

# The Bridge

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A monthly newsletter for educators from the  
New Jersey Department of Education



## College & Career Readiness Issue

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## In this Issue...

The Department of Education has a singular goal – ensuring that all students in New Jersey, regardless of zip code, graduate from high school ready for college and career. The Department has completely reorganized over the past two years to ensure that all of our work is aligned with this mission of college and career readiness.

In this issue of the Bridge, we outline a couple of concrete steps the Department is taking towards this goal. In order to ensure that every child is college and career ready, the Department is focusing on providing a strong foundation to all children from an early age through a new pilot to identify a child's individual needs upon their entrance into kindergarten. The Common Core State Standards, adopted by the State Board of Education in 2010 and currently being implemented across the state, provide a new definition of college and career readiness by providing clearer and sequenced standards of what each student should know from grades K-12 in English language arts and math. The

Department will be ramping up its support to educators in the coming months to continue to help them implement these standards.

Recognizing that every child learns differently and has different interests after high school, this goal also requires offering a range of high-quality options to allow students to choose the school that is the best fit for them. As we enter Career and Technical Education month, we highlight some of the work happening in CTE schools around the state. Beyond CTE, the Department has taken a number of steps to expand options for students, including authorizing high-quality charter schools and the interdistrict school choice program, helping to ensure that every student has the chance to be successful in an environment that suits their needs.



New Jersey  
Department of Education

## Notes from the Road

*In order to gain a better idea of what education looks like across the entire state, the 2013 NJ Teacher of the Year, Lauren Marrocco, has been awarded a six month sabbatical, sponsored by ETS. Based at the New Jersey Department of Education, she will share her experiences with The Bridge monthly as she travels to both talk to and learn from, teachers, administrators, students, business people and government officials as she represents New Jersey.*

October 3rd was the day that this incredible journey began. Being announced as New Jersey's State Teacher of the Year by Commissioner Cerf and the State Board of Education is a moment I will never forget. One of the most rewarding moments in this awesome recognition is witnessing the pride of my students. They are my biggest cheerleaders and throughout this process, they have become little superstars. Balancing their new found fame as we have been interviewed, filmed and photographed definitely required some finesse, but we made it through. Although leaving in December was difficult, I am excited to step out of my comfort zone, travel the state, meet many new faces and grow from each experience.

My first day at the Department of Education was on January 2nd. When I entered my cubicle waiting for me was a note pad with a message that read, "Journey = A life is measured by the roads we travel and the people we share it with. This is how we grow. This is how we add light to our world." by Adele Basheer. I found this fitting as I begin this leg of my journey as New Jersey's State Teacher of the Year.

So far, I have met with members of various offices and divisions to learn more about what they do. I have been invited to work on initiatives such as teacher evaluation, teacher preparation, professional development and strategic partnerships. I am excited to work collaboratively with them, and to provide a fresh classroom perspective.

Over the next six months, I will tour New Jersey, speaking to current and future educators about ways to improve our practice, build our capacity and raise student achievement. I look forward to sharing this journey with you each month. If you have any suggestions about topics or discussions I should consider as I travel across the state, please email me at [lauren.marrocco@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:lauren.marrocco@doe.state.nj.us).

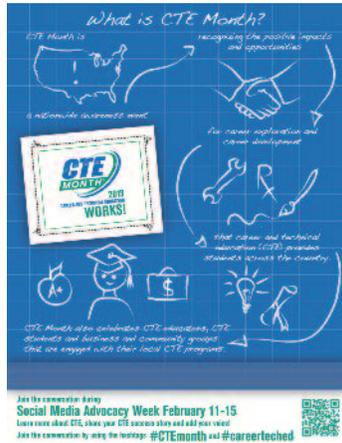
## Kindergarten Readiness

When children enter kindergarten, it is important to understand their current skills, knowledge and abilities to get a snapshot of where they are starting out, so that teachers can begin instruction based on each child's individual needs. Young children come to school with such a wide range of language, cognitive, social and emotional abilities; they also lack "test-taking skills." The best way to understand what young children know and can do is to observe their behavior and collect their work during activities and interactions using a formative assessment. This holistic and comprehensive approach is a valuable tool for planning instruction, even for our youngest learners.

