



NJDOE News

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'Great Expectations'

D.O.E. Prepares to Launch Professional Development Series for Educators

The New Jersey Department of Education begins a six-part professional development series for educators tomorrow, January 20. The series, entitled *Great Expectations: Expecting More from Our Students, Our Communities and Ourselves*, will feature lectures by national experts, workshops that will showcase best practices related to the topics, and hands-on activities for participants.

Part I in the series, **Restructuring the Middle School Classroom**, will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., tomorrow, at the Passaic County Public Safety Academy. The series, developed by the Regional Office Collaborative for Educational Improvement, is made possible by the Northern Region Office of the New Jersey Department of Education and Passaic County Community College.

"This series gives educators a chance to hear from leaders in their field and share good ideas with their colleagues from other schools," said Acting Governor Richard J. Codey. "I encourage our schools to continue to work with the Department of Education in finding new and better ways to improve student performance."

"The collaboration between our Northern Region Office and Passaic County Community College has resulted in the creation of an excellent series of programs for educators who are serious about closing the achievement gap," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera. "Participants will gain insights on how to set high expectations for themselves and their students to ensure the highest levels of achievement for all students."

Tomorrow's event is designed as a workshop that will feature practical application for teachers and administrators working with students in grades 4-8. The integrated curriculum approach will highlight ways students can become self-motivated independent learners while allowing for different competency levels and learning styles within the classroom.

A brief description of each of the remaining parts in the series appears below:

Differentiated Instruction and Problem-Based Learning, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., January 26, 2005 at the Passaic County Public Safety Academy. In this program, participants will engage in hands-on activities and a Web quest, through which they will learn ways to address the student needs through differentiated instruction and problem-based learning. Dr. Nancy Sulla, president of Innovative Designs for Education (IDE) Corp, will be the keynote speaker.

Small Learning Communities, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. February 8, 2005 at the Woodbridge Hilton. Keynote speaker Dennis Littky, educator and visionary, will explore small learning communities and flexible learning environments that provide equal access to all students by adjusting instruction to address student learning styles, performance levels and interests. In addition representatives from Camden City Big Picture Schools will share their experiences with Learning through Internship.

Using Data for Instructional Decision Making, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., April 12-13, 2005 at the Passaic County Public Safety Academy. Dr. Willa Spicer of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association will guide teachers, supervisors and administrators on strategies to analyze assessment data to identify how students learn and think. Participants also will learn to use several protocols to analyze student work samples.

Special Education: Addressing Disproportionate Placements, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., April 21, 2005 at the Passaic County Public Safety Academy. This workshop will address the issues of over-classification and disproportionate placement of minority students in special education. Schools that have been successful in overcoming aspects of this problem will share their experience.

Jonathan Kozol - Closing the Achievement Gap, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., May 24, 2005 at the Shea Center, William

Paterson University. Jonathan Kozol, author of *Ordinary Resurrections* and *Savage Inequalities*, will address the causes of the achievement gap and how to overcome obstacles to high levels of achievement for all students. In addition, principals from various New Jersey schools will share their strategies that resulted in higher levels of student achievement.

For program details or to register, contact Meredith Coticchio at 973-655-2115.