

New Jersey Department of Education

2003 *Annual Report*



Better Teaching More Learning Accountability and Innovation



Governor James E. McGreevey
Commissioner William L. Librera

*“Our greatest
obligation to the
next generation is
to prepare our
children for the
future.”*

Governor James E. McGreevey
December 2003

21-Point Plan for Education



Better Teaching

- ▶ Ensure that all elementary school teachers know how to teach reading.
- ▶ Increase the minimum passing scores for teacher certification exams.
- ▶ Require that teachers have certification in the subject matter they are teaching.
- ▶ Implement uniform standards for teacher preparation programs.
- ▶ Streamline the alternate route through training during an intensive summer teaching academy.
- ▶ Require that teachers needing improvement of their skills attend a summer teaching academy or other summer program for success in the classroom.
- ▶ Provide dispute resolution tools to help resolve local contract disputes fairly.
- ▶ Develop a strategy to increase the number of National Board-certified teachers and support teachers pursuing that certification.

More Learning

- ▶ Incorporate technology standards into Core Curriculum Content Standards and require high school students to pass a technology proficiency test.
- ▶ Develop new initiatives to improve character education in schools to help children become productive, informed, actively involved citizens.
- ▶ Provide meaningful alternatives for high school seniors who have passed the High School Proficiency Assessment, such as serving as a teacher's assistant, volunteering in an approved community program, participating in an apprenticeship or taking college courses.
- ▶ Allow high school students to test out of some classes and take more challenging ones.

Accountability and Innovation

- ▶ Administer a new statewide third-grade test to ensure that we meet our third-grade literacy goal.
- ▶ Implement common-sense testing reforms, including the fourth-grade test, to accurately measure student learning and yearly progress.
- ▶ Develop a statewide student-level database to identify where students are learning or not learning.
- ▶ Reform our state takeover law to allow quicker intervention and assistance in troubled districts before serious problems worsen.
- ▶ Strengthen partnerships with parents by ensuring that elementary schools establish parent involvement programs that include them in school.
- ▶ Establish a Governor's Schools of Excellence program to recognize and reward schools for outstanding achievement.
- ▶ Initiate five "renaissance schools" as a pilot program by building small schools designed to improve learning, as well as the surrounding community.
- ▶ Forge new partnerships with the private sector and higher education to establish high-quality summer programs for reading teachers.
- ▶ Adopt national professional standards for administrators to develop leadership and create a type of "alternate route" for administrators.

J a m e s E . M c G r e e v e y

Governor's Message



"Our goal is to make New Jersey's schools the best in the nation."

Our greatest obligation to the next generation is to prepare our children for the future. Our public schools in New Jersey have been helping our children gain the skills that they need to succeed in life through our Core Curriculum Content Standards. Our elementary and preschool teachers have been working toward our goal to have every child able to read by the end of third grade. The ability to read is the key to all further education, and research shows that children who achieve early literacy are more likely to stay in school and more likely to be graduates that go on to higher education and rewarding careers.

Education remains one of the top priorities of my administration. Even in one of the toughest economic climates the state has ever experienced, we have increased our spending on education to a record \$8.1 billion. We have financed the reading coach program at \$10 million a year for four years to share effective teaching techniques with teachers of at-risk students. The Governor's Book Club – the only one of its kind in the nation – has reinforced our message that the key to all education is reading.

We also can be proud of the fact that recently released scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show that New Jersey students scored higher on average than students across the nation in fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math. We intend to build on that success.

Simply put, our goal is to make New Jersey's schools the best in the nation. At the beginning of my administration, I convened an Education Summit to discuss my agenda for education reform with educators and representatives of the business community. As a result, we have developed a blueprint to guide educational decisions for the state through my 21-point plan for education that focuses on better teaching, more learning, and accountability and innovation.

As you read this annual report on progress toward the educational goals in my 21-point plan, keep in mind that these are just some of the major actions that have been taken to ensure that each of our children will have the best possible education in New Jersey.

Governor James E. McGreevey
December 2003

Mission Statement

The New Jersey State Department of Education will provide leadership for a superior education by utilizing multiple and diverse paths to success for all children in New Jersey.



To carry out the mission of the NJ Department of Education, as well as the governor's 21-point plan, the Department of Education has defined five areas of focus for all of its actions and initiatives:

- ▶ **Teacher and administrator quality**
- ▶ **Raising student achievement**
- ▶ **Diverse and multiple paths for student success**
- ▶ **Innovative and outstanding practices and programs**
- ▶ **Public communication, engagement, and accountability**

William L. Librera

Commissioner's Message



Commissioner of Education William Librera reads to students at Cornelia Bradford School in Jersey City in support of "Read Across America" day.

"If we are to achieve our goals for educating every child, we must depend on dedicated teachers working in conjunction with involved parents."