New Jersey is in the process of piloting a formative assessment called Teaching Strategies GOLD with seven school districts and one charter school. Training in the use of the assessment instrument and reliability in scoring took place in August, 2012 with 37 teachers, one teacher assistant and 10 district level administrators. During the first seven weeks of school, teachers observed and collected evidence on children's readiness to learn across nine domains. Feedback so far indicates that some modifications will need to be made to the instrument itself, including reducing the number of items. Also, participants suggested that additional professional development would help with implementation. It is a work in progress.

Information about children's skills and competencies at kindergarten entry will not only inform instructional practices during the kindergarten year, but will also provide essential data on how well programs are meeting the needs of our youngest children. For more information about New Jersey Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines check <http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/kl/>.

# Career & Technical Education in New Jersey – Addressing Current and Future Needs



The NJDOE is happy to celebrate Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month. The theme for this year is "Career and Technical Education Works!"

Over the past decade, Career and Technical Education, formerly known as Vocational Education, has adapted to address our changing economy and the educational needs of students. This is more than just a change in name; it signifies CTE's evolution to provide opportunities for all students in college and a wide variety of career choices. The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 requires states to provide rigorous opportunities for students that include academic and technical skills to prepare students for success in high-wage, high-skill or high-demand careers.

This chart reflects the shift in philosophy from a purely vocational approach to one that prepares students for both college and career:

| Vocational Education         | Career Technical Education                    |
|------------------------------|---|
| For a FEW Students           | For ALL Students                              |
| For a Few "Jobs"             | For All "Careers"                             |
| 6 to 7 Program Areas         | 16 Career Clusters with 79 Career Pathways    |
| "In lieu of" Academics       | Integrates Academics                          |
| Secondary vs. Post-Secondary | Secondary w/Post-Secondary (i.e. dual credit) |

Currently, there are over 91,000 secondary students enrolled in CTE programs at 153 comprehensive high schools and 21 county vocational school districts in New Jersey. Approximately 30,000 secondary students are served in county vocational school districts, but the majority are enrolled in CTE programs at comprehensive high schools. CTE programs are organized by 16 career clusters encompassing 79 career pathways. The career clusters of Business Management & Administration and Arts, A/V Technology and Communications currently have the largest enrollment. In the 2011-2012 school year, 5,104 CTE students earned college credit while in high school with the majority of credits earned in Health Science, Business Management and Administration, and Science, Technology,

Engineering and Mathematics. To learn more about CTE programs in New Jersey please visit our webpage. <http://www.nj.gov/education/cte/>

## Communications High School Student Helps Promote CTE Month!

We are proud to congratulate Julie Prascsak, a senior studying Visual Communications at Communications High School (CHS) in Wall, NJ who won a national poster design contest sponsored by the Association for Career and Technical Education. Inspired by a blueprint, her poster, located to the left, will be used by schools around the country to promote CTE month this February.

## Keeping New Jersey's Schools Safe

After the tragedy at Newtown, schools across the country are looking at their safety and security procedures and making adjustments. While New Jersey has security requirements as strict as any other state in the nation, we still see that there is room to strengthen what we already do. Schools in the state are required by NJ STATUTE 18A:41-1 to conduct drills for each of the following situations, a minimum of two times per year: active shooter, evacuation, bomb threat and lockdown. This is in addition to a fire alarm drill that must be conducted every month.

Schools have been performing security drills for several years now, and the NJDOE has been planning over the past several months to conduct a small number of unannounced visits to districts. The purpose of these visits is two-fold: 1) to see whether the current laws are having the desired effect or if we need to course correct, and 2) to use the opportunity to provide targeted support to individual schools and share anything we learn with others across the state. While visiting schools and evaluating drills, security teams will run through a checklist that addresses a series of questions. Do people know what they are doing? Are they moving with a sense of urgency? Are the doors locked? Was it all done in a timely fashion? Because the entire purpose of the visit is to provide technical assistance and support, there is no report or consequences from the visit, just an opportunity for collegial collaboration.

