



NJDOE News

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Award Winners Announced for Parent Participation Projects in Abbott School Districts

Twenty schools in six districts were honored today for creating successful parent involvement programs in cities across New Jersey. Known as the Parent Participation Program, this initiative for recognizing and encouraging the development of exemplary parent involvement programs in Abbott school districts is sponsored by the Commissioner's Urban Advisory Committee and the New Jersey Department of Education.

Special cash grants totaling \$60,000 were awarded to schools in Newark, Elizabeth, Long Branch, New Brunswick, Vineland, and West New York.

The luncheon ceremony at the Newark Airport Hilton served to showcase outstanding programs that enable parents to use community and school resources to become active participants in the successful education of their children. The awards not only salute schools that have launched programs for increasing parental involvement, but encourage other schools to adapt successful plans to meet the special needs of their districts.

"I know from personal experience that active and committed parents can have a powerful and positive impact on student success," said Gov. Christie Whitman. "I commend the Urban Advisory Committee for inspiring school communities in the Abbott districts to step forward and share their successes with schools throughout the state."

The state Department of Education is awarding grants of \$3,000 to each Parent Participation Program, and a publication spotlighting these effective efforts will be shared not only with Abbott districts, but with every school district in New Jersey.

"I am very pleased that the Urban Advisory Committee has recommended this rewards program to encourage schools to make an extra effort to achieve excellence in their parent involvement efforts," said Education Commissioner David Hespe. "There is clear evidence that effective parental participation is a key ingredient of school quality."

The Urban Advisory Committee was launched by the Education Commissioner in 1997, and the 15-member panel is co-chaired by Dr. Daniel Rodriguez, superintendent of the Old Bridge Public Schools, and Margaret McLeod, an education activist and former director of the Association for Children of New Jersey in Newark. The panel's initial charge was to find ways of responding to the evidence showing that parental involvement is critical to helping students stay in school and excel at their studies.

"The Parent Participation Program is part of our community-based effort to assure the success of school reform in the Abbott districts," said Dr. Daniel Rodriguez, co-chair of the Urban Advisory Committee. "We want to inspire school communities to spread the word of their success and encourage parents to be involved in ALL school districts."

"Parents who work closely with schools show their children that there is unity and support for their well-being and success," said Margaret McLeod, the Committee's other co-chair. "Special relationships between home and school can help students overcome many obstacles."

Parent involvement programs include training seminars, volunteer programs, education services and other efforts to help equip parents to participate in representational governance of the school, especially through the School Management Teams that each Abbott district school has created to oversee the implementation of whole-school reform.

All public schools in the Abbott school districts were eligible to compete for the awards, and the winners were selected by an independent panel under the auspices of the Urban Advisory Committee.

The following provides a summary of the 20 exemplary Parent Participation Programs.

COMMISSIONER'S URBAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR EXEMPLARY PARENT PROGRAMS

RECIPIENTS 2000

<p>Avon Avenue School Newark, New Jersey Marion Bolden, Superintendent Willie Hutcherson, Principal</p>	<p>Avon Avenue School believes that student achievement is closely linked with parental involvement. Parents are provided with educational workshops on a variety of topics in which they choose. Currently, parents are offered computer training at no cost. Parents can also access the service of outside agencies by contacting the school. Avon Avenue School works in collaboration with many agencies including the Statewide Parent Association Network, Every Person Influences Children, Family and Child Early Education Services, and the Youth Development Program to address the academic and developmental needs of both student and parent.</p>
<p>Battin Middle School Elizabeth, New Jersey Thomas Dunn, Superintendent Richard Hueston, Principal</p>	<p>The Parent Participation Program at Battin Middle School revolves around providing outreach services through the Family Outreach Center that links families with mental health counseling, medical services, social services, and other community resources. The program consists of parenting education classes, a parent volunteer program, parent and child standardized test preparation sessions, parenting web site, and a newsletter. The program is also combined with the after school program so that workshops can be offered that parents and students can attend together. As a result, the Parent Participation Program has promoted a steady increase in parental involvement and student achievement. Since its inception, the program has shown evidence of increased attendance and adult participation.</p>
<p>Belmont Runyon School Newark, New Jersey Marion Bolden, Superintendent James Suite, Principal</p>	<p>It is the policy of Belmont Runyon School to encourage parent participation and maintain school to home communication through ongoing communication via dissemination of information through quarterly newsletters, bulletins, and monthly parent meetings. Parenting skills workshops are facilitated by the nurse, guidance counselor, computer teacher, math developer and literacy facilitator who provide services that are designed to enable parents to assist their children academically, improve parent and student self-esteem, promote social and emotional development through their participation in workshops and conferences. Belmont Runyon School has established partnerships that work to provide developmental sound services for parents as stakeholders in their child's education.</p>
<p>Burnet Street School Newark, New Jersey Marion Bolden, Superintendent Genevieve Reavis, Principal</p>	<p>The Burnet Street School of Science and Technology GEDTECH program teaches parents to use community and school resources independently to increase their literacy levels and how to become active participants in the successful education of their children. GEDTECH is an eighteen-week program that focuses on improving writing skills through process based writing instruction in a participatory literacy learning cycle. The Family Reading and Math program has helped parents develop skills that will enable them to effectively provide homework assistance for their children and increase their involvement in the learning process.</p>
<p>Garfield School Long Branch, New Jersey Joseph Ferraina, Superintendent Sandra Munson, Principal</p>	<p>At Garfield School parent participation is a vital component in the development of student achievement at any grade level. Parents are encouraged to become active in their child's education to build strong, long-term partnerships between school, parent, and student. Volunteer Listener Program, Second Cup of Coffee, Science Fair, and Salute to the 20th Enrichment Fair are all program that have been implemented as a means of encouraging academic success, promoting self-esteem and establishing a bond between the school and the surrounding community.</p>

