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Contact: Richard Vespucci
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Commissioner Hespe Presents 1999-2000 Star Schools to State Board of Education

Commissioner of Education David Hespe presented New Jersey's Star Schools for 1999-2000 to the State Board of Education. Now in its seventh year, the Star Schools Program is designed to identify those New Jersey schools that have implemented an identifiable "cutting edge" specialization.

"I am proud to meet again and present to you the leaders of the schools that have distinguished themselves as special places of learning in New Jersey," Commissioner Hespe said. "By entering the Star Schools program, these schools have subjected themselves to a rigorous review. Each of these schools serves as a worthy model of excellence deserving of our praise and recognition."

Each year, the Department of Education identifies 10 Star Schools. The selection process is one of rigorous competition that includes a review by the county superintendent of schools, two evaluations by an independent panel of educators, and a site visit by panel members to verify and clarify activities detailed in the application.

"Earning Star School status has become a true mark of distinction," said State Board of Education President Maud Dahme. "These schools represent what is best about public education in New Jersey and we are proud of their accomplishments."

The 1999-2000 Star Schools are:

- H. Russell Swift School, Egg Harbor Township
- Clara Barton School, Bordentown Regional
- Cherry Hill High School East, Cherry Hill
- Gloucester County Alternative High School, Gloucester County Special Services
- Round Valley Middle School, Clinton Township
- Lawrence Middle School, Lawrence Township
- CLASS Academy, Monmouth County Vocational Schools
- Monmouth County Academy of Allied Health & Science, Monmouth County Vocational Schools
- Hillcrest School, Morris Schools
- Franklin Park Multiple Magnet School, Franklin Township Schools

Ellen Schechter, assistant commissioner for the Division of Academic and Career Standards, recognized representatives of each school and briefly described the areas of specialization that makes them distinctive.

"The Star Schools possess some common characteristics, such as a shared vision, strong leadership, competent professionals and active family involvement," Schechter said. "These schools have reached the goal of improved academic achievement for all through the efforts of the entire school community."

Schechter noted that each Star School has a particular specialization, has faculty involved in professional development activities that contribute to exemplary practices, attracts the involvement of parents, businesses and the community, has demonstrated fiscal efficiency and has an outstanding record of student performance and accomplishments.

Each school was invited to send a contingent consisting of the superintendent, school principal, a member of the local board of education, an officer of the parent/teacher association, and a student representative or teacher.