Refresher courses will be held across the state this spring for school administrators. Guidance for schools around varying the time of day for the drills and conducting drills with neighboring schools will also be provided. You can find more information about security drills and the state regulations at: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/security/drill/>

# EVALUATION UPDATE

On March 6, 2013, the Department of Education plans to propose regulations to the State Board of Education which will provide rules for educator evaluation and professional development as outlined in the TEACHNJ Act. These regulations are scheduled to become effective at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year and will include greater details about several elements of evaluation, including:

- Calculation of the annual summative ratings for teachers, principals, assistant principals, and vice-principals;
- Observation requirements for teachers;
- Objective measures of student achievement for

teachers of subjects and grades tested by the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge ("NJ ASK") as well as for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects;

- Measures of practice and student achievement for principals;
- Mentoring;
- Individualized professional development;
- Corrective action plans; and
- The role and duties of the School Improvement Panel.

When the proposed regulations are presented to the State Board, the Department will launch a statewide outreach initiative to

communicate information about evaluation requirements for 2013-14. Over the course of several weeks, we will conduct regional presentations, post a variety of resources on our website, and provide opportunities for educators and others to share questions and feedback. Materials for various audiences (teachers, principals, etc.) and on various topics (evaluation system overview, student achievement and teaching practice measures, training, etc.) will be available for districts to tailor and use. Any educator interested in providing input on topics to include in this outreach initiative should send an email to

[educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us)



Fourth grade teacher Patrick O'Neill is this year's Milken Award winner. O'Neill teaches at Ocean Township Elementary School, where he has been since 2004. A member of the school safety committee, he heads a new anti-bullying campaign and a new literacy program. At the district level, O'Neill is helping formulate the writing curriculum, report card revisions and technology infusion. He also coaches varsity and JV football at the local high school.

Whether it is SMART boards, an ELMO document camera, computer-based assessments (with pre-tests for re-teaching and reinforcement) or mobile laptop labs, he employs the latest technology to engage his students and track their progress. Student achievement data show that O'Neill's students' test scores have been climbing in science and math since 2007. When compared to other schools, their gains are among the highest in the district.

Unlike most teacher awards, this program has no formal nomination or application process. Every participating state's department of education appoints an independent blue ribbon committee to recommend candidates according to strict criteria, with final selections made by the Milken Family Foundation. Recipients are heralded in early to mid-career for what they have achieved. Each educator in the program is given a \$25,000 unrestricted financial award and the opportunity to participate in ongoing professional development at yearly state conferences and an annual National Education Conference. Unsuspecting recipients are caught by surprise during annual notifications when their names are announced at emotional all-school assemblies.

## Common Core Q&A

### Q: What is the Department doing to support the alignment of New Jersey's preschool standards with the State's adopted English Language Arts and Mathematics Common Core Standards for K-12?

**A:** The Department's Division of Early Childhood Education is in the final stages of updating New Jersey's preschool standards for English language arts and mathematics.

The process included a review of other state's standards, review of the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and for Mathematics, and consultation with national experts. Academic rigor was carefully balanced with research findings on young children's particular developmental needs, including play and social skills. Activities and long-term projects that integrate traditional "subject" areas are re-emphasized, along with the importance of a hands-on, learning-by-doing approach.



The updated standards will provide New Jersey with a stronger bridge between learning outcomes for children birth through three and the standards for those attending K-12 schools. They will continue to serve as a

significant resource to guide high-quality preschool program curriculum implementation for all three- and four-year old children in the State, regardless of language, background, or diverse needs.

The draft revised standards and webinars will be available for viewing in early March on the DOE's Division of Early Childhood Education webpage at:

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/>

## Contact Us!

## Upcoming Events

Do you have ideas, information, or pictures you would like to submit? For comments, concerns, questions or feedback, contact us at:

[thebridge@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:thebridge@doe.state.nj.us)

Would you like to be on our direct mailing list? Click on the link below to ensure that you are connected to "The Bridge" every month.