Welcome to this first annual report to the public on our progress toward meeting the goals in the McGreevey Administration's educational agenda. After two years of reorganizing the department for better delivery of services to local districts and intense development of programs and initiatives to help the state meet the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act* and the Governor's 21-point plan, it is time to step back and measure our progress.

We have worked diligently with the State Board of Education, the Professional Teaching Standards Board, and the State Action for Education Leadership Project within the department to identify our professional standards for classroom teachers and their administrators. The teacher licensing code has been completely revised to include the new professional standards as the basis for teacher preparation, induction, and professional development.

In addition to creating the professional standards, we have completely revised the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards. They are much more content-specific and benchmarked at more grade levels.

We also have utilized every possible resource to improve early literacy, because the children who can read well by the end of grade three are more likely to stay in school and achieve success in subsequent schooling, as well as lifetime pursuits. The goal of universal early literacy we believe is absolutely critical to eliminating the achievement gaps and helping every child to earn a diploma that opens the door to a bright future.

If we are to achieve our goals for educating every child, we must depend on dedicated educators working in conjunction with involved parents. As you read about the progress we have made in two years, we hope it will inspire you to do your part in extending the scope of our work at the department down to the level of each individual student. There are multiple paths to reach our goals, and we encourage you to create and innovate, but most of all, provide leadership for a superior education in your school and community.

Commissioner William L. Librera
December 2003

Better Teaching

Skillful teaching produces successful learning. The one-on-one rapport between a teacher and a student is essential in motivating a student to learn, guiding the student to what he or she must learn, and assessing whether the learning has taken place.

Teaching Children to Read

One of the primary goals of the McGreevey Administration is early literacy, defined as having every child able to read by the end of third grade. Research has shown the power of early literacy to keep children in school, promote successful learning in subsequent grades, and increase the likelihood of students' graduating and pursuing further education. In order to successfully teach early literacy skills to students so that they can master them, teachers must first know how to teach reading. The new language arts literacy standards provide specific direction to teachers about all of the essential skills students must have by each grade level from K to 8.

One of Governor McGreevey's first initiatives to enhance the skills of teachers who teach reading to at-risk students was to invest \$10 million a year in a four-year literacy program that provides reading coaches to schools that need them.



Reading coaches are specially trained to work with other teachers, as well as parents and school administrators, to improve reading instruction in the classroom. Thirty reading coaches working in 80 districts with nearly 700 teachers and approximately 25,000 students launched the program in 2002-03. In the 2003-04 school year, 60 reading coaches are working with 2,000 elementary school peers in more than 120 schools with additional professional development activity in another 50 schools.



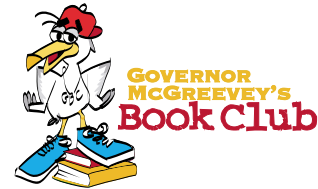
One of the primary goals of the McGreevey Administration is early literacy defined as having every child able to read by the end of third grade.

Better Teaching



Governor McGreevey joined Commissioner of Education William L. Librera at Roosevelt School to talk about the Governor's Book Club and the importance of reading.

Governor McGreevey and Commissioner Librera are pictured hosting one of the county teacher town meetings to discuss the 21-point plan for educational reform and other issues raised by the teachers.



In addition, the Governor sponsored the first two-day literacy conference in August 2003 entitled "Keeping the Promise: Literacy for all Children." It was attended by over 700 educators, reading and literacy coaches, principals, and Reading First coordinators to learn about research-based teaching practices focused on literacy.

In 2002, after successfully engaging in a rigorous process, the department received a Reading First grant from the US Department of Education (USDOE) under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. The grant amount awarded to New Jersey is approximately \$120 million over six years. The department disbursed funds to twenty-two school districts that may use this money to purchase and implement scientifically based comprehensive reading programs and provide professional development to raise the reading levels of students. Following the USDOE's guidelines, the department will evaluate the twenty-two districts at predetermined intervals throughout the grant period.

Also as reinforcement for the focus on early reading, the Governor created his own Governor's Book Club to help nurture a love of reading in young children. The goal is to inspire children to read outside the classroom during the crucial years from K-3 when they can develop good reading skills and become generations of life-long readers. During the 2002-03 school year, more than 60,000 children in K-3 registered online, and more than 1,000 teachers signed up to receive the newsletter.

Supporting Teachers

Early in his administration, Governor McGreevey created the Teacher Advisory Committee to give New Jersey's teachers a direct link to the Governor's Office. The committee offers advice on classroom experience, identifies ways to attract bright students to the profession, and recommends ways to retain teachers and make the profession more rewarding.

Additionally, in 2003, Governor McGreevey and Commissioner Librera conducted teacher town meetings in numerous counties as part of an initial goal to hold a teacher town meeting in every county. These have been valuable "give-and-take" sessions that have provided insight into the needs of our teachers and given them a forum to influence the state's educational agenda.