<p>Harold Wilson Middle School Newark, New Jersey Marion bolden, Superintendent Craig Browne, Principal</p>	<p>Harold Wilson Middle School has established a parent center which provides a great deal of services to develop parents personal, academic, and health needs so that they may be the best parents for their children. The school believes that good parenting through participation in the school equals student achievement. Therefore, the parenting center serves as a liaison for workshops in resume writing, computer skills, how to get a GED and other program offered at Essex County College. In addition to the workshops offered at Essex County College, other workshops for parents offered at the school include the following topics: CPR, first aid, diabetes, hyper tension, breast cancer, exercise, and reading literacy.</p>
<p>Hawkins Street School Newark, New Jersey Marion Bolden, Superintendent Joseph Rendeiro, Principal</p>	<p>Hawkins Street School recognizes the benefits associated with the link between teacher, parent and student collaborative efforts and student achievement. Students at Hawkins Street School have benefited academically as a result of parents and teachers sharing ideas, working collaboratively on activities and assisting one another's intellectual growth. Parents are encouraged to become active participants in their child's education through workshops that provide assistance based on needs assessments and partnerships with community agencies that provide family counseling.</p>
<p>Joseph M. Ferraina Early Childhood Learning Center Long Branch, New Jersey Joseph Ferraina, Superintendent Carmina Villa, Principal</p>	<p>Parents of Joseph M. Ferraina Early Childhood Learning Center have become involved and informed of every aspect of their child's education through the parent information component which encourages parents to participate in workshops on topics related to children's physical, emotional and intellectual development and on self-help issues involving community agencies and services. Parents also participate and give input on curricular and extra-curricular activities through being active members in the School Planning and Management Team and Parent Teacher Organization.</p>
<p>Lafayette Street School Newark, New Jersey Marion bolden, Superintendent Joanne Bergamoto, Principal</p>	<p>The Accelerated School Project focuses on families and local communities being a vital component to children's success and wellness. The program has established a parent learning studio that focuses on the teaching, training, and exercising strategies and activities that will link the program to the classroom and home environments. The goal is to have parents continue to nurture and cultivate the program philosophy and process so that students can enjoy a 24-hour a day healthy learning environment.</p>
<p>Livingston Elementary School New Brunswick, New Jersey Ronald Larkin, Superintendent Timber Washington, Principal</p>	<p>Livingston Elementary school cultivates positive relationships through family involvement and dialogue between parents and school faculty. Parents are encouraged to participate in a series of parent workshops using literacy kits designed to promote literacy in the home. Parents are offered services of support staff that specializes in community health and stress management. These workshops provide parents with opportunities to discuss strategies for positive discipline, effective communication, teaching, and learning in an open and inviting environment.</p>
<p>Long Branch Middle School Long Branch, New Jersey Joseph Ferraina, Superintendent Robert Celli, Principal</p>	<p>In Long Branch where parent involvement is very important, golden opportunities for ongoing parent education and promoting successful student achievement are offered to parent through a variety of programs including the Coffee Chat, Studying and Snacks, Gold Card Dinners and others. These are programs that promote student success and provide ongoing parent training through rich discussion and dialogue on strategies for reinforcing memory, analyzing, and inferring for practical use and workplace readiness.</p>

