

Newark, NJ

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Newark Students Learn Real-World Science Via Watershed Pilot

Newark students took part in fieldwork on water infrastructure, water chemistry, water treatment, biology, ecology and engineering.

By Eric Kiefer, Patch Staff

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(Photo: City of Newark)

NEWARK, NJ — *The following news release comes courtesy of the City of Newark. Learn more about [posting announcements or events](#) to your local Patch site.*



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Mayor Ras Baraka and Acting Director of Water and Sewer Utilities Kareem Adeem announced the completion of the educational pilot program for Newark youth at the Newark Pequannock Watershed, located in West Milford, New Jersey, the Newark Watershed Science and Leadership Academy.

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The program provided elementary, middle and high school students with indoor classroom and outdoor fieldwork on water infrastructure, water chemistry, water treatment, biology, ecology and engineering. The consultant on the project who assisted with the facilitation of the program was the Ready Set Grow Academy, its founder, David Jefferson Jr. served as program director. The program's inaugural closing ceremony and awards dinner was held on Monday, June 17 at 6 p.m. at the Vince Lombardi Center of Hope.

Students, parents and school administrators attended the ceremony which celebrated the accomplishments of the NWSLA students in academics and leadership. Fifty schools and over 1,300 Newark students participated in the program during its opening year. This is the first time such a program has been developed in the city in partnership with the Newark Board of Education and marks a milestone for the Department of Water and Sewer Utilities and the City of Newark.

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Select schools were invited to participate as a cohort which involved partaking in a detailed science curriculum and required monthly visits to the Watershed to complete instructive modules in leadership training, water treatment, chemistry and ecological experiments. Once completed, eligible students were able to apply for paid internships with the Department of Water and Sewer. Those students were also able to take an assessment to determine what type of learner they are. All students who came through the program participated in mentoring and leadership training as an extension of the mayor's current Leadership Academy held every first Saturday of the month. The NWSLA program sought to cultivate scientific leaders and assist with personal development which ultimately encouraged students to be civically engaged and productive members of their academic and social communities.

"This extraordinary class teaches our youth valuable lessons about the sciences, engineering, and sustainability, all in the context of Newark's water system. It also provides guidance about career choices, leadership, and public service," Mayor Baraka said. "We hope that the students who complete the program today will be tomorrow's leaders in the sciences and will share with their friends, families and neighbors what they have learned about how our watershed functions."

All cohort students who successfully completed the full curriculum were presented with a certificate as a Young Scientific Leader of Tomorrow. Their final experiments of building their own watersheds were also on display at the event as well as a slide show presentation of their experience in NWSLA.

"We are proud of the accomplishment of this department in founding a ground breaking and unique program in the City of Newark and the state of New Jersey. Our children are being exposed to the sciences with real world hands on experience in their own community where the

individuals who operate and maintain our infrastructure look like them and many of whom also come from their communities. That is not only important for them to see but impacts them in measures we will never be able to quantify. This program means a great deal to the city and has empowered our students to be confident leaders civically and in the scientific community. We are excited to continue this into the upcoming academic school year,” said Acting Director Adeem.

“Along with the mayor’s vision, I created the Newark Watershed Science and Leadership Academy. This academy served as a new program implemented to educate, inspire and encourage our young scientific leaders of tomorrow. Our goal was to put together a curriculum program to encourage young people in the areas of not only growing wiser in relation to the water infrastructure in our city but also to empower them as young scientific leaders! And I’m pleased to report it worked! Through programs and initiatives like this one, the city has shown a commitment to ensuring a strong progress report for the state and condition of our water in this great city. We served over 1,300 students which means we touched over 1,300 families with education regarding that state of the city’s water and its infrastructure. We will continue working with the community to improve outcomes for children, young people and families,” said Assistant Director Stewart.

If you are a principal and would like to have your school participate in this unparalleled program for the 2019-2020 academic school year, contact Tiffany Stewart at (973) 733-2690 or send an email to .

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