



## NJDOE News

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### **New Jersey Joins National Coalition to Bring 21st Century Skills to Classrooms**

Education Commissioner Lucille E. Davy today announced that New Jersey recently became the ninth state to join the leadership initiative *Partnership for 21st Century Skills*, a coalition designed to infuse current classroom instruction with skills students need to be better prepared for the workplace.

Discussing the partnership at the State Board of Education's December meeting, Commissioner Davy said the resources and expertise available through the 10-state effort will assist New Jersey in modernizing its educational system to promote workforce competitiveness and economic innovation.

"Being a member state of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills will help New Jersey move forward with its mission to empower all children with the skill sets and knowledge needed to compete in our ever-changing modern world," the Commissioner said. "New Jersey students must be challenged to think globally, use new technology and solve complex problems to ensure they are career- and college-ready."

The partnership, which is a growing network of state governments, businesses and educators, has created the country's first framework for introducing 21st century skills into existing curricula. Targeted skills include: [creativity and innovation](#); [critical thinking and problem solving](#); [communication and collaboration](#); and information, media and technology.

"Promoting 21st century skills does not necessarily equate to new class offerings," said Commissioner Davy. "Rather, it requires that we take a long look at how we teach existing courses, and discover where we can make the content more applicable to real life and how we can engage the interest and active participation of more students."

One key element of the framework is the integration of significant, emerging 21st century themes -- global awareness, civic literacy, health literacy, and financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy -- into core subjects to help students understand and apply academic content to real-world situations.

For example, curriculum developed by the partnership to assist eighth grade math teachers with integrating global awareness into lesson plans suggests challenging students to calculate their ecological footprints, which measure the amount of natural resources that individuals consume in a given year. The sample lesson suggests that students calculate the average footprints of individuals in a number of other nations and compare their findings. Students are then asked to make lifestyle changes inspired by other cultures that would lower their ecological footprint over time. Students recalculate their footprints later in the year to determine if their lifestyle changes have made any measurable ecological benefits.

Today's announcement supports the department's secondary school transformation initiative, which has been developed in concert with the National Governors Assoc. and Achieve's American Diploma Project.

Arizona, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, North Carolina, South Dakota, West Virginia and Wisconsin also participate in the Partnership for 21st Century Skills' state leadership initiative.

Board member organizations of the partnership include: Adobe Systems Inc.; American Association of School Librarians; Apple; ASCD; Atomic Learning, Blackboard Inc.; Cable in the Classroom; Cisco Systems; Corporation for Public Broadcasting; Davis Publications; Dell Inc.; Discovery Education; EF Education; Education Networks of America; Education Testing Service; Ford Motor Company Fund; Gale Cengage Learning; Hewlett Packard; Intel Corp.; JA Worldwide®; KnowledgeWorks Foundation; K12; Learning.com; Learning Point Associates; LEGO Group; Lenovo; Measured Progress; Microsoft Corp.; National Education Assoc.; Oracle Education Foundation; Pearson; PolyVision; Scholastic Education; Sesame Workshop; THINKronize; Verizon; and Wireless Generation.

More information on the partnership can be found at [www.21stcenturyskills.org](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org).