High Quality Teachers and Administrators

We have heard much in the news about the new highly qualified teacher requirements under the federal *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*. The state was already dedicated to raising the quality of teachers and administrators before the federal requirements became law.

We have strengthened state requirements to ensure that all early elementary school teachers know how to teach reading; increased the minimum passing scores for teacher certification exams; and required teachers to be certified in the subject matter they are teaching. To support statewide efforts to ensure that all teachers meet the federal mandate for highly qualified teachers, the department worked with stakeholders to develop the NJ Model for Identifying Highly Qualified Teachers, as well as a rigorous High Objective Uniform State Evaluation (HOUSE) Standard Content Knowledge Matrix to allow veteran teachers to show their content expertise in the subjects they teach. The department provided training statewide that involved thousands of hours of technical assistance to districts and individuals. The department created an electronic survey to gather data from school districts to meet federal reporting requirements under *NCLB*.

In order to upgrade teacher preparation programs and continuing professional development, the Department of Education worked with the New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards Board to develop teaching standards that are aligned with national standards, so that there are uniform expectations for teacher preparation programs, as well as for mentoring and professional development. The state has created a similar set of professional standards for programs that prepare administrators through its adoption of national standards for school leaders as recommended by the NJ State Action for Education Leadership (SAELP) consortium. The NJ SAELP consortium also recommended the creation of a professional development requirement for school leaders that links individual interests with authentic school and district needs.

In December 2003, these new professional standards were adopted by the State Board of Education as part of the new Professional Licensure and Standards regulations. The new regulations are linked to the Core Curriculum Content Standards and contain the following: the new professional standards; national accreditation requirements for standards-based teacher preparation programs; a continuous path of teacher training from college preparation to

Supporting Teachers



Teachers learn more about the integration of technology into their classrooms at the Middlesex County Educational Technology Training Center. There are training centers available in each county to serve teachers and administrators in all districts.

There are three essential components of a highly qualified teacher, according to NCLB:

- ▶ Hold at least a bachelor's degree.
- ▶ Be fully certified/licensed by New Jersey and
- ▶ Demonstrate competence in each of the core academic subjects in which the teacher teaches.

Teachers can demonstrate competence in the subject(s) they teach by either:

- ▶ Passing a rigorous state test or completing an academic major, graduate degree, coursework equivalent to an undergraduate academic major, or national certification or credentialing; OR
- ▶ Meeting the requirements of the NJ High Objective Uniform State Evaluation (HOUSE) Standard.



Elspeth Corrigan Moore from Memorial High School in West New York, Hudson County, is the 2002-03 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year.

“I entered teaching believing teachers can help make the world a better place and can change lives. I still believe that.”

ongoing professional development; and certification requirements that result in highly qualified teachers as defined in the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*.

In addition, the state has expanded on the highly successful alternate route to certification that was begun in 1983. Two of these new preparation programs involve four-year institutions of higher education – the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) offered at New Jersey City University and the Summer-to-Summer Program developed by the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. The third is the Community College Provider Plan developed in conjunction with the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association and the New Jersey Association of School Administrators. It features a uniform curriculum at 16 community colleges and a pre-employment course that counts toward the 200 hours required for certification under current regulations.

By tapping into the corporate sector, the state has replicated successful models of professional development, such as the Merck Summer Professional Development Model for Science Teachers that is currently being adapted for literacy and mathematics.

Teachers need incentives to seek the rigorous National Board Certification that is encouraged under the Governor’s 21-point education plan. Under a collaborative effort among the Department of Education, the Business Coalition for Educational Excellence, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, teachers can receive reimbursement for the cost of the application fee, qualify for mentoring while enrolled in the program, and earn a master’s degree upon completion. The goal is to have at least one nationally qualified teacher in every school.

The state also won an award of \$7.9 million in a competitive state grant from the U.S. Department of Education over a period of three years to enhance teacher quality throughout the state. The grant was awarded to New Jersey based on the Department of Education’s proposal to align teacher education programs with the Core Curriculum Content Standards; redesign and strengthen the alternate route; provide mentoring support for novice teachers; and develop standards for providers.

More Learning

Overall, New Jersey's schools do a very good job of educating the state's 1.3 million students. To ensure that all students receive a similar education throughout their years in public school, the state has revised and strengthened its Core Curriculum Content Standards. The language arts literacy, science, and mathematics standards were adopted by the State Board of Education in July 2002. The revised language arts literacy standards provide more specific direction for teaching reading with an emphasis on scientifically based reading instruction that will enable all students to read with proficiency by the end of third grade.