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**The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST)** are the nation's highest honors for teachers of mathematics and science (including computer science). Awardees serve as models for their colleagues, inspiration to their communities, and leaders in the improvement of mathematics and science education. Since 1983, more than 4,200 teachers have been recognized for their contributions in the classroom and to their profession.

Presidential awardees receive a citation signed by the President of the United States, a trip for two to Washington D.C., professional development opportunities, and a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation.

**If you know any great secondary (grades 7-12) mathematics and/or science teachers, please nominate them to join this prestigious network of professionals. The nomination form and additional info about the award can be found at [www.paemst.org](http://www.paemst.org).**

### **WHO CAN NOMINATE?**

Administrators, teachers, parents, or students may nominate exceptional math & science teachers  
NOMINATION DEADLINE: April 1, 2013

### **WHO CAN APPLY?**

Secondary school teachers (grades 7-12) who have been nominated are eligible to apply  
APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 1, 2013

Are there pressing questions about the NJDOE that you want to know?

## **Ask Ed!**

Dear Ed,

**Q:** I'd like to know if NJ schools incorporate African American History into the curriculum? I've heard something about an Amistad Commission, but I don't know what it's about.

**A:** On August 27, 2002, the governor of New Jersey signed into law the "Amistad Bill" (A1301). This bill created an "Amistad Commission" in honor of the enslaved Africans who gained their freedom after overthrowing the crew of the Amistad ship in 1839. The Commission's mandate was to promote a wider implementation of educational awareness programs regarding the African slave trade, slavery in America, and the many contributions Africans have made to American society. The primary work of the Commission is to provide an inclusive social studies curriculum, especially in United States and world history, and serve as a resource and support for New Jersey classroom teachers. An electronic model social studies curriculum, that provides resources and methodologies to implement the Amistad law, is available free of charge to all educators in New Jersey at: [www.njamistadcurriculum.org](http://www.njamistadcurriculum.org).

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## In the News....

### Local, State and National Education News

#### **Holocaust Commission Issues Curriculum Guide about Atrocities under Stalin – January 16, 2013**

The New Jersey Holocaust Commission has developed a new high school curriculum guide to help schools teach about the atrocities committed in the Soviet Union that led to the deaths of millions of people from the 1920s to the 1950s under the rule of dictator Joseph Stalin.

<http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/13/01/15/commission-on-holocaust-education-unmasks-another-monster/>

#### **Red Bank Schools in Prestigious Program to Integrate Arts into the Classroom – January 10, 2013**

The Red Bank Public Schools are one of only 11 school districts nationally participating in the national Partners in Education program, which is run by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. School staff are working with the Count Basie Theater, their local partner, to integrate the arts with science, math and language arts.

<http://www.app.com/article/20130109/NJNEWS15/301090051/Red-Bank-taps-into-Kennedy-Center-integrate-arts-academics>

#### **Millville High Students Work on Improving their Own Space – January 11, 2013**

Students in Millville High School's construction trades class have helped enlarge the building where their classes are held. They have laid block, installed sheetrock and insulation among other jobs as they train for future careers in construction.

[http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/news/press/cumberland/in-the-schools-millville-high-school-trades-class-enlarges-its/article\\_dc1454a2-5b60-11e2-8c42-0019bb2963f4.html](http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/news/press/cumberland/in-the-schools-millville-high-school-trades-class-enlarges-its/article_dc1454a2-5b60-11e2-8c42-0019bb2963f4.html)

### Reports of Note

MET Project – final report from its three year project.

[http://www.metproject.org/downloads/MET\\_Ensuring\\_Fair\\_and\\_Reliable\\_Measures\\_Practitioner\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.metproject.org/downloads/MET_Ensuring_Fair_and_Reliable_Measures_Practitioner_Brief.pdf)

CCSSO – Our Responsibility, Our Promise: Transforming Educator Preparation and Entry into the Profession

[http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2012/Our%20Responsibility%20Our%20Promise\\_2012.pdf](http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2012/Our%20Responsibility%20Our%20Promise_2012.pdf)