



SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT 1



Hope Fuels Our Future: Cultivating Communities of Care in Turbulent Times

Sustainable Jersey Summit, May 9, 2025



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WIFI INFORMATION: 1 Open Networks

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Session Speakers



**Rosalie Morillo,
Program Manager Schools
Content and Special Projects
Sustainability Institute
The College of New Jersey**



**Sarah Sterling
Senior Advisor Climate Change
Education
Division of Teaching & Learning
The New Jersey Department of Education**

A Thought Experiment

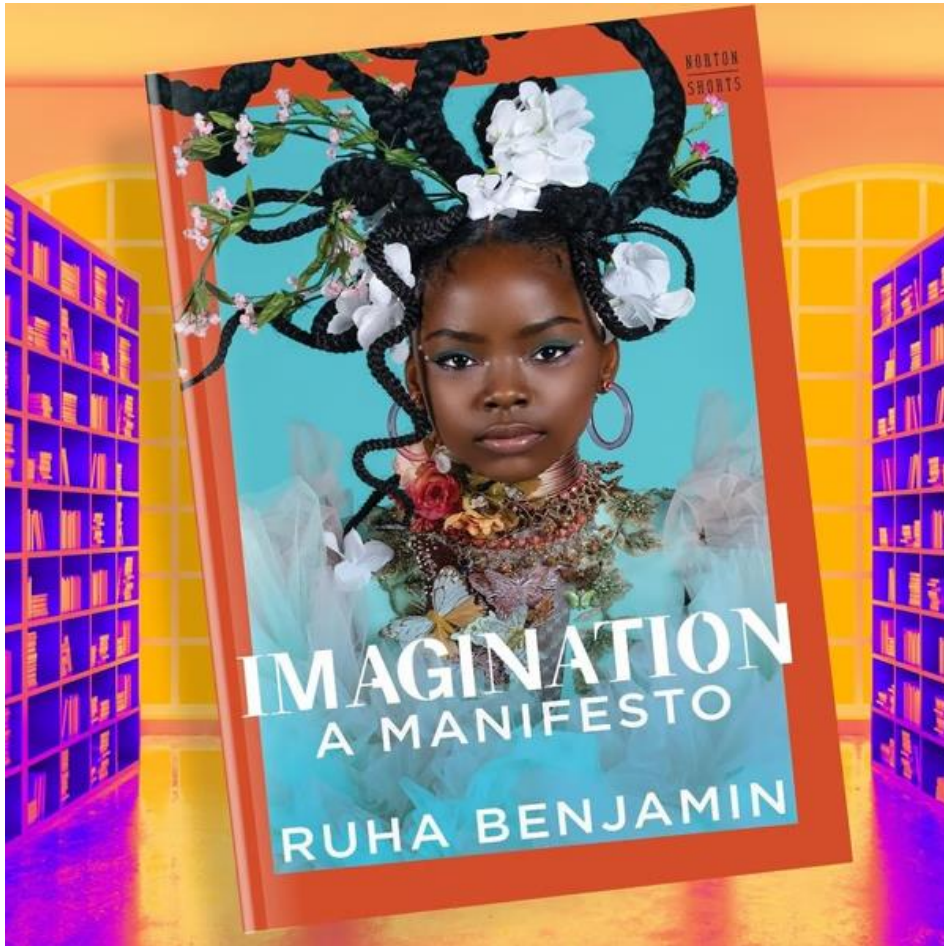


Imagine *your* perfect community.

- Use all five senses to build a mental picture.
What do you....
 - See?
 - Smell?
 - Touch?
 - Hear?
 - Taste?



Hopeful Imagining is Hard Work!



“The map to a new world
is in the imagination.”

-Robin D. G. Kelley

New Jersey Student Learning Standards to Support Climate Change Education



2019	2020	2022	2023	2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standards revision process adds climate change to 7 out of 9 content areas (all but ELA and math).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standards are adopted in all 7 content areas.• Local curriculum revision and teacher training are meant to take place from Fall 2020 through Fall 2022.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COVID response impedes implementation.• Governor Murphy allocates \$5M to support implementation efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ELA and math revisions are opposed by special interest groups.• Companion guides for both content areas are created.• Climate Change Education Unit is created.• 48% of LEAs receive grant funding from initial allocation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Climate Change Learning Collaboratives and Community Resilience grants roll out.• Office of Standards begins to prepare for 2025 standards revision process.• FY25 NGOs are released.



Climate Change Education Unit



1. Develops strategic responses to state context and national trends.
2. Oversees the administration of CCE grant funding.
3. Supports capacity building of internal and external partners.
4. Serves as a point of connection between entities to enhance existing networks and build new ones where necessary.