The social studies, world languages, visual and performing arts, and comprehensive health and physical education standards have undergone major revisions to improve their clarity and rigor. Two new standards areas, technological literacy and career education and consumer, family, and life skills, replace the 1996 Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards. These six content areas will be adopted by the State Board of Education in 2004. The standards provide New Jersey's schools with expectations that guide local curriculum development and assessment and prepare students for post-secondary education and a career.



Academic Standards

During 2003, the State Board of Education has discussed substantive proposed amendments to the Standards and Assessment Code that contains the overview of the Core Curriculum Content Standards and their relationship to course requirements and the statewide assessment system. The amendments are designed to create greater flexibility for high school students to select courses and establish new paths to a high school diploma that place priority on demonstrating proficiency in required content areas. It also accommodates the new senior year project that allows students who have passed the High School Proficiency Assessment more flexibility to pursue other experiences in high school. Adoption is expected early in 2004.

The state has revised and strengthened its Core Curriculum Content Standards in three core academic subjects...

Core Curriculum Content Standards

NP



▶ *Career Education and Consumer, Family and Life Skills*

UR



▶ *Comprehensive Health and Physical Education*

RA



▶ *Language Arts Literacy*

RA



▶ *Mathematics*

RA



▶ *Science*

UR



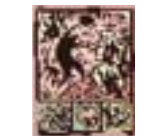
▶ *Social Studies*

NP



▶ *Technology*

UR



▶ *Visual and Performing Arts*

UR



▶ *World Languages*

RA = Revised Adopted

NP = Newly Proposed

UR = Under Revision

Early Childhood Education

One of the ways to increase learning, especially for children from low-income families, is to provide a quality education program at younger ages. Children in preschool programs for three- and four-year-olds in Abbott districts, where all children in the district are eligible, are better prepared for school. About 70 percent of the eligible children were funded in the Abbott preschool programs in 2002–03. The ultimate goal is to have 100 percent enrolled in high-quality programs.

In order to make the preschool programs as research-based as possible in preparing children for elementary school, the department assembled task forces and committees with broad representation from every sector of the community to assist with development of the *Abbott Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines*. The guidelines help to shape early childhood programs in eligible districts, as well as assist with the required three-year plan and budget from each district. Additionally, with broad-based support, the department completed development of the *New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Expectations: Standards of Quality*. This document provides initial preschool program guidance in preparation for meeting the Core Curriculum Content Standards in the elementary grades.

So that teachers are prepared to implement the standards of quality, the department offered a comprehensive year-long training for 105 master teachers who, in turn, train, mentor, and coach over 4,000 classroom teachers and assistant teachers in the Abbott districts. Teachers were also trained in the use of structured evaluation instruments, so that they are able to conduct self-assessments to determine the success of their preschool programs.

To assist districts with creating research-based programs and ongoing evaluations of progress, the department launched the Early Learning Improvement Consortium (ELIC), a multiyear initiative in which participating institutions of higher education help the department and Abbott districts with identifying the particular needs of preschool children and programs. The colleges and universities collect and report data on preschool classroom performance. So far, ELIC studies reveal that Abbott preschool classrooms are



The New Early Childhood Center No. 45 in Elizabeth was built with funding from the state's \$8.6 billion school construction program. It provides 20 preschool classrooms for 300 three- and four-year-olds.



Preschoolers from the Elizabeth School District participate in the groundbreaking of their new early childhood center.

One way to increase learning is to provide a quality education program at younger ages.

NEW JERSEY
CHARACTER EDUCATION

• PARTNERSHIP •



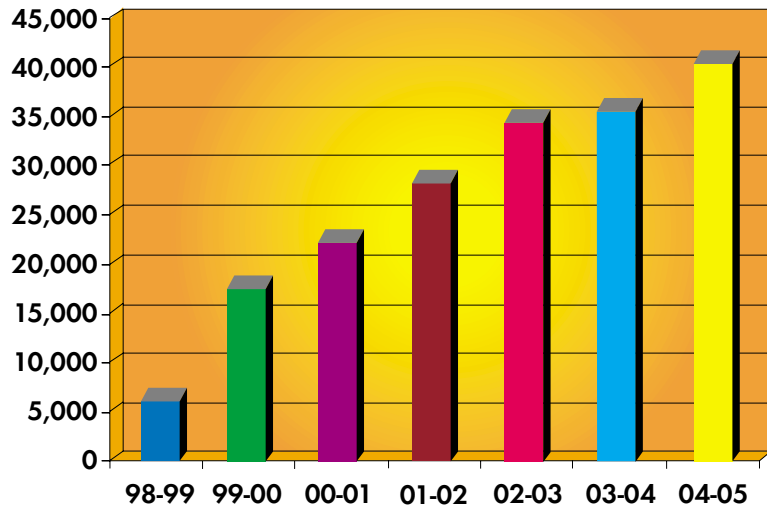
**OVERALL SCHOOL
IMPACT OF CHARACTER
EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

(Excerpts from the *New Jersey Character Education Partnership (NJCEP) Initiative Report on Year-Two Outcomes*)

The following were reported by school districts throughout New Jersey when describing the primary outcomes of their character education programs and the overall impact of this initiative within the school:

- ▶ Increased attendance rate
- ▶ Decreased student discipline referrals
- ▶ Improved classroom performance
- ▶ Improved school climate

Preschool Children Served in Abbott Districts, 1998–2005



increasing in quality, especially in those areas that are most related to school readiness. In addition, children entering kindergarten show significant gains in language skills.

