



## NJDOE News

**For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:**

**Tom Rosenthal  
Rich Vespucci  
609-292-1126**

**For Release: May 20, 2002**

### **Education Commissioner Librera Recognizes Seven World Languages Regional Model Program Resource Centers And Four Supervisors Of The Year**

#### [Commissioner's comments](#)

Monroe Township, NJ – Department of Education Commissioner William L. Librera today honored the seven school districts from around New Jersey that have been designated as World Languages Regional Model Program Resource Centers that can assist other districts develop world language programs.

Commissioner Librera also awarded World Language State Supervisor of the Year to William Slinger of the Piscataway School District in Middlesex County.

The commissioner also gave the regional World Language Supervisor of the Year award to:

- Elizabeth Willaum of the Englewood School District in Bergen County, northern region
- Martin Smith of the Edison School District in Middlesex County, central region
- Donna Anderson of the Greater Egg Harbor School District in Atlantic County, southern region.

The World Language Model Programs honored by the Commissioner Librera were:

- Englewood Public Schools, Bergen County
- Fair Lawn Public Schools, Bergen County
- Millville Public Schools, Cumberland County
- West Orange High School, Essex County
- Princeton Regional Schools, Mercer County
- East Brunswick Public Schools, Middlesex County
- Elizabeth Public Schools, Union County

"Our public education system must take the lead so that our young people leave our schools with the multilingual, multicultural, and multiliterate skills essential to succeed in a multifaceted world," Dr. Librera said.

"The cornerstone of Governor Mc Greevey's education initiative is that students need to begin the academic basics in preschool and kindergarten, and that all students will read well and independently by the end of third grade," Librera said. "As world languages educators, you are assisting in enabling New Jersey's students to meet this goal by providing effective second language instruction in your districts' programs."

Librera described the value of world language instruction, especially at the elementary school level. "In recent years, it has become increasingly clear from research that all children can profit from participation in good world languages programs."

"Strong evidence exists that the early study of a second language enhances students' basic skills in such areas as language arts literacy, reading and mathematics," Librera told the assembled world language supervisors. "Inclusion of world languages in our elementary curriculum furthers the educational priorities in this state."

Elizabeth Willaum, the world language supervisor from the Englewood School District, presented her research data that showed that students at the elementary grade level who studied a foreign language scored higher on their English language arts and math basic skills standardized tests.

New Jersey is already a nationally recognized leader in teaching world languages starting in elementary schools through high school. It is one of only nine states that mandate world language study at the elementary level.

"The effects of early language learning on basic skills and standardized tests indicate a positive impact on learning in the elementary core curriculum," said Janis Jensen, World Languages Coordinator at the Department of

Education. "Rather than diverting energy and attention from high priority academic goals, inclusion of world languages in the elementary curriculum furthers the educational goal," Ms. Jensen said.

Educators cited the value of foreign language instruction:

- Children at the elementary school level have the capacity to learn languages faster and more effectively than those on the high school level, when the so-called 'window of opportunity' begins to slide shut as children approach puberty.
- Early learning of a second language may facilitate learning in other languages in later years.
- Students who learn foreign languages early learn understanding and tolerance of other cultures. More than 160 languages are spoken in New Jersey.
- Multi-lingual graduates are better equipped to compete for quality jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.

"The educational community needs to be assured that the goal of early second language education is worth pursuing in spite of complications and old stereotypes, preconditioned practices, and the contemporary reality of limited resources," the Commissioner said.

"We must keep in mind that New Jersey's students need the best skills that schools can provide in order to succeed in an ever-shrinking world," Librera said. "In many parts of the world, multilingualism and innovative approaches to education constitute the normal everyday experience. Funding for a world languages program is a recurrent issue for implementing sound programs in this country. But if a program is good for children, it is worth the best of our efforts to meet these challenges."

[www.state.nj.us/education](http://www.state.nj.us/education)