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Department of Education Seeking More Good IDEAS for Teaching Workplace Standards

The New Jersey Department of Education, in collaboration with the Business Coalition for Educational Excellence and the New Jersey Education Association, is again participating in a program designed to identify effective ways to teach skills and knowledge all students will need in the workplace.

Known as IDEAS (Incentives for Demonstrating Excellence in Academic Standards), the program will offer stipends to educators who have developed unique approaches to integrating the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards into their curriculums.

"I encourage educators throughout New Jersey to show us how they are effectively teaching workplace skills and knowledge to their students," said acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco. "We want to share their good ideas with educators everywhere for the benefit of all of our students."

"Workplace readiness skills and knowledge cross all instructional lines," said State Board of Education President Maud Dahme. "Through IDEAS, we are able to identify model programs that can be adopted or adapted for use by school districts throughout the state."

"Learning effective workplace skills needs to be an essential part of every student's education, regardless of what they do after graduation from high school," said Commissioner of Education Vito A. Gagliardi, Sr. "Learning how to succeed in the workplace is a vital objective for all of us."

In 1996, the State Board of Education adopted the Core Curriculum Content Standards. The standards serve as an academic blueprint of what New Jersey students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate from high school. At the same time the board adopted the content standards, they also adopted the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards in the following areas: career planning and workplace readiness skills; use of technology and other tools; use of critical thinking, decision-making and problem-solving skills; and applying safety principles. Rather than taught as distinct courses, the workplace readiness standards are woven into each school district's curriculum.

Educators interested in developing unique approaches to integrating the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards into their curricula may apply for the IDEAS program. A stipend of \$4,000 will be awarded to each winning submission; one winner will be selected from each county. Applicants must submit a brief description of their general curricular concept, its relevance to the integration of the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards into one or more academic content standards, its potential use by others, and proposed expenditures.

All applications for the IDEAS competition must be submitted by July 31, 2001. For an application or more information, contact the New Jersey Department of Education at 877-NJ-CAREER (877-652-2733) or visit the department's website:

www.state.nj.us/njded/cte/ideasprog.htm