



## **NJDOE News**

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### **Department of Education Prepares to Honor Exemplary Schools and Programs**

#### **Local Interest - News Media Invited**

The New Jersey Department of Education will honor 10 Star Schools and 46 Best Practices at a recognition ceremony scheduled for June 8, 2000. Commissioner of Education David Hespe will lead a contingent of state education officials in honoring exemplary schools and innovative practices at the seventh annual awards ceremony of the Best Practices / Star Schools Program.

Nearly 300 educators will participate in the special recognition ceremony scheduled to begin at 1:30 p.m. at the Greystone Manor, Freehold. Commissioner Hespe and State Board Member Anne S. Dillman will present pins, banners and certificates to the educators. Each Star School will be awarded \$1,000; each Best Practice will receive \$500.

"Part of our mission as a state agency is to identify successful local schools and programs and to offer them as models for others to emulate," Commissioner Hespe said. "The Best Practices / Star Schools Program has proven to be an effective way to seek out the brightest stars in New Jersey education."

The Commissioner said that he was pleased that this year's selection of schools and programs was broad-based and representative of the diversity of the state. He also noted that early childhood programs and educational support programs in guidance and counseling were strongly represented in this year's selection.

The Department of Education received nearly 800 applications for the 1999-2000 Best Practices / Star Schools competition. Each school or practice was subjected to a rigorous review.

In the first phase, the county offices of education reviewed each application for compliance with laws, regulations and department policy. Then, the applications were submitted to the Department of Education, where panels of experts (involving approximately 300 administrators and teachers) reviewed the work of their peers and rated each application. A second peer review of the highest-scoring applications was then conducted. In the final phases, the focus of the evaluation returned to the county and local levels. The process culminated in 56 site visits by panel members to verify information in the applications.

The Star Schools component of the program identifies New Jersey schools that have a particular specialization or whole school reform model with objectives that help students meet the state's academic and workplace readiness standards. In addition, the school's faculty is involved in professional development activities that contribute to exemplary teaching practices. Active involvement of parents, business and the community is a hallmark of Star Schools.

The Best Practices component is designed to recognize successful practices in 18 different categories that address the educational needs of students and help them achieve New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the cross content workplace readiness standards.

The Best Practices / Star Schools Program is administered by the Office of Innovative Programs and Practices in the Division of Academic and Career Standards, New Jersey Department of Education. Schools and practices identified through the program become part of the Office of Innovative Programs and Practices website, established to provide information regarding innovative and effective program models.

In addition to the database provided through the website, the department publishes a report that summarizes information about the winning Star Schools and Best Practices. Information about the Best Practices / Star Schools Program can be found on the Department of Education's website:

#### **[Innovative Programs](#)**

NOTE: Attached are the names of the winners of the 1999-2000 Best Practices / Star Schools Program.