



NJDOE News

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State Board Member Josephine Figueras Named to National Study Group on Value Added Assessment

A member of the New Jersey State Board of Education has been selected to serve on a national panel that is exploring issues related to improving the quality of teaching.

Josephine Figueras, of Elizabeth, Union County, is serving on the Study Group on Value Added Assessment for the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE). The group is expected to focus on how measuring actual achievement against expected achievement is related to the quality of instruction students receive.

"I am honored to have this opportunity to be part of this most important study," said Figueras, who serves as vice president for enrollment management at Passaic County Community College. "I am eager to participate and look forward to sharing my experiences with New Jersey's education community for the benefit of our children."

Value-added evaluation models of teaching and learning are built on complex statistical formulas that still need more study to understand their validity and reliability. The NASBE Study Group on Value Added Assessment will examine the current knowledge as:

- An element of a robust state data and information system;
- A way to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs and alternative routes to licensure;
- An element of school accountability;
- A tool for principals in teacher evaluation; and
- A tool for districts and schools in closing achievement gaps by assigning the most effective teachers to those students who need them the most.

In addition, the study group will address issues related to:

- The need to align assessments and data collection systems;
- The technology necessary for complete data collection; and
- The use of value added assessment in performance pay approaches.

Figueras was appointed to the State Board of Education last year. The State Board reviews and approves educational policies proposed by the Commissioner, confirms his or her appointees, and decides appeals of the Commissioner's decisions on disputes arising from school law. State Board members set the rules for carrying out state education law, as well as rules for the supervision and governance of the state's public schools.