSTEM and Sustainability efforts, including programming provided through the NJSBA Board Member Academy, County School Boards Associations, and programming the Annual Workshop conference. Three initiatives—the New Jersey Sustainable Schools Project, the New Jersey Green Program of Study, and the National Fish and Wildlife Resilience Grant—involve 20 school districts, providing estimated savings of \$10,000 to \$15,000 each. But for school districts statewide, the true value will result from the results of the project’s research on the linkage between a healthier school environment and student achievement and curriculum on emerging “green” careers.

NJSBA is a founding partner in [Sustainable Jersey for Schools](#), launched in October 2014. By the end of June 2015, more than 225 schools had enrolled in the program, which advances environmentally and financially sustainable practices and recognizes schools that implement them. This free certification program provides school districts with resources, training, and grant opportunities.

For local school boards, Sustainable Jersey provides the unique opportunity to show leadership in reducing energy costs, supporting healthy school environments and connecting curricula with STEM learning. The program, offered in conjunction with a non-profit organization based at The College of New Jersey, provides a roadmap for progress that focuses on current accomplishments and encourages incremental change. The Sustainable Jersey for Schools website, www.sustainablejerseyschools.com, is an interactive portal for school leaders to download examples of from other New Jersey schools, receive notifications of free training and webinars provided by Sustainable Jersey for Schools and other partners.

In 2013, the New Jersey Chapter of the **U.S. Green Building Council** presented NJSBA with a “Special Impact Award for Education.” It commended NJSBA for being the only school boards association in the nation that has committed resources and personnel to sustainable practices. Today, NJSBA has a full-time STEAM and Sustainable Schools Specialist on staff. The Association is also hosting a “Green Fellow” from the U.S. Green Building Council, who is advising local school districts on sustainable practices.