



## **NJDOE News**

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### **2008 New Jersey Education Accomplishments**

The Department of Education made significant progress towards improving educational opportunities for students, providing more equity in the distribution of state aid and increasing accountability in 2008, Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy said today.

"Thanks to Governor Corzine's leadership, DOE has had an exciting and productive year, and we have seen many accomplishments on a number of fronts as we work to fulfill our mission to prepare all of New Jersey's children to be productive citizens in the 21st century," Commissioner Davy said.

"We adopted a landmark news school funding formula, implemented a new testing program and increased our proficiency standards and enacted new regulations that provided for district accountability in spending, anti-nepotism, pay-to-play and administrators' contracts," the Commissioner said. "Meanwhile, new executive county superintendents are using their expanded authority to promote efficiencies in district operations and our plan to transform secondary education to prepare all students with 21st century skills is kicking into high gear."

The Commissioner cited the following key 2008 accomplishments:

- **New School Funding Formula:** On January 13, 2008, Governor Corzine signed the "School Funding Reform Act of 2008" which provided a fair and equitable funding system for students throughout the state based upon their educational needs, which required local support for schools based upon the community's wealth. For the first time, the needs of all students, regardless of their zip code, were recognized, and additional resources were provided to children at-risk because of poverty, language, or disabilities. The new funding formula also included a significant expansion of high quality preschool education programs for students from low income families regardless of where they live and in communities with high concentrations of low-income families.
- **Accountability Regulations:** Through a series of regulatory adoptions, DOE implemented the Governor's requirements for increased accountability in connection with budgeting and tax levy caps, spending for non-instructional costs, anti-nepotism and pay-to-play, efficient and effective spending, and limitations on compensation and buyouts for high level district administrators.
- **Executive County Superintendents:** With almost all counties now served by an Executive County Superintendent or Acting Executive County Superintendent, work has begun on the consolidation of school districts and the expansion of shared services. In addition, transportation and the delivery systems for special education programs are being reviewed on a county-by-county basis to identify efficiencies and optimal program delivery. The county offices are also implementing the new accountability regulations and reviewing district budgets and tax levy cap waivers.
- **Preparing Students for the 21st Century World:** New Jersey became the 9th state to join the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, which focuses on infusing higher order thinking skills and technology into K-12 education programs. All students need new skill sets and knowledge if they are going to compete in our ever-changing modern world. They must be challenged to think globally, use new technology and solve complex problems to ensure they are career- and college-ready. Promoting 21st century skills does not necessarily equate to new class offerings. Rather, it requires that educators take a long look at how existing courses are taught in order to understand how content can be made more applicable to students' lives and how the interest and active participation of more students can be better engaged.
- **New State Tests and Raising Performance Standards:** This spring, new statewide tests were administered in Language Arts and Mathematics in grades 5-8 and in grade 8 Science. As part of the state's efforts to improve preparedness for the challenges of more rigorous high school coursework, the standard for

proficiency was increased. New Jersey students continue to demonstrate impressive results and progress in their achievement on state tests as well as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments, and outperform most of their counterparts across the country in nearly every category.