



NJDOE News

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For Release: April 23, 2008

Commissioner Davy Announces 10 “Schools of Character”

Ten schools in New Jersey have been selected as “Schools of Character” because of their attention to social and character development, Education Commissioner Lucille E. Davy announced today.

“These schools are committed to perpetuating school climates that support teaching and learning and positive relationships among teachers, students, parents, and the community,” Commissioner Davy said. “Their approaches will be shared throughout New Jersey as we continue to develop knowledgeable, responsible and caring students with the necessary skills to be productive, competent citizens in a democratic society and global economy.”

New Jersey’s Schools of Character program began as a pilot program in 2005. A leader in character education efforts, New Jersey is one of 20 states that have state-level programs. The program recognizes schools that:

- Encourage educators to use social and character development for their school’s mission, instruction and daily life; and
- Set standards for quality programming in social and character development.

The following schools/district have been selected:

- Brigantine Elementary School, Brigantine, Atlantic County;
- Colonia High School, Woodbridge, Middlesex County;
- Hamilton Township School District, Hamilton, Mercer County;
- Horace Mann Elementary School, Cherry Hill, Camden County;
- Lawrenceville Elementary School, Lawrence, Mercer County;
- Livingston Park Elementary School, North Brunswick, Middlesex County;
- Lore Elementary School, Ewing, Mercer County
- Rosa International Middle School, Cherry Hill, Camden County;
- Veterans Memorial Elementary School, Brick, Ocean County; and
- Woodcrest Elementary School, Cherry Hill, Camden County.

Four of the nine schools and one district announced today have been nominated for national consideration through the Character Education Partnership’s “National Schools of Character” program: Brigantine, Hamilton, Lore, and Rosa International. National Schools of Character will be announced sometime this summer. In 2007, two New Jersey Schools received the honor out of 10 selected nationally: Radix Elementary School in Monroe Township, Middlesex County and Memorial Middle School, Fairlawn, Bergen County.

A team led by Dr. Philip Brown, Director of the Center for Social and Character Development at Rutgers University, which was created under the NJDOE’s federal Partnerships for Character Education grant, reviewed the applications received by the department this year.

Winning applications were selected based upon their ability to demonstrate how they effectively implemented the *Quality Standards for Effective Character Education* and the “Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education,” which measure an outstanding character education initiative that yields positive results in student behavior, school climate, and academic performance.

Radix Elementary School will contribute a significant portion of its \$20,000 national award to co-sponsor two regional conferences in May. The conferences will honor the State Schools of Character, highlight New Jersey’s best practices in character education, and launch the New Jersey Alliance for Social-Emotional and Character Development.

“Leading for the Future: Best Practices in Character Education” will take place on May 16 at the Educational Information and Resource Center in Washington Township (Burlington County) and at the Rutgers University

Busch Campus in Piscataway on May 27.

Programs that comply with the eleven principles of a sound character education:

- Promote core ethical values as the basis of good character;
- Define “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling and behavior;
- Use a comprehensive, intentional, proactive and effective approach;
- Provide students with opportunities for moral action;
- Include a meaningful and challenging curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them succeed;
- Strive to foster students’ self-motivation;
- Engage the school staff as a learning and moral community;
- Foster shared moral leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative;
- Engage families and community members as partners in a character-building effort; and
- Evaluate the character of the school.

For more information about the NJSOC: <http://www.rucharacter.org/page/njsoc/>.

For more information about today’s announcement, please contact the Department of Public Information at (609) 292-1126.