



NJDOE News

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New Jersey Again Leads Nation in Excellence for Service-Learning

New Jersey continues to lead the nation in the number of schools singled out for their special commitment to incorporate community service activities into their learning experiences. Ten New Jersey schools were among 64 schools selected by the Corporation for National Service as National Service-Learning Leader Schools for 2001.

"I applaud the staff, students and parents of these award-winning schools," said Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco. "It is vital for us to instill in our future adults a strong sense of community and responsibility. I'm especially proud of our distinction as first in the nation for school-based community service activities."

"In addition to fostering civic responsibility, service-learning helps young people learn more about language arts, social studies and other subjects while making a valuable difference in their communities," said Commissioner of Education Vito A. Gagliardi, Sr. "Our award-winning schools serve as shining examples of service-learning that are worthy of emulation by educators throughout our state and nation."

The schools will be recognized in a public ceremony to be held on Wednesday, May 30, at Rider University, Lawrenceville.

New Jersey's 10 national Service-Learning Leader Schools are:

- Benedictine Academy, Elizabeth
- Christa McAuliffe Middle School, Jackson
- Delsea Regional High School, Franklinville
- Hoboken Charter School, Hoboken
- Iselin Middle School, Iselin
- Middle Township High School, Cape May Court House
- North Arlington Middle School, North Arlington
- Notre Dame High School, Lawrenceville
- Ocean County Vocational-Technical School, Toms River
- West Brook Middle School, Paramus

"Service-learning challenges young people to higher achievement and prepares them for a lifetime of responsible citizenship," said Wendy Zenker, Acting CEO of the Corporation for National Service. "By integrating service-learning into their curricula, the educators at these Leader Schools are enriching their students, their school environment and their communities."

New Jersey's strong representation in this year's selection process outpaced the other states by a wide margin. Ohio, with four schools selected, had the second greatest participation rate.

Service-learning is a growing trend in education. The United States Department of Education reported that in 1984, 27 percent of all high schools sponsored community service projects and 9 percent offered service-learning. By 1999, the sponsorship and course offerings rose to 83 percent and 46 percent, respectively.

The recognized schools will join a network of schools that can serve as models to others. Recognized schools receive a banner, an invitation to Washington, D.C. for educational workshops and a recognition event, and access to service-learning resources to support the Leader Schools network and advance service-learning as a teaching, learning and community-building strategy.

The New Jersey Department of Education supports service-learning programs and funding to school districts throughout the state in part through a grant from the Corporation for National Service. Created in 1993, the Corporation for National Service provides opportunities to improve communities through programs such as AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and the national Service Corps.

For more information, contact Rowena Madden and Linda Rivera in the Office of Community Services, 609-633-9627.

(NOTE: News media are invited and encouraged to attend the May 30 event at Rider University.)