<p>Maple Avenue School Newark, New Jersey Marion Bolden, Superintendent Esther Wright, Principal</p>	<p>Maple Avenue believes that parental involvement should be based on two basic principles: (a) awareness, and (b) active participation. The Parent Teacher Community initiative works to foster involvement based on need and opportunities for the parent to participate in the school to help students optimize educational opportunities. The Parent Teacher Community strives to engage parents and the community in school, district, and state programs that seek to promote awareness and active participation.</p>
<p>Marie Durand Elementary School Vineland, New Jersey Keith Figgs, Interim Superintendent Karen Sanderson, Principal</p>	<p>A major objective of the Durand School Management Team is parent and community involvement. The action plan focuses on involving parents as partners in learning, as volunteers, and as leaders as well as decision-makers. The activities are clustered under four dynamic strategies: parent and student learning sessions; communication through the parent office; content specific take home books; and PTO leadership and School Management Team leadership. Other parent learning sessions are organized with monthly themes and include: parent and student computer evenings; family folk art evenings; student musicals and performances; and the Durand run. All strategies focus on parent involvement with an end goal of helping students develop a life-long love of learning, positive attitudes, positive spirits, and positive student achievement at Durand School.</p>
<p>Newton Street Elementary School Newark, New Jersey Marion bolden, Superintendent Willie thomas, Principal</p>	<p>At Newton Street School a major component in the planning of most school programs is parent involvement. Input from parents is solicited at parent meetings, parent surveys, and questionnaires. Compacts between home and school are completed by the parent and student to build a strong and lasting partnership for education. In addition to open house, open forums, workshops that develop self-esteem,</p> <p>Alcohol and drug abuse, violence, health care, parenting skills, and childhood development sessions are scheduled during the school term. GED and technology classes for parents are held at the school. In addition to parental assistance programs.</p>
<p>Public School Thirteen West New York, New Jersey Anthony Yankovich, Interim Superintendent Sharon Johnson, Principal</p>	<p>Public School Thirteen has long understood that parent involvement is the key to student academic success, therefore, increasing parent involvement in a priority. Workshops are offered to educate parents in the areas of parenting, homework, schoolwork, testing, technology, bilingual education, school improvement and positive thinking. The guidance department and bilingual department offer group sessions so parents may exchange ideas and become involved in the learning process. The school has benefited in many ways as a result of the parent participation program. Student achievement and parent education remain the highest priorities in our school as we reach for new goals.</p>
<p>Ridge Street School Newark, New Jersey Marion Bolden, Superintendent Emil Garruto, Principal</p>	<p>By providing enriching Language Arts Literacy activities to parents and students, performance on standardized tests such as the Stanford 9, ESPA, and GEPA has increased. The Parent Participation Program has four key components: one-on-one tutoring; reading and language arts enrichment activities; after school hands-on learning experiences in a creative enjoyable environment; and parent to student reading time. Ridge Street School believes that continued enrichment activities in the area of language literacy will result in increased test scores on standardized assessments.</p>
<p>Terence C. Reilly Middle School Elizabeth, New Jersey Thomas Dunn, Superintendent Laura Morano, Principal</p>	<p>Parents are an integral part of the key partnership initiatives that further strengthen a sense of shared ownership. The school's main objective is to remove any barriers, so that parents may feel welcomed and respected. Families' needs and interests are assessed to help determine priorities.</p>

	<p>Parental involvement in the teaching and learning process is promoted through the activities and programs including a parent teacher organization, parent education program that reach out during day, evening, and weekend sessions that provide opportunities to address the needs of the parent, and daily parent/teacher meetings. Terence C. Reilly Middle School successfully involves parents as decision-makers and recognizes the importance of their role as it pertains to the development of their children as tomorrow's leaders.</p>
<p>Theodore Roosevelt School Elizabeth, New Jersey Ronald Larkin, Superintendent Hector Villafane, Principal</p>	<p>The collective goal that members of the Roosevelt School community is to build a collaborative school, family, and community partnership that positively impacts on the education and social development of students. Developed by the School Management Team, the Parent Involvement Program, through its Involvement Center, connects to and communicates with parents in order to provide information and instruction about services and resources available to families. Families have access to the resource library containing materials that enhance parenting skills. The school has initiated an "English as a Second Language" program that will enable parents who have limited English proficiency to become active participants in their child's education. Roosevelt School is continually working toward developing and maintaining strong community based constituencies of parents, teachers, and community members to substantially increase student achievement.</p>
<p>Vailsburg Middle School Newark, New Jersey Marion Bolden, Superintendent Michael Daniels, Principal</p>	<p>At Vailsburg Middle School there is a relationship between the parent, school, and community that nurtures and promotes a foundation of learning for children and parents. We believe that a positive, parent -friendly school helps to mindset of the stakeholders maintain a good attitude and positive outlook towards education. Incentive based programs at Vailsburg focus on parent participation and student achievement through the use of support staff and systems that ease the process of parental inclusion into the school environment. Parents are active participants in the decision making process regarding their area of volunteerism. As active participants, parents become advocates for the school and serve to support and supplement the education in the home. That parental support leads to increases in academic achievement and improvements in attendance and other areas.</p>
<p>William Brown Academy Newark, New Jersey Marion bolden, Superintendent Rose Campbell, Principal</p>	<p>Parent involvement at William Brown Academy is an integral part of the school day. Many activities afford parents the opportunity for job skills development, home buying techniques, parenting skills, and various self-improvement activities. Saturday GED classes serve those parents that cannot attend the weekday classes at adult education centers. Each week parents attend an internet class that incorporates and exposes them to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards in the technology and workplace readiness area. At Brown Academy parents volunteer on a daily basis for activities within the school and in providing assistance to other parents in need.</p>

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