



NJDOE News

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For Release: May 20, 2004

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MEDIA ADVISORY

300 Educators Prepare for 2nd Annual Conference on Early Literacy Reading Proficiency is Central Theme of Gov. McGreevey's Plan for Education Reform

More than 300 educators, including teachers, administrators and reading coaches, will participate in a statewide conference on May 24 focusing on the need to improve language arts literacy skills for young students. Helping all New Jersey students read proficiently by the end of the third grade is central to Governor James E. McGreevey's 21-point plan for education reform.

The conference, sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Education, will be held at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, between 8 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. The conference theme is *Side by Side: Working Together to Improve Literacy Instruction*. **News media are invited and strongly encouraged to attend.**

"At the beginning of my administration, I directed the Department of Education to develop and implement a plan to ensure that all of our young students, regardless of where they live and go to school, read at grade level by the end of the third grade," said Governor McGreevey. "Since then, Commissioner of Education William L. Librera and his staff have enacted a plan, based on the best practices to teach young students to read. As a result, teachers and school leaders throughout New Jersey are using these ideas in their classrooms.

"I hope each participant in the conference will be able to return to his or her school with more good ideas to improve their local efforts to help our children learn to read," Governor McGreevey said. "I am confident that these efforts will result in increased student achievement in the next several years."

Governor McGreevey will be out of state on May 24; he will be represented by Lucille Davy, his special counsel for education. She will deliver the closing remarks.

"Reading is a fundamental skill, and the ability to read well is a basic requirement for success in any academic subject," said Commissioner Librera. "During the last two years, the Department of Education has applied this theme to several initiatives, including the creation of standards for early literacy based on the recommendations of Governor McGreevey's Early Literacy Task Force, which studied and then developed literacy standards for teachers of students in grades pre-K to 4, and the creation of a state-sponsored reading coach program. Through this initiative, the state has hired and assigned 60 coaches to 135 districts since September 2002. These coaches train teachers in the districts in current topics and techniques based on new knowledge about how young children learn to read. They also expose the teachers to best practices in the field.

"This is most important and exciting work. I encourage our language arts literacy teachers to keep up the good work and to assure them that Governor McGreevey and I remain committed to improve early literacy," Dr. Librera said.

In addition, the Commissioner noted that the Department of Education strongly supports and helps maintain Governor McGreevey's Book Club, in which thousands of young readers throughout the state read books recommended by Governor McGreevey and discuss them in their classrooms.

Richard C. Ten Eyck, assistant commissioner for the Department of Education's Division of Educational Programs and Assessment, will deliver the welcoming remarks on Monday for Commissioner Librera, who must also be out of state on that day.

Monday's conference will consist of 26 separate workshops, all of them conducted by one or more reading coaches and the teachers they work with side by side in schools throughout the state. Topics include: Vocabulary Teaching Strategies, Successful Coaching: Creating a Climate for Change, Connecting the NJ Core Curriculum

Content Standards in Reading with Strategies for a First Grade Classroom, Building Student Fluency, and Comprehension: 2nd and 3rd Grades. ([See attached workshop brochure for all workshop details](#)).

NOTE: Reporters and photographers attending the workshop should report to Brower Commons on the New Brunswick Campus of Rutgers University.