

July 14, 2003

TO: Chief School Administrators  
Charter School Lead Persons  
Principals

FROM: Richard C. Ten Eyck, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Educational Programs and Assessment

SUBJECT: Governor's School of Excellence

The application for the 2003-2004 Governor's School of Excellence program is now available. This initiative provides up to 25 awards of \$25,000 each to schools that have demonstrated significant improvement over the past two academic years. This is another opportunity for the New Jersey Department of Education to recognize outstanding schools and to help those schools share their accomplishments with others.

The awardees can use the funds for educational purposes such as enhancing student achievement and/or supporting continuous school improvement. At the conclusion of the award period, the schools will submit a formal report to Commissioner William L. Librera as to how they have used the money. Schools that receive awards will be asked to serve as demonstration centers for their exemplary programs.

In order for a school to qualify for the Governor's School of Excellence program, there must be a demonstration of significant improvement in academic achievement as measured by state test scores, standardized test scores and/or other relevant measures of achievement. Additionally, the school must provide evidence of **at least five of the following**:

- ❖ Outstanding growth in literacy measures as evident in state test scores, standardized test scores, and/or relevant measures of achievement;
- ❖ Meaningful improvement for parental involvement in school matters evident in both quality and quantity;
- ❖ Improvement in student attendance, graduation rates, retention rates, and/or dropout reduction;
- ❖ Reduction in measures of violence and vandalism as supported by the Annual Violence and Vandalism Report or other measures;

- ❖ Creative as well as increased and documented involvement with partnerships and/or the community;
- ❖ Creative and increased use of technology as a tool for learning;
- ❖ Demonstrated improvement in the quality of professional development which may include the following: staff development programs, PIPs, evaluations, summary evaluations, and/or teacher improvement procedures;
- ❖ Demonstrated success in providing better learning opportunities for specialized populations such as special education students and second language learners; or
- ❖ Other category – this is an area where a school may provide particular documentation of significant improvement that does not fit any category described above.

Attached is the 2003-2004 Governor's School of Excellence Application. Complete information and instructions about the process are detailed therein.

Make sure that any submission completely covers all criteria and that the properly formatted application cover sheet with the appropriate signatures is included. *Applications that are incomplete or that fail to comply with the procedures for submission will not be considered.* The original application and 4 copies must be received by your County Superintendent's Office no later than **August 29, 2003**. If you have any questions, contact Nancy Weiss in the Office of Innovative Programs and Schools at (609) 943-5203 or by e-mail at [nancy.weiss@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:nancy.weiss@doe.state.nj.us).

RCT/MKK/AM/nw/o:Application Memo  
Attachment

c: William L. Librera, Commissioner  
Dwight Pfennig  
Gloria Hancock  
Michael Rush  
Albert Monillas  
Judith Weiss  
Michael K. Klavon  
Pam Castellanos  
Arthur Mitchell  
Nancy Weiss  
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