Character Education

A student is more likely to learn if he or she feels safe and secure in school. Character education programs are designed to develop traits that have been universally accepted as helpful to people both in childhood and adulthood. Governor McGreevey raised the importance of developing such programs by making character education one of the 21 points in his plan. The Governor's 2003 budget provided \$4.75 million to school districts for the development, implementation, and expansion of character education programs. Character education has also been included in the Core Curriculum Content Standards for comprehensive health and physical education, social studies, and career and consumer, family and life skills.

New Jersey's character education initiative has had a positive impact on school climate, student conduct, and student achievement as illustrated in the "New Jersey Character Education Partnership Initiative: Report on Year-Two Outcomes." This report provides an overview of the continued progress of the state initiative and summarizes the data submitted by second-year participating public schools for the 2001–02 school year. More than 700,000 students participated in a variety of character-building activities in year two, which is an increase from 250,000 students in year one.

More Learning

In 2002, New Jersey was one of only five states to receive an award under the Partnerships in Character Education grant program, Title V, Part D of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. This four-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education enabled the department to establish the New Jersey Center for Character Education at Rutgers. The new center will assist the department in offering technical assistance and support for program and professional development, as well as for skill enhancement.

Following the second year of a four-year Memorandum of Agreement with Rutgers University, the center has facilitated a three-year strategic plan for character education improvement in the 10 selected collaborating Local Education Agency (LEA) partners and met with 10 teacher preparation institutions of higher education to discuss how character education has been infused through the coursework. These efforts will advance character education in our schools to help our children become productive, informed and actively involved citizens.

Multiple Paths for Student Success

Another way to increase learning is to encourage innovation in educational approaches to achieving the Core Curriculum Content Standards. Student success is dependent on many factors, not just on how much time a student spends in a classroom. Many things affect achievement, such as the school facility, the safety of the environment, the interaction of students and teachers, and the flexibility of the program. Those who do not respond to the traditional approaches in classrooms sometimes fare better with a choice either of schools or programs.

In 2002, Governor McGreevey charged the state's education system to create a seamless flow from preschool to college and beyond. The first initiative to result from this directive is the Entrepreneurship/Business Management Academy with Camden County Community College, Rutgers University, and six Camden high schools participating to become the first seamless pre-kindergarten through senior-year-of-college model in the state.

Another major thrust aimed at high school students in 2003 was the twelfth-grade pilot project designed to encourage high school seniors who have finished all graduation requirements to enroll in college-credit courses or seek volunteer opportunities and internships for personal and intellectual growth, as



The following are the programs that are under development from 2002–03:

- ▶ The partnership of Pfizer and Morris School District to create a medical/health program, followed by PSE&G with Trenton School District and Mercer County Community College to develop a utility engineering program;
- ▶ the Academies at Englewood in Dwight Morrow High School with Verizon to develop programs in law and public safety and informational technology; and
- ▶ Commerce Bank with the Cherry Hill School District and three colleges to develop a business academy.

Others that are already in the planning stage are as follows:

- ▶ Jersey City School District working with Pershing on a finance academy;
- ▶ Trenton School District working with Merrill Lynch to develop a finance program and with the New Jersey Education Association to create an academy for future educators; and
- ▶ Neptune Township School District working with Meridian Health on a career academy for science and medical arts with emphasis on emergency management.

More Learning



The proposed \$98 million Demonstration Project in New Brunswick is a new two- and three-story, 380,000-square-foot high school to be built on a 32-acre site in the city's Route 27 "Renaissance Area" where proposed housing and commercial redevelopment activities are under way. The school would accommodate 1,750 students in two educational wings separated by a central core structure housing indoor athletic facilities, gymnasium, auditorium, and other common and administrative spaces.

well as take the opportunity to learn firsthand about a career that is of interest. Nearly 60 districts participated in the first year of the program.

Some students are not motivated by the traditional high school curriculum choices and would like to have alternatives to that type of program. One of Governor McGreevey's major educational priorities is the formation of career academies that involve partnerships among schools, institutions of higher education, and the corporate/business community. These academies provide an alternate path to a high school diploma while offering career testing and guidance to students who think they might know what they want to do after graduation from college.

