

Governor Carney, Lt. Governor Hall-Long Announce \$50,000 Grant from Highmark Delaware for Basic Needs Closets

Grant will support basic needs closets in 45 high-needs schools throughout Delaware

HARRINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney on Wednesday, joined by Lieutenant Governor Bethany Hall-Long, visited Lake Forest South Elementary School to announce a \$50,000 grant from Highmark Delaware’s *BluePrints for the Community* fund to support basic needs closets in schools throughout Delaware.

The funds will help high-needs schools across the state restock their [basic needs closets](#) so students have access to clothing, school supplies, hygiene products and other essentials.

“Highmark’s generosity is a perfect example of how community support can make a big difference in the everyday lives of Delaware’s children,” said **Governor John Carney**. “By meeting students’ basic needs in a dignified way, we are able to ensure children can focus on their learning and be successful. We are grateful for Highmark’s support in this worthy endeavor.”

☒ The grant comes in two installments. The first \$25,000 recently was distributed to help school leaders restock the closets for the second half of the academic year. The second \$25,000 will come in June so the schools can restock over the summer for the new school year.

“Highmark Delaware is proud to support the basic needs closet.

We know our BluePrints for the Community grant will make a difference for children throughout Delaware. When a student's basic needs are met they are healthier and better able to focus on the important task of learning," said **Tim Constantine, President of Highmark Delaware.**

In August, Governor Carney [launched the basic needs closets initiative](#) in 45 high-need schools across the state. The stocked closets are a result of the [coordinated efforts](#) of Delaware educators, Delaware businesses, Delaware healthcare institutions, and a partnership with [First Book](#).

The basic needs closets provide elementary and middle school students across the state with increased access to free products designed to meet students' needs so they can effectively participate in class. Each school's basic needs closet is stocked with products identified by districts and charter schools as essential to the wellbeing of their students. Students are able to discreetly access the closets throughout the school year. The initiative aims to meet students' basic needs with dignity so they can be ready to learn in class.

"Every year, heroic educators spend hundreds of dollars out of their own pockets to purchase supplies and basics for their students, because they see the needs in front of them every day," said **Kyle Zimmer, President and CEO of First Book.** "We applaud the State of Delaware and Governor Carney for a sustained commitment to meet these essential needs, and Highmark for its generous donation to make this sustained commitment possible. This kind of leadership acknowledges that all kids deserve equal access to a quality education."

Thanks to additional support from Operation Warm, students also were able to receive coats earlier this winter.

Lake Forest leaders said children and their families appreciate access to the needed supplies.



Superintendent Dr. Brenda G. Wynder said Lake Forest South Elementary is honored to receive this funding.

“As a district, we are committed to meeting the educational, emotional, and social needs of our students. We recognize that supporting our students’ educational and basic needs increases the opportunity for them to be successful,” said **Lake Forest Superintendent Dr. Brenda G. Wynder**. “We thank Highmark for helping us by providing clothing, school supplies, hygiene products and other essentials to our closet. We value all our community partnerships and the generosity that they provide the Lake Forest School District and families.”

Lieutenant Governor Hall-Long, who is overseeing the initiative for Governor Carney, said the state will continue to look for ways to coordinate needed supports for students.

“Our children and families have enough things to worry about. School supplies and clothing should never be one of them,” said **Lieutenant Governor Hall-Long**. “As a community, we have a responsibility to help the most vulnerable among us, which all too often are our children. This grant funding provided by Highmark will help ensure that Delaware students have basic supplies and necessities to be more prepared and more effective in school.”

###

[Click here](#) to view photos from the announcement.