



NJDOE News

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Gov. McGreevey, DOE Proudly Announce 2004 Governor's Schools of Excellence Winners

Citing the need to continue supporting and recognizing schools that have shown great improvement and promise, Governor James E. McGreevey and the Department of Education today announced the Governor's Schools of Excellence Award winners for 2004.

This year's group of 22 schools is the second set of schools honored since the Sept. 2002 inception of the three-year, \$2 million program. Each school receives a \$25,000 award for showing improvement in at least five of nine categories over the course of two academic years. Last year, the McGreevey Administration recognized 25 schools. [A list of this year's award winners is attached.](#)

"Throughout my Administration, we have sought to honor and recognize schools that are determined to give their students the best opportunities to succeed in the future," Gov. McGreevey said. "This year, we have found 22 schools that stand out as the best examples of what we are doing to improve education in this state. I hope that schools across the state will look to these recipients and be inspired to provide their own students with the same opportunities for success as a result of such great academic improvement."

Individual schools apply and compete for the awards. The schools can use the funds for educational purposes, such as enhancing student achievement and supporting continuous school improvement. School officials report to the Commissioner at the conclusion of the school year how they have used the money. The schools themselves also serve as excellent examples of improvement that can, and will, be shared statewide.

School representatives from the 22 winners have been invited to a reception in their honor on Tuesday, November 23 at the Masonic Temple in Trenton. The event begins at 11:30 a.m. and is open to the media.

"I am so very pleased to join Gov. McGreevey in honoring these very fine schools," Commissioner of Education William L. Librera said. "Throughout the Governor's time in office, he has pledged steadfast support to schools that provide the best experiences possible for each and every student in the classroom by improving each and every day. We have that in the schools we announce this year."

Schools selected as Governor's Schools of Excellence must meet five of the following criteria:

- Outstanding growth in literacy measures, as demonstrated by improvement in test scores and other measures of achievement;
- Meaningful and demonstrative improvement in parental involvement in school matters;
- Improvement in student attendance, graduation rates, retention rates, and/or dropout reduction;
- Reduction in violence and vandalism as demonstrated in the annual Violence and Vandalism report and other measures;
- Creative and increased involvement with partnerships and/or the community;
- Increased and creative use of technology as a tool for learning in a school's curriculum;
- Demonstrated improvement in the quality of professional development of teachers;
- Demonstrated success in improving learning for special needs and/or specialized populations; and
- Other category: this is an area where a school may submit documentation that shows areas of significant improvement that may not fit one of the criteria above.

The awards are made possible, in part, by Pepco/Connectiv, formerly Atlantic City Electric Company, and First Energy Corporations, formerly Jersey Central Power & Light Co. Both companies donated \$1 million each for the program. The Rate Payer Advocate and the Board of Public Utilities have been instrumental in the program as well.

"The Governor's Schools of Excellence program is about the schools themselves," Commissioner Librera said. "What makes a great school? Great leadership. Great teachers. Great students and community support. But what makes these schools even greater — and worthy of a Governor's School of Excellence Award — is that they have shown sustained improvement."

"We're very confident that these winners, as was the case last year, will spend the money from these awards to enhance teacher development and other programs vital to school improvement," the Commissioner said. "This is perhaps the best part about the Governor's Schools of Excellence: the opportunity for us all to continue recognizing that education in this state as good as it is — and to continue making it better."

For more information, please contact the Department of Education Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.