



## NJDOE News

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

**Tom Rosenthal  
Richard Vespucci  
Jon Zlock  
609-292-1126**

**For Release: January 29, 2003**

---

### **Commissioner of Education William L. Librera Announces "Network of Schools"**

Commissioner of Education William L. Librera announced this week the Department of Education's newest initiative, the "Network of Schools." The initiative will create a technology-based link between school districts statewide and the DOE and will address the following three areas: the Achievement Imperative, Special Education reform and Small Schools.

The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner Dwight Pfennig hosted a videoconference from Trenton on Monday that included seven other sites across the state for superintendents and other educators. About 60 people attended total at remote sites in Cape May Courthouse, Howell, North Bergen, Lodi, Tinton Falls, North Brunswick and Wayne.

"Our main focus is to create just what the name says: a network of schools — one that encourages districts to share with the DOE their own ideas and practices, what they deem successes and what they deem failures that could use our help or the help of other districts in solving how to fix them," Commissioner Librera said.

"We want to define a problem and change the outcome," the Commissioner said. "We want to spotlight, support, emphasize and embrace best practices. With the Network of Schools, we will be able to succeed in both regards."

During Monday's videoconference, Commissioner Librera outlined the three central issues, beginning with the Achievement Imperative. The Network of Schools, he said, will address gaps in student achievement while at the same time address how to raise student achievement.

Sharing practices that work is a key ingredient, the Commissioner said.

The same is said for Special Education Reform and Small Schools. The Commissioner said a major emphasis of Special Education Reform and the Network of Schools will be to find new models and ways to provide better education for special needs children while at the same time streamlining regulations, reducing costs and promoting innovation while not compromising quality.

As for Small Schools, the Commissioner said the Network of Schools will explore how some districts have created small schools with positive results and emphasize the connection between small schools and public school choice.

The DOE's website (<http://www.state.nj.us/education>) will be an integral part of the Network of Schools, as will additional videoconferences with educators across the state. The Commissioner said more technology-based initiatives will be part of the program as well.

The program is one of the many initiatives Governor James E. McGreevey, Commissioner of Education William L. Librera and the Department of Education encourage for both teacher growth and innovative lessons for students in the state.

Specifically, the Network of Schools is a prime example of the Department's mission to provide leadership for a superior education by utilizing multiple and diverse paths to success for all children in New Jersey.

On Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>, the Governor and Commissioner hosted an Educational Summit in Trenton, where they outlined the Administration's 21-point plan for educational reform. The 21-point plan is available on the Department of Education's website: [www.state.nj.us/education](http://www.state.nj.us/education).