Successful programs are often given a boost by the types of facilities that house them. Research shows that small schools or small-school concepts within larger schools create environments more conducive to more learning for more students. There are two programs that are designed to experiment with small schools built in urban areas that are strategically placed so that they stimulate the revitalization of the entire community around them. This school construction concept is designed to also tap into another very powerful factor in student achievement – parent involvement. In such a neighborhood with its own school, the pressure for involvement will be greater.

The first concept is included under a provision in the school facilities act to grant funding to create six Demonstration Projects. In 2003, the department advanced to the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation (NJSCC) multiple school facilities projects in Abbott districts as Demonstration Projects designed to develop visionary school facilities that boost the revitalization of an entire neighborhood. The six proposals that received preliminary designation from the state Treasurer were submitted by Vineland, East Orange, Trenton, New Brunswick, Camden, and Union City. The projects will undergo further review before there are final approvals.

More Learning

The second concept is that of the Renaissance Zone. The department has announced the first four of at least seven Renaissance Zones which feature integrated planning that

incorporates schools into the economic development of a neighborhood. The first is the Roebling Elementary School to be built in Trenton on the site of the former factory. The second is to be located in Neptune, where school officials plan to build a \$35 million community school and a permanent home for the early childhood center to be located in a rehabilitated warehouse on the site. The Renaissance Zone program combines elements of Smart Growth with providing small state-of-the-art schools within the context of the larger community development in urban or older suburban areas. The state's third and fourth Renaissance Zones are in Union City and Paterson. There are already plans to build 21st century classrooms in over 1,300 schools around the state.

In addition to program choices, it is also possible to increase learning by allowing a choice of schools to parents. There are two choice programs that the department oversees – charter schools and interdistrict public school choice.

In 2003, the state approved two new charter school applications – the Jersey Shore Charter School, which will serve students from Eatontown, Oceanport Borough and West Long Branch in Monmouth County and the Great Falls Charter School, which will serve students from Paterson. New Jersey's 48 operating charter schools currently enroll nearly 13,000 students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12. Both applicants will take a planning year before opening in September 2004.

The department has released the 2002–03 annual report for the Interdistrict Public School Choice program featuring 12 choice districts that enrolled 461 choice students. In 2003–04, 13 choice districts are expected to enroll 736 students. The program must be reauthorized by the Legislature by June 2005. Benefits of the program noted in the report include smaller class size, innovative programs, expansion of classes such as art and music, adding diversity, and avoiding overcrowding or underutilization. Manchester Regional High School District was the 15th choice school selected, and it is offering access to a technology program in 2004–05.



Drawing by a first-grade choice student at Folsom Elementary School.



Accountability & Innovation



New Jersey students scored higher on average on the National Assessments of Educational Progress (NAEP) than students across the nation on 4th- and 8th- grade math and reading. New Jersey students' average scale scores were higher across the board than the national average in the following four categories:

- ▶ **4th-grade reading**
NJ 255 US 216
- ▶ **4th-grade math**
NJ 239 US 234
- ▶ **8th-grade reading**
NJ 268 US 261
- ▶ **8th-grade math**
NJ 281 US 276

The ultimate accountability for all of the state's education policies and initiatives appears in the scores on state assessments. While standardized tests measure one very narrow dimension of a school's program, it is the only accountability tool that the state has at its disposal to ensure that students are achieving the knowledge and skills that are included in our carefully crafted state standards. In addition to accountability to the state, under the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act*, all schools are accountable to the federal government, as well.

Assessment

The state currently administers three assessments – the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge 4 (NJASK 4), the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA), and the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) that is required at grade 11. In accordance with *NCLB*, the state must develop tests in mathematics and language arts literacy for all grades 3–8. In the spring of 2003, the state administered the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge 3 (NJASK 3) as a field test. The spring 2004 NJASK 3 will be used to set standards for measuring adequate yearly progress (AYP) the following year. In addition, the third-grade test will be valuable in assessing the progress of students toward the goal of having all able to read by the end of grade three.

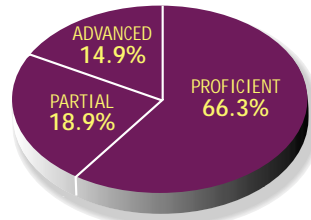
New Jersey students do well in language arts and math compared to students across the 50 states, according to the results of the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). These results provided independent evidence that New Jersey is making progress in closing achievement gaps, particularly those between Hispanic students and white students. For example, the gaps between Hispanic students and white students in fourth-grade math lowered from 32 points in 1992 to 24 this year. In 2003, the average scale score was 224. The scores in 1992 were 233 and 195, respectively.

