



Green New Deal for Public Schools Act

The Green New Deal for Public Schools will invest \$1.43 trillion over ten years in America's K-12 education system, healing and strengthening our schools for the 21st century — and putting young people at the center of our national response to the crises of climate change, systemic racism, and economic inequality. The bill creates an Office of Sustainable Schools within the U.S. Department of Education to administer new grant programs in collaboration with the Department of Energy. Resources include:

- \$446 billion in Climate Capital Facilities Grants and \$40 billion for a Climate Change Resiliency Program
 - Upgrade every public school building in the country, starting with the highest-need districts, to create safe, healthy, zero-carbon, and accessible learning environments for students and staff
- \$250 billion in Resource Block Grants
 - Drastically reduce student-to-staff ratios, equipping schools to approach target ratios of 12:1 for grades K-8 and 15:1 for grades 9-12
 - Strengthen and diversify the educator pipeline
 - Better integrate local knowledge and community relationships in high-need schools
- \$100 million for an Educational Equity Planning Grants Pilot Program
 - Address historic school funding inequities within regions
- \$695 billion over ten years for Title I and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) increases
 - Quadruple Title I funding to reach \$66 billion annually to support schools and districts with students living in poverty
 - Increase funding for IDEA Part B to reach \$33 billion annually to support students with disabilities

According to researchers at the University of Pennsylvania and the climate + community project, the Green New Deal for Public Schools will fund 1.3 million jobs per year and eliminate 78 million metric tons of CO₂ annually, equivalent to taking 17 million cars off the road.

Climate Capital Facilities Grants will fully fund healthy green retrofits for the highest-need third of schools, as measured by the CDC Social Vulnerability Index, and offer a mix of grant funding

and no- or low-interest loans for the middle and top thirds. Grants will cover two-thirds and one-third of retrofit costs for these schools, respectively.

Retrofitting our public schools will:

- Remove toxic materials such as mold and asbestos;
- Eliminate carbon emissions with a combination of energy efficiency upgrades and electrification, on-site renewable energy installation, and green power procurement; and
- Ensure full accessibility for students with disabilities.
- Additional funding will cover a broad spectrum of resiliency investments, from garden and tree planting to broadband infrastructure and EV charging stations. Each school will become a resiliency center for the surrounding community, and offer learning environments that serve as a living lab for the Green New Deal — directly engaging students in a range of sustainability topics, and kickstarting climate and other growth-sector STEAM careers across the country.

Resource Block Grants will fund staffing increases, expanded social service programming, and curriculum development at high-need schools. The program will allow Local Educational Agencies across the country to hire and train hundreds of thousands of additional educators and support staff, including paraprofessionals, school psychologists and counselors, and learning specialists. High-need LEAs may also use funds to design locally-rooted curricula; adopt trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and restorative justice practices, to move towards a “whole child” approach to public education; and partner with community organizations to offer a range of services to schools and surrounding neighborhoods, such as after-school programs.

Educational Equity Planning Grants will encourage neighboring LEAs to form regional consortia, which will receive funding to conduct extensive community outreach, identify the historical and current sources of educational disparities within the region, and create and implement a Regional Education Equity Plan to address those disparities. This pilot program is modeled on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants, which are designed to encourage equitable, locally-driven economic development.