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Commissioner Librera Announces 2002-2003 Competition for Best Practices/Star Schools Program; Application Deadline is December 15, 2002

TRENTON — Commissioner of Education William L. Librera has announced the 2002-2003 competition for the state's Best Practices/Star Schools Program. The purpose of the program is to recognize and celebrate the excellence achieved in public schools statewide.

The application deadline for the program is December 15, 2002. The Department of Education will host its annual awards ceremony in June 2003 to recognize all winners.

The focus of the annual Best Practices/Star Schools competition is to identify programs that promote high student achievement. Such programs then serve as models for the Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards.

"The Best Practices/Star Schools program represents our state's 'cutting edge' schools," Commissioner Librera said. "The program is beneficial for educators statewide because it allows us to recognize schools who seek to cultivate their excellence both in the classroom and in their communities."

Selection criteria for the program include:

- The school must have an identifiable specialization and/or implemented a whole-school reform model;
- Faculties must be engaged in professional development activities and research;
- Administrative and fiscal efficiency must be demonstrated;
- An outstanding record of student performance and school accomplishments must be demonstrated; and
- Collaborative efforts with the public must be prominent.

Schools who garner Best Practices/Star Schools recognition must represent innovative approaches that promote high student achievement. These initiatives must identify objectives that address student educational needs. They must also document assessment strategies for meeting their objectives.

Schools who have been previously recognized with the Best Practices award may not apply for a second time. In addition, programs from vendors are not eligible for consideration. The Star Schools application requires that previously recognized winners must wait five years before resubmitting an application. They must also demonstrate how they have expanded, replicated and/or disseminated specialization or whole-school reform model.

Since its inception in 1993, 446 Best Practices and 90 Star Schools have been recognized through the Best Practices/Star Schools Program. The initiative serves as an important part of the Department of Education's efforts to assist school districts, teachers and parents by providing information about models of innovative and efficient programs.

More information, including how to apply to the program, can be found at www.nj.gov/education/bp-ss/. For additional information, please contact: Jennifer Beaumont at (856) 468-5530 or Jennifer.Beaumont@doe.nj.gov; or Gralyn Diggs at (973) 569-2130 or Gralyn.Diggs@doe.nj.gov.