Building Climate Literacy in New Jersey



We will prepare students to understand:

- How and why climate change happens.
- The impact it has on our local and global communities.
- How to act in informed and sustainable ways.



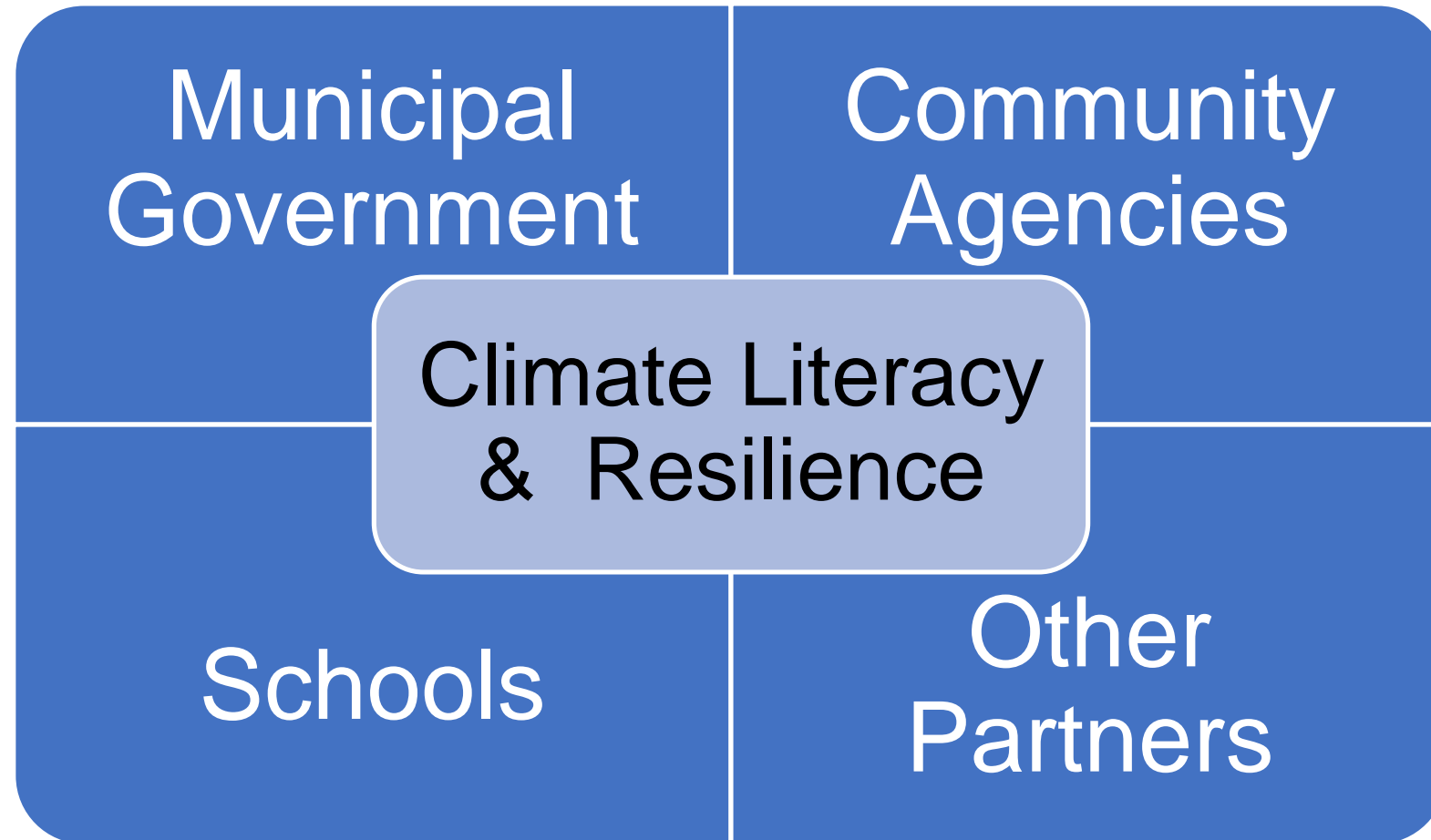
NJDOE's Key Elements of High-Quality Climate Change Education



1. Grounded in Climate Science.
2. Developmentally Appropriate.
3. Standards-based.
4. Interdisciplinary.
5. Locally-focused.
6. Justice-focused.
7. Student-centered.



School - Community Connections





Pedagogy of Hope



“one of the tasks of the progressive educator...is to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles might be.”

