

## PROVEN HIGH SCHOOL CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW JERSEY

*Dr. Saul Petersen, March 2023*

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### *WHY the new Climate Change Education Standards Will Take Collective Effort and Urgency?*


Society's youth have not yet had the experiences to think about and critique how climate change is narrowing their life choices. Coupled with the challenging choices many students are facing as Covid pushes many highschoolers out of school and into poorly paid work, our purpose in New Jersey must now be to act collectively and with urgency to provide knowledge, experience, and hope, to the next generation of public servants, executives and influencers.

### *WHY Engage NJ?*

**Engage NJ** is a higher education presidents' coalition with members right across the state – public, private, 2-year, 4-year – devoted to equipping students with the competencies to thrive in life and work. Through its presidential engagements, Engage NJ is the perfect vehicle to support this K-12 climate change education mandate. Through well-structured partnerships and innovation pathways to 21st century careers across multiple sectors, we can support the standards AND get students to and through college.

Over the past decade, Engage NJ (formerly New Jersey Campus Compact) has successfully managed several \$1M+ AmeriCorps grants have allowed us to recruit and place over fifty full-time “service members” (personnel) on partner campuses in order to build the capacity for campus-community engagement and impact. As we now look to the crucial decade ahead, one of Engage NJ's three strategic goals is to establish a statewide network of students capable of success in life and work through innovative programs and partnerships. To achieve that goal, earlier this year we were awarded one of the largest AmeriCorps VISTA grants in New Jersey's history. Over the next decade, this is our flagship initiative known as **ENGAGECorps**.

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*One Key Deliverable of ENGAGECorps – Beginning Fall 2024*

***“To expand higher education’s capacity to tackle climate change, including by providing crucial supports to neighboring high schools with implementing the new K12 climate change education standards”***

*How? Through Targeted Partnerships for Proven Success*


We are teaming up with the nonprofit, [SEI: Building Leaders for a Resilient World](#), as climate education experts with offices on the east and west coasts, including in Princeton. [SEI](#) works with schools and districts to adopt standard-based curriculum and engage students in regional forums and programs. SEI’s Energize Schools program has [proven effective annually](#) in over 250 schools (primarily 9-12 grades) and across 66,000 students in California. SEI’s Energize Schools program helps to educate K-12 students to become environmental leaders, activate their campus and community, and develop green career awareness and skills through experiential learning. SEI builds student knowledge and skills for energy and sustainability leadership and careers.

Through the partnership with SEI in New Jersey, ENGAGECorps will pilot this initiative by **recruiting 5 AmeriCorps VISTAS, based on 5 college campuses and working with 10 high schools beginning in Fall ’24, with planned annual expansion thereafter, to:**

- Bring **college student volunteers into high school classrooms** to deliver project-based supports to teachers in adopting the new standards

- Tailor and **make available sustainability curriculum** for use in participating New Jersey high schools – curricula specifically adapted and aligned to New Jersey standards
- Develop and **present a training series** for ENGAGECorps AmeriCorps VISTAs and teachers aimed at integrating standards-aligned climate education lessons within New Jersey high schools
- **Provide individualized, hands-on mentoring and coaching** to ENGAGECorps and teachers as they seek to adopt curricula, and in the process, help to build a diverse cohort of trained sustainability educators addressing the state’s climate education standards

*Ability to Have Impact at Scale*

- Over the past 4 years, Engage NJ AmeriCorps programs have **brought over 6,000 college student volunteers into schools** and other community settings to build the capacity for success
  - Through the first year of the pilot, up to **2,500 high school students** will experience working on projects together to meet curricular standards in the areas of **Climate change overview, energy, water, transportation, and air quality**
  - On average, teachers participating in a SEI teacher training rated the training **4.3 out of 5**. As one teacher described, “It’s amazing. SEI has cut my work in half because of their curriculum development and teacher trainings”
  - Funders for SEI programs in California have **maintained their financial support** for several year
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Breakdown Of Funding Request and Engage NJ Match in Fy'24 for:

- 5 ENGAGECorps VISTAs
- On 5 College Campuses
- Partnering With 10 High Schools, 100 Teachers, & 2,500 High School Students

YR. 1 ENGAGE NJ MATCH	YR.1 REQUEST FOR FUNDING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Portion of AmeriCorps VISTA Grant Awarded to Engage NJ for 5 Climate Change Positions = \$142,475</li><li>• SEI Match - SEI is leveraging curriculum development to align with NJ standards = \$100,000</li></ul> <p><b>TOTAL MATCH for FY'24:</b> <b>\$242,475</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 ENGAGECorps VISTAs @ \$11,000 Recruitment and Placement Fees = \$55,000</li><li>• SEI Curriculum, licenses, 5 days trainings, and ongoing individualized support - Providing services to approximately 100 teachers = \$97,250</li><li>• Engage NJ Project Management - 20% CEO, 25% Program Manager, &amp; 100% VISTA Program Leader = \$81,000</li></ul> <p><b>TOTAL REQUEST for FY'24:</b> <b>\$233,250</b></p>

Beyond FY'2024:

- The goal is to expand the scale of the program year on year with proven impact
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This represents a solid, cross-sector, statewide partnership opportunity with state government, nonprofit Engage NJ, SElinc, the federal government's AmeriCorps initiative, NJ higher education institutions, and neighboring school districts.

**Based on a funding request of \$233,250 in fiscal year 2024 involving:**

- 10 high schools
- 100 teachers approximately across the 10 high schools
- 25 students approximately per teacher (2,500 total)
- Plus teams of volunteers at 5 Engage NJ member campuses

**We understand a per-unit request for funding in the first year as follows:**

\$ 93.30	= Per student for 2,500 students for 1 year
\$ 2,332	= Per teacher for 100 teachers for 1 year
\$23,325	= Per institution for 10 high schools for 1 year

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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