Being fully aware of the limitations of standardized testing for most subject areas, the department has formed a partnership with the Coalition for Responsible Educational Assessment, Testing and Evaluation (CREATE) and the Business Coalition for Educational Excellence (BCEE) consortium in the amount of \$750,000, to be supplemented by \$100,000 from BCEE and \$400,000 of in-kind support from CREATE member organizations. The grant is for a five-year pilot project involving nine school districts to create performance-based assessments to be used in conjunction with standardized tests in all core content areas –

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

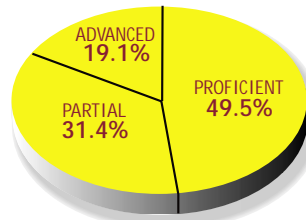
High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA)

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY



ALL STUDENTS
2001-2002

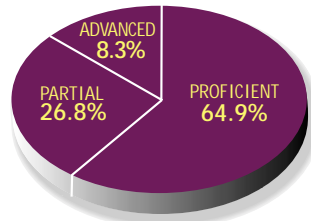
MATHEMATICS



ALL STUDENTS
2001-2002

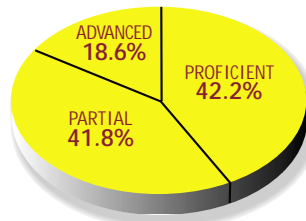
Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA)

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY



ALL STUDENTS
2001-2002

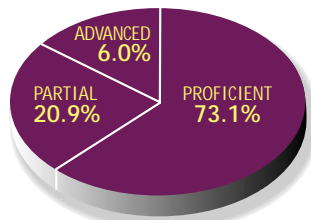
MATHEMATICS



ALL STUDENTS
2001-2002

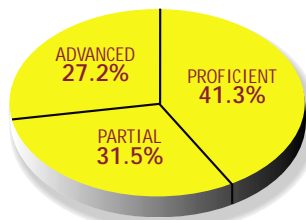
Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA)

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY



ALL STUDENTS
2001-2002

MATHEMATICS



ALL STUDENTS
2001-2002



New Jersey
Department of Education
2002
NCLB State Report Card

beginning with math, language arts and science. The assessments will include student projects, demonstrations, competitions, and problem-solving tasks.

The department also participates in three assessment development projects sponsored by the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The State Collaboration on Assessment and Student Standards projects develop assessment materials in the arts, social studies, and health education.



Overcoming Achievement Gaps

The federal education act (*NCLB*) requires that every one of six subgroups of students – including special education students and those with limited English proficiency – must meet the adequate yearly progress (AYP) benchmarks set by the state and approved by the U.S. Department of Education. The implementation of this law has been challenging for schools and districts in all fifty states.



While the implementation of *NCLB* is difficult because of its focus on identifying schools as “in need of improvement” even for having only one of forty indicators unmet, the intent of eliminating all achievement gaps among our student subgroups has been a goal of the NJ Department of Education and the

McGreevey Administration all along. Through its programs to improve the quality of teachers and administrators and its technical assistance to districts requesting help, the Department of Education hopes to see progress in the elimination of all achievement gaps.

Currently under construction in the department to assist local districts, as well as the state, in knowing where students are learning and where they are not is a student-level system called NJ SMART – New Jersey Standards Measurement and Resources for Teaching. With student-level, longitudinal data, higher-quality information will be available to educators to help drive instructional

improvements. Ultimately, NJ SMART will reduce schools' administrative burden and streamline the state's reporting process. It will take several years to complete, but school districts will start to see benefits in 2004-05.

Accountability for School Construction Progress

One of the areas for which Governor McGreevey has established accountability is the multiyear \$8.6 billion school construction program that had been floundering under the weight of bureaucratic delay caused by having many agencies involved in the process prior to 2002. The Governor refocused the program by establishing the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation (NJSCC) and by appointing capable leadership and staff. Following the approval of school facilities projects by the Department of Education, the NJSCC manages the project design and construction in Abbott districts and in other districts that are entitled to 55 percent or more in their district aid percentage (DAP). For districts under 55 percent DAP, the NJSCC administers the grants for those district-managed projects.

Under this administration, the timetable for projects has been cut from five years to three. In 2003, the department facilitated many needed projects to go forward. Overall, more than 680 school facilities projects were approved. The department advanced 127 predevelopment approvals to NJSCC and approved 103 school facilities projects managed by NJSCC that have a total value over \$670 million. The department also approved 462 projects for districts with under 55 percent DAP with a total value of \$1.3 billion – \$300 million of which is the state's share.

Awards for Innovation

As an incentive to schools to develop innovative programs, the Governor and the department created a new award program called the Governor's Schools of Excellence awards. In November 2003, Governor McGreevey presented \$25,000 prizes to 25 schools in the first annual award ceremony held at Drumthwacket. The winning schools were honored for demonstrating effective practices to prepare their students for the future and for showing significant improvement during a two-year period. Funding for the program is provided



As of the end of November 2003, the NJ Schools Construction Corporation (SCC) has reported entering the following:

- ▶ 356 construction contracts totaling over \$1.2 billion
- ▶ 212 design contracts totaling almost \$230 million
- ▶ 67 architectural assignments totaling over \$85 million
- ▶ 375 site acquisition contracts totaling over \$100 million

The SCC has also executed 1,160 agreements with districts that receive less than 55% in state aid for their total project amounts for a grand total of over \$4.1 billion of which the state share was about \$1.26 billion. In 2003 alone, districts in all 21 counties received \$435.5 million in direct property tax relief as the state's share of projects that totaled \$1.476 billion.

