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### **New Jersey Receives \$7.9 million Grant to Improve Teacher Quality; Commissioner Librera Says Grant Will Provide "Vital Support" for Teachers**

TRENTON — The state Department of Education has received a three-year, \$7.9 million federal grant to enhance teacher quality throughout the state. The funds will help ensure all teachers receive high quality preparation and professional development support, both of which are aligned with state and national guidelines.

Governor James E. McGreevey and Commissioner of Education William L. Librera have made education the cornerstone of the McGreevey administration. The state of New Jersey, with money received through the Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant, is poised to assume a leadership role critical to the success of standards-based education reform.

The U.S. Department of Education grant, according to Commissioner Librera, is "in line with this administration's focus on teacher quality enhancement."

"The grant will provide vital support to New Jersey's efforts to strengthen the preparation and mentoring new teachers receive," Librera said.

The grant was appropriated based on a three-tiered proposal from the state. The three goals were:

- Redesigning teacher education programs in institutions of higher education to align with the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards and national professional standards;
- Establishing standards and a pre-service education component to strengthen teacher candidates for the alternate route program; and
- Retaining well-prepared teachers through a strong, criterion-based mentoring support program facilitated by trained mentors.

The grant was awarded through the federal Quality Enhancement Grants program. The state's proposal answers U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige's call to "radically transform state teacher certification systems" to promote higher achievement for all students.

The federal Teacher Quality Enhancement grant is the second to be announced by the state of New Jersey in a week. On Oct. 10, Commissioner Librera announced the state had secured a six-year \$120 million federal Reading First grant that will support Governor McGreevey's statewide literacy initiatives. This includes the ambitious goal of having every child reading at or above grade level by the third grade.