



# HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

*"A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE"*

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### INDIAN HILL STUDENTS SET OUT TO RAISE A SCHOOL OF TROUT

**HOLMDEL (December 7, 2016)** – Thanks to the Freehold Soil Conservation District (FSCD), sixth graders at Indian Hill School have been given the opportunity to explore an actual ecosystem right inside the school's science labs. Science teachers Cathleene George and Kevin McCarthy and their students are raising trout in this year. The FSCD, which covers Middlesex and Monmouth Counties, is part of the New Jersey Natural Resources Program. The FSCD's goal is to "provide leadership and administer programs to help people conserve, improve and sustain our natural resources and environment." This science-based program teaches students about the importance of cold water conservation through a hands-on approach to learning.

The project began with the delivery of over 300 eggs, divided between the two teachers' labs, and the students' predictions of the hatch date of those eggs. Students record data on a daily basis and test the quality of water for pH, ammonia, nitrates, and nitrites each week. They make notes on water changes, monitor the health of the tank, the physical development of the trout, and determine how many of the hatchlings survive. Thanks to Alicia Killean, K-12 Supervisor of Mathematics and Science, the students will be utilizing stereomicroscopes to observe and determine physical characteristics of the trout throughout the year. According to Mr. McCarthy, "our goal is to show the students how fragile an ecosystem can be and how important it is to make sure that ecosystems are maintained, since the smallest changes can damage all of the organisms in it." The project complements the sixth grade curriculum unit on interdependent relationships in ecosystems and is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish & Wildlife provided the school with all of the materials needed to raise rainbow trout from eggs to fingerlings. To help students document their work and share it with the world, Indian Hill's Technology Department staff member Jerry Finneran set up a "trout cam" in the classroom, enabling students to view a live video feed, linked through the school's website. From [here](#) students and others interested can observe the continuing growth and development of the trout throughout the year. Once they become fingerlings and are roughly 3-5 inches, the trout will be ready to be released into a healthy stream. A culminating field trip to the Manasquan River in the beginning of June 2017 is planned.