



NJDOE News

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Commissioner Davy Announces Schools of Character Honorees

Eight New Jersey schools have been selected as state Schools of Character because of their attention to their students' social development and interaction, Education Commissioner Lucille E. Davy announced this week.

The schools were honored recently at a special awards ceremony at the 2nd Annual New Jersey Alliance for Social Emotional and Character Development Statewide Conference on Tuesday, March 24, at Rutgers University in Piscataway.

"These schools have developed outstanding programs that have nurtured caring and safe school cultures where learning can flourish," Commissioner Davy said. "Their programs will serve as an example throughout New Jersey as we continue to develop students ready to enter a 21st Century economy with the necessary skills to compete in a global market."

The Commissioner noted that institutions such as the Center for Social and Character Development are key partners who support Governor Corzine's commitment to effective public schools of the highest quality.

The schools are:

- Brigantine Elementary School, **Brigantine**, Atlantic County;
- Northfield Middle School, **Northfield**, Atlantic County;
- Lore Elementary School, **Ewing**, Mercer County;
- Hamilton Township School District, **Hamilton**, Mercer County;
- Lawrence Intermediate School, **Lawrence**, Mercer County;
- Lawrenceville Elementary School, **Lawrence**, Mercer County;
- Lake Riviera Middle School, **Brick**, Ocean County;
- Liberty Corner School, **BernardsTownship**, Somerset 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 Partnerships for Character Education grant) reviewed the applications the department received for this year's program.

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.

All of the schools named as State Schools of Character have been nominated for national consideration; National Schools of Character will be announced sometime this summer.

Rosa International Middle School in Cherry Hill, which won state and national awards last year, contributed \$10,000 of its \$25,000 national prize to support the March 24th conference at Rutgers where this year's state award winners will be honored.

New Jersey's Schools of Character initiative 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 Eleven Principles of a Sound Character Education are described as follows. The program:

- Promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character;

- Defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling and behavior;
- Uses a comprehensive, intentional, proactive and effective approach;
- Provides students with opportunities for moral action;
- Includes a meaningful and challenging curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them succeed;
- Strives to foster students self-motivation;
- Engages the school staff as a learning and moral community;
- Fosters shared moral leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative;
- Engages families and community members as partners in a character-building effort; and
- Evaluates 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.