-Paolo Freire





We Set the Tone



Hope and Hard Truths



Ecoanxiety and Apocalypse Fatigue



"Here's your problem—it looks like you're paying attention to what's going on."

"Paying attention" by Pia Guerra, *The New Yorker*, 2018.⁴⁶



Reorienting towards hope...



Core Components of Promising Interventions, *Climate Change and Youth Mental Health 2021*, Climate Mental Health Network



Sources of hope to support action



- Positive reappraisal – focus on opportunities rather than problems.
- Trust in others – adults, organizations, and innovations have good intent.
- Self-efficacy – belief in one's ability to make positive changes.
- Sense of pride and belonging.



Sense of pride and belonging



How might we help our community to:

- Learn deeply about our rich history.
- Learn more about our own families' migration stories.



Positive re-appraisal



How might we help our community to:

- Envision the possibilities rather than focus on problems.



Photo credit: Alicia Acerra

Trust in others

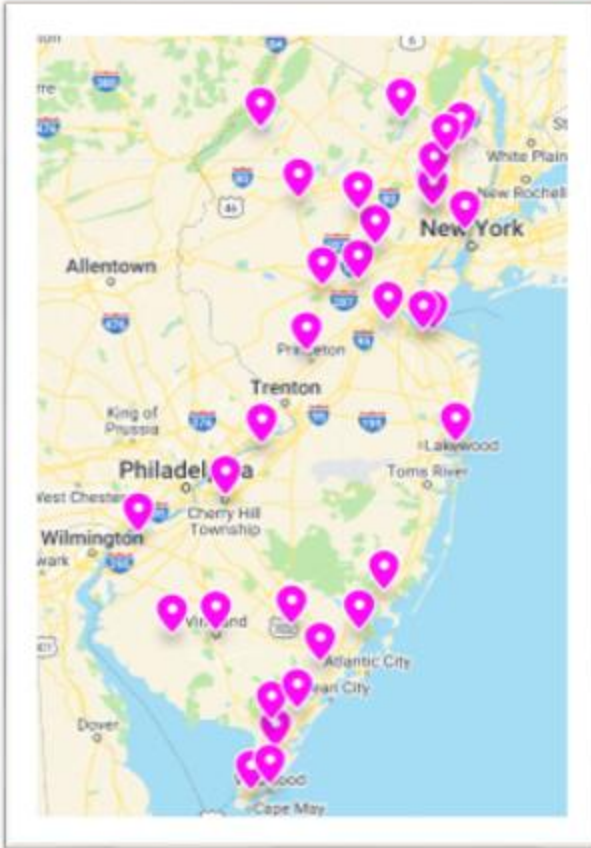


- How might we help our community to:
- Develop relationships of trust.
 - Seek out local expertise.



Photo credit: Sarah Sterling-Laldee

FY24 LEA Grant Impact (1 of 2)



- The FY24 grant made it possible to expand access to climate change educations across all grade levels in 18 of New Jersey's 21 counties.
- 32 local education agencies developed student-led community resilience projects with a local community partner.
- 25% of grantees are Title I LEAs.

