



NJDOE News

For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:

Richard Vespucci
Kathryn Forsyth, Director
609-292-1126

For Release: January 5, 2005

Eleven New Jersey Schools Honored for Character Education Accomplishments

Eleven New Jersey schools were recognized today for their award-winning character education programs. Representatives from the schools attended a ceremony held at the Department of Education, where they were cited for the honors they received from the Character Education Partnership (CEP). Ten schools received Promising Practice awards; one school received CEP's National School of Character award.

"It's important for our young people to learn honesty, respect and responsibility," said Acting Gov. Richard J. Codey. "Congratulations to our New Jersey schools for their recognition as national models of excellence."

"Through our state's continuing commitment to character education, New Jersey has been recognized as a leader in the character education movement," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera. "We are one of only a few states that provide funding to all public school districts for character education, and we have ensured that all students have the opportunity to gain essential knowledge and skills in character education through the Core Curriculum Content Standards. I congratulate the 11 schools we honor today for receiving national recognition."

The Character Education Partnership is a nonprofit coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to developing moral character and civic virtue of the nation's youth. In October 2004, CEP selected the 11 New Jersey schools for special commendations after reviewing 200 applications submitted nationally. One of the schools, Cranford High School in Cranford, Union County, received CEP's highest honor, a National School of Character award.

Cranford was cited for its locally developed program *Leading a Life of Consequence*, which integrates academic achievement, service learning and character education for approximately 1,000 students in grades 9-12. Local educators developed the program 10 years ago in response to concerns about discipline problems and a low sense of civic responsibility.

Members of the school's academic standards committee decided to expand upon and enhance its service learning experience, integrating what formerly was a discrete course into the entire curriculum. The school also formed a character education committee, consisting of parents, teachers and other staff, and school administrators. The committee supported the idea of making "structured and reflective service the way to connect curriculum to real life and to foster lifelong good citizenship."

Robert T. Sherman, CEP's executive director and chief operating officer, praised the successful efforts made in Cranford and in the other New Jersey communities recognized by his organization, and he encouraged them to continue their work in developing good character in their students.

In addition to the national recognition given to Cranford High School, the following 10 schools received Promising Practices awards from the Character Education Partnership:

- **Cherry Hill High School East**, Cherry Hill Public Schools, Camden County, for its program *In-School Support and Feng Shui* for students in grades 9-12;
- **Gladys Cannon Nunery P.S. 29**, Jersey City Public Schools, Hudson County, for its *Do Something Club* for students in grade Pre K-4;
- **Haskell Elementary School**, Wanaque Borough School District, Passaic County, for its *Leaving a Legacy* program for students in grades K-8;
- **Kingston Elementary School**, Cherry Hill Public Schools, Camden County, for its program *A Different Mask* for students in grades K-5;
- **Long Branch Middle and High schools**, Long Branch Public Schools, Monmouth County, for their program *Lead by Example* for students in grades 6-12;

- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School**, Jersey City Public Schools, Hudson County, for its *Pre K Buddies* program for students in grades Pre K-7;
- **Memorial Middle School**, Fair Lawn Public Schools, Bergen County, for its program *Points of Light - A Character Galaxy* for students in grades 6-8;
- **Plainfield High School**, Plainfield Public Schools, Union County, for its *Students of Character* program for students in grades 9-12;
- **Robert Frost Elementary School**, East Brunswick Public Schools, Middlesex County, for its program *Character in Context* for students in grades Pre K-5; and
- **South Amboy Elementary School**, South Amboy Public Schools, Middlesex County, for its *School-wide Writing Project* for students in grades Pre K-6.

New Jersey has been a strong proponent for character education in its public schools. In 2003, the Department of Education received the Partnerships for Character Education grant from the United States Department of Education, which assisted in the establishment of the New Jersey Center for Character Education (NJCCCE). The center offers technical assistance to public and non-public schools throughout the state that are interested in enhancing or establishing a character education program within their school community.