



NJDOE News

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For Release: June 7, 2002

Local Interest

2001-02 Best Practices / Star Schools Take Center Stage as Models of Excellence

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Local educators responsible for outstanding classroom practices and model schools of excellence throughout New Jersey today were honored as recipients of the ninth annual Best Practices / Star Schools Program Awards.

Commissioner of Education William L. Librera and senior staff from the Department of Education presided over the ceremony to honor nearly 300 educators responsible for their award-winning schools and classroom practices. The winners also received pins, banners and certificates, as well as individual proclamations signed by Governor James E. McGreevey.

"New Jersey takes great pride in the innovation and commitment demonstrated by this year's award winners," said Governor McGreevey in a message to the honorees. "Through recognition of your outstanding educational accomplishments, we will encourage other school districts and teachers to build upon the strong foundation you have provided for our students and for our future."

"I am privileged to have the opportunity to personally thank this year's award recipients," said Commissioner Librera. "These are the innovators and thinkers who help students develop and improve their skills, discover their interests and abilities, build their self esteem and confidence, and learn how to be productive citizens of the 21st century."

"New Jersey has many excellent schools and locally developed classroom practices that promote high levels of student achievement," Dr. Librera continued. "This year's Star Schools and Best Practices will be added to our growing data base of successful schools and programs."

Ten Star Schools and 50 Best Practices were selected from a field of nearly 800 applications. This year's Star Schools include an urban elementary school from Paterson, nine first time winners and a repeat Star School that has also won distinction as a Blue Ribbon School selected by the U.S. Department of Education. Best Practice awardees represent 17 counties.

Applications for Best Practices / Star Schools are first reviewed by the county offices of education for compliance with laws, regulations and department policy. Then, the applications are submitted to the Department of Education, where panels of experts (involving approximately 300 administrators and teachers) review the work of their peers and rate each application. A second peer review of the highest-scoring applications is then conducted. In the final phases, the focus of the evaluation returns to the county and local levels. The process culminates in 60 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 with objectives that help students meet the state's academic and cross content 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 20 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 Schools, Division of Educational Programs and Assessment. Schools and practices identified through the program become part of the Office of Innovative Programs and Schools Web site, which was established to provide information regarding innovative and effective program models.

In addition to the database provided through the Web site, 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 Web site:

www.state.nj.us/education

([click Innovative Programs and Practices](#))

NOTE: Attached are the names of the winners of the 2001-02 Best Practices / Star Schools Program.