



Aug. 1, 2024

**NJSEA Meadowlands Environment Center Furthers Climate
Change Education Initiatives Through \$650,000 Grant**
MEC an Early Advocate of Climate Change Education

Media Contact

Brian Aberback

barerback@njsea.com – 201-460-4619

(LYNDHURST, NJ) - The Meadowlands Environment Center (MEC), the educational arm of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority (NJSEA), will play an essential role in creating regional Climate Change Learning Collaboratives as part of a Statewide program to support school districts and charter schools in implementing climate change education initiatives.

The MEC is the key Community-Based Organization for the \$650,000 grant awarded in May by the State Department of Education to Ramapo College. Through the grant, Environment Center educators and staff will offer professional development on climate change to teachers in school districts in the State's northern region, including Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren Counties. Professional development begins in July and runs throughout the 2024-25 school year.

The Meadowlands Environment Center is operated by Ramapo College through an over 20-year partnership with the NJSEA. More than 20,000 students in Grades K-12 from school districts throughout the State participated in MEC education programs during the 2023-2024 school year. The NJSEA and MEC are located in DeKorte Park, which serves as an MEC outdoor classroom.

“The Meadowlands Environment Center is a beacon in environmental science education,” said NJSEA Chairman John Ballantyne. “Its exceptionally motivated educators and staff inspire students’ ambition to address large-scale environmental threats such as climate change. The MEC makes a lasting, significant and positive impact on the next generation of environmental stewards.”

The \$650,000 grant is part of an overall \$4.5 million award to establish a network throughout the State to support school districts and charter schools in implementing climate change education initiatives at New Jersey institutes of higher education.

MEC educators and staff are well prepared to provide professional development workshops on the subject. In 2018, the highly respected organization began implementing climate change education programs as part of its class offerings.

The NJSEA and the MEC vigorously support Governor Murphy's steadfast determination in raising awareness of the consequences of climate change and the need to mitigate and reverse its deleterious effects. Under Governor Murphy, New Jersey in 2020 became the first state in the nation to require climate change education across multiple content areas in school curriculums.

"I marvel at the MEC's skill level, commitment and ability to engage students by crafting highly interactive and creative environmental education learning experiences," said Paul Juliano, President and CEO of the NJSEA. "The MEC's hands-on approach successfully raises awareness in young people of the crucial importance of understanding and combating climate change."

"The MEC is thrilled to expand our community outreach efforts by helping teachers learn new and inventive ways to impart upon their students the importance of understanding and working against climate change," said Dr. Angela Cristini, Director of the MEC and a Biology Professor at Ramapo College. "We look forward to sharing our insights into climate change education with fellow, dedicated professionals."

"This grant is a testament to the tremendous passion with which the MEC approaches its efforts every day," said Commissioner Anthony Scardino, Jr., Chairman of the Authority's Science and Environment Committee. "I am proud of and commend the MEC's highly-esteemed, vital work in educating students about the Meadowlands' critical environment, natural resources and wildlife habitats."

###