New Jersey Counties and Regions



For additional information from the NJ Department of Education, call: 609-292-4469.

through a collaborative effort among Pepco/Conectiv, First Energy Corporation, the Board of Public Utilities, and the Office of the Ratepayer Advocate. The funds can be used for educational purposes to be decided by the school. The school will report to the Commissioner at the end of the school year on how it used the award, and it will serve as a demonstration center for exemplary programs.

Public Accountability and Communication

With 600 school districts containing 2,500 schools, it was difficult for the Department of Education to be accountable for all of the needs in so many schools. The department has been reorganized and has worked to find a better balance between oversight and support for teaching and learning. Assistance to local districts has occurred by reorganizing the department into two functional sectors – central operations and field operations with three regional offices that have incorporated the county offices into the regional delivery structure. Another part of the department with extensive field operations is the Abbott division that works directly with the thirty Abbott districts.

In another public accountability measure in February 2003, the department released the 2002 New Jersey School Report Card that contains detailed statistical profiles of all public schools in the state. The annual report cards, mandated by the 1995 law, are prepared for the public to gauge school and district progress, and the report card has become a major state accountability instrument.

In order to meet the additional reporting requirements for *NCLB*, the department designed and issued the new *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) 2002 Report Card* in August 2003. This report must be issued annually before the opening of school and show the indicators that schools must meet in order to avoid classification as a school in need of improvement under the law. The report shows assessment data disaggregated by various student subgroups, such as race, gender, economic disadvantage, special education, and limited English proficient, along with attendance figures, adequate yearly progress status, dropout rates, and highly qualified teacher information. There is also a version of the report in Spanish. Because of these efforts, the reports are now more accessible to parents and the public.

The department has continued the compilation and release of the annual *Comparative Spending Guide*. The guide is a statistical report that details how public school districts in New Jersey allocate their financial resources which allows citizens to hold their communities accountable for their local spending priorities.



2003 Governor's School of Excellence Awards

Pictured are three winners of the Governor's School of Excellence Award representing the three regions. School personnel are shown receiving the awards from Governor James E. McGreevey and Education Commissioner William Librera.



Alexander D. Sullivan School
Jersey City Public Schools, Hudson County

NORTHERN REGION

Other winners in the northern region:

- ▶ Jackson Avenue School, Hackensack School District, Bergen County
- ▶ Memorial School, Little Ferry School District, Bergen County
- ▶ John F. Kennedy School, Wayne Township Public Schools, Passaic County
- ▶ High Tech High School, Hudson County Schools of Technology, Hudson County
- ▶ Marie V. Duffy Elementary School, Wharton Borough Public Schools, Morris County



Washington Elementary School
Trenton Public Schools, Mercer County

CENTRAL REGION

Other winners in the central region:

- ▶ Lincoln Middle School, Dunellen Public Schools, Middlesex County
- ▶ Piscataway High School, Piscataway Township School District, Middlesex County
- ▶ Indian Fields Elementary School, South Brunswick Public Schools, Middlesex County
- ▶ Monmouth County Academy of Allied Health and Science, Monmouth County Vocational Schools, Monmouth County
- ▶ Spring Lake Heights Elementary School, Spring Lake Heights School District, Monmouth County
- ▶ Magnet High School for Math and Science, Union County Vocational-Technical Schools, Union County



Maud Abrahms School
Lower Township School District, Cape May County

SOUTHERN REGION

Other winners in the southern region:

- ▶ Brigantine Elementary School, Brigantine School District, Atlantic County
- ▶ Bordentown Regional High School, Bordentown Regional School District, Burlington County
- ▶ George Washington School, Camden City School District, Camden County
- ▶ Thomas Paine Elementary School, Cherry Hill Public Schools, Camden County
- ▶ Joyce Kilmer Elementary School, Cherry Hill Public Schools, Camden County
- ▶ Samuel S. Yellin School, Stratford School District, Camden County
- ▶ Maurice River Township Elementary School, Maurice Township School District, Cumberland County
- ▶ Cunningham Elementary School, Vineland School District, Cumberland County
- ▶ Harrison Township School, Harrison Township School District, Gloucester County
- ▶ Evergreen Avenue School, Woodbury Public Schools, Gloucester County
- ▶ Penns Beach Elementary School, Pennsville School District, Salem County

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P. O. Box 500

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