



Christie Administration Celebrates National Teacher Appreciation Week by Recognizing and Applauding the Contribution of New Jersey's Educators

For Immediate Release

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Date: May 7, 2012

Trenton, NJ - The Christie Administration today kicked off National Teacher Appreciation Week with two new website features and a video address from Acting Commissioner Chris Cerf to celebrate and recognize the work of New Jersey's 130,000 educators. National Teacher Appreciation Week is an annual event that begins on May 7, 2012.

"Every day I am asked what the secret is to ensuring every child in New Jersey graduates from high school ready for college and career, and I always have one simple response - outstanding teachers," said Acting Commissioner Cerf. "I began my career as a high school history teacher, and I can honestly say that I never worked harder or felt more rewarded than I did during those four years. We as a state should make sure that we celebrate outstanding educators every day for their work with our children and for developing the next generation of leaders."

To kick off National Teacher Appreciation Week, the New Jersey Department of Education launched three new pages on its website.

- **Video address to New Jersey's teachers:** Acting Commissioner Cerf recorded a short video address to New Jersey's educators.

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- **Teacher Memory:** This is a new feature of the state's website where New Jersey residents can submit a memory of their favorite teacher, either past or present. These memories will be reflected on the Department's website to demonstrate the important contribution that teachers make in each of our lives, even many years later. <http://education.state.nj.us/feature/>
- **Teacher Spotlight:** Each month, the Department will feature a different outstanding New Jersey teacher to recognize and reward their contribution in the classroom. The first teacher to be featured in this series is New Jersey Teacher of the Year - Jeanne DeColle. <http://education.state.nj.us/feature/spotlight/12/05.php>

"The research is very clear that the quality of the teacher in front of the classroom is the most important in-school factor affecting student achievement," said Acting Commissioner Cerf. "That is why this administration has invested so heavily in making sure that we are able to recruit, retain, reward, and support outstanding educators that make a difference every day in our children's lives."

Among Governor Christie's education reforms, the Department of Education has launched the following initiatives over the past year to ensure that New Jersey has the best educators in the country and that those educators have the tools they need to be successful.

- **Teacher evaluation:** This year, the Department launched the first year of a pilot program to develop a more meaningful teacher evaluation system that will help all teachers