Source: New Jersey Department of Education





Framing for Diverse Belief Settings

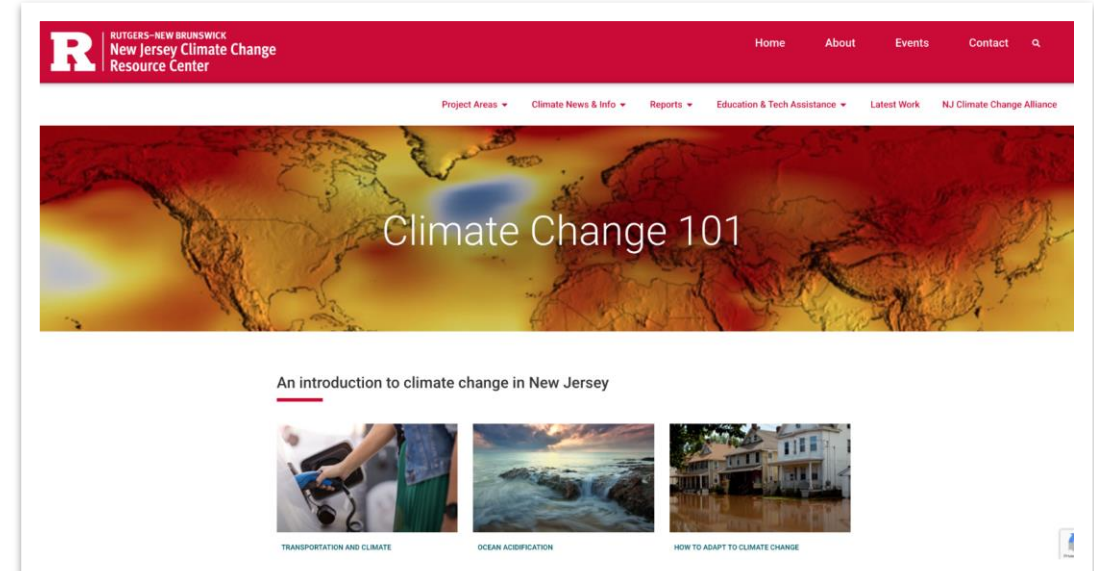
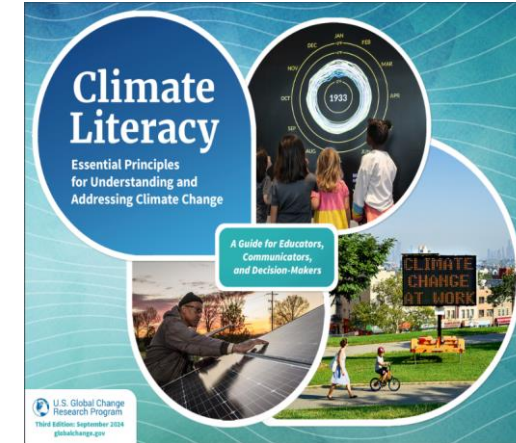


- Be prepared to discuss that climate science is earth science.
- Relate a value that the audience may hold to the need to respond to climate change.
 - Water availability, health, jobs, energy independence, national security, etc.
- Use local terminology and frameworks to interpret and discuss changes they are witnessing.
 - Lead with neutral language.

Moving towards a hopeful future



- Learn climate science.
 - What do **you** need to know to ground your actions in scientific fact?
 - What do **the people you serve** need to know to be engaged citizens?





Moving towards a hopeful future



- Learn our communities.
 - What is the physical, cultural and historical context?
 - What are the current climate-related challenges?
 - Who can support your intentionally asset-focused lens?



RUTGERS-NEW BRUNSWICK
New Jersey Climate Change
Resource Center



COLUMBIA CLIMATE SCHOOL
Climate, Earth, and Society





Moving towards a hopeful future



- Engage with our youth and their families.
 - What experiences do they bring with these issues?
 - What family knowledge and other ways of knowing do they share?
 - What are they curious and passionate about?



Moving towards a hopeful future



- Recharge our hope batteries when fatigue sets in.
 - Engage in promising practices.
 - Establish (or maintain) collaborative networks that fuel us.
 - Be patient with ourselves and each other.



Thank You!



New Jersey Department of Education Website

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/>

Sarah Sterling, Senior Advisor, Climate Change Education, ssterlin@doe.nj.gov

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From Actions to Solutions



Many opportunities to inspire hope into action through:

- Sustainable Jersey collaborative actions
- Grants to support sustainable initiatives



Questions?

GRANTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

☐ SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES GRANT PROGRAM WEBINAR

Monday, May 19, 2025, 1:00pm-2:00pm

Register: bit.ly/2025SCGPWebinar

Application Deadline: Monday, June 30, 2025

☐ HOW TO START A MUNICIPAL COMMUNITY SOLAR AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT PROGRAM WEBINAR

Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 1:00pm-2:30pm

Register: bit.ly/4jgkUau

☐ NORTH JERSEY'S TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AUTHORITY'S PROGRAMS FOR MUNICIPALITIES WEBINAR

Wednesday, May 28, 2025, 11:00am-12:00pm

Register: bit.ly/4m7QjOh

☐ TRI-COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, May 28, 2025, 7:00pm-8:00pm

Register: bit.ly/Tri-CountySustainability

☐ BERGEN COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY HUB MEETING

Wednesday, May 28, 2025, 7:00pm-8:00pm

Allendale Community Center, 210 W Crescent Ave, Allendale, NJ

☐ TREES FOR SCHOOLS: TREE-PLANTING GRANTS

Learn More & Apply: bit.ly/TreesforSchools

Application Deadline: Tuesday, May 13, 2025



FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER FOR AN UPCOMING EVENT VISIT:



Municipalities:
bit.ly/SJMunicipalEvents

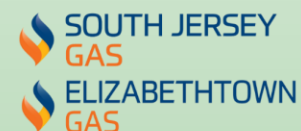


Schools:
bit.ly/SJSchoolsEvents

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SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT 10



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