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McGREEVEY AND LIBRERA ANNOUNCE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM
Award Winning Educators Honored at Drumthwacket Reception

PRINCETON — Governor James E. McGreevey and Commissioner of Education William L. Librera joined distinguished educators and school representatives on Sunday to announce the Governor's Schools of Excellence initiative, a three-year, \$2 million program set to begin in September 2003.

The announcement came during a reception, held at Drumthwacket, which honored the educators and schools recognized for excellence in 2002. Those recognized included the state Teacher of the Year, Star Schools and the state's six Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award winners.

"We come here to honor our educators and announce our newest recognition program: the Governor's Schools of Excellence," said McGreevey. "This new program, like the teachers who led New Jersey to the forefront of education in 2002, will continue to pave the way so that we can and will make this state the premier state to teach in the nation."

"These professionals, from Elspeth Corrigan Moore, our Teacher of the Year, to our six Milken National Educator Award winners, deserve each and every accolade placed upon them," Governor McGreevey said. "We can and will take every possible opportunity to celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of our teachers and our schools."

Both Governor McGreevey and Commissioner Librera lauded the birth of the Governor's Schools of Excellence program, saying it represents the Administration and the Department of Education's commitment to providing leadership for a superior education by utilizing multiple paths of success for all students in New Jersey.

"This celebration is emblematic of our mission to continually recognize our success in schools," Librera said. "Our award winners from over the past year have represented themselves, their school districts, and the state educational system with nothing but pride and dignity. The Governor's Schools of Excellence program is one more opportunity to continually raise our standards of education."

Among those attending Sunday's event were the principals and superintendents from the state's Blue Ribbon Schools and Star Schools, the County Teachers of the Year, the state Teacher of the Year, the state Principals of the Year and the Presidential Award winners for excellence in science and math teaching. Also attending were the IDEAS award winners for innovative educators, the six Milken National Educator Award Winners and the state's 10 newest National Board Certified Teachers.

Also in attendance were representatives from the two corporations who are initially sponsoring the Governor's Schools of Excellence program - Pepco/Conective, formerly Atlantic City Electric Company, and First Energy Corporations, formerly Jersey Central Power & Light Co. Both companies donated \$1 million each for the three-year program. Through this program, 25 schools that demonstrate excellence - as measured by significant improvement in student achievement - will be selected each year. Each school will receive a \$25,000 award for their improvement.

On September 17th, Governor McGreevey released a 21-point reform plan at the Governor's Education Summit. The four key components of the plan are:

- Involving teachers at all levels of decision-making;
- Creating a more professional environment for teachers;
- Better preparing teachers and administrators for the challenges they face in their classroom and in their schools, and supporting them once they begin their work;
- A continued emphasis on recognizing and celebrating excellence.

Governor McGreevey is committed to maintaining an open line of communication between the Governor's Office and the State's teachers. In March, he established the Governor' Teacher Advisory Committee, which advises the Governor on the experiences of teachers in the classroom, identifies and examines factors that attract bright students to the profession, and recommends ways to end intellectual isolation among teachers by building and supporting communities of learners. Governor McGreevey has also pledged to meet with teachers in every county in the State in order to explain his 21-point educational reform agenda and to engage in an open dialogue with the teaching community.

A copy of the Governor's 21-point plan for education is posted on the Department of Education's website, www.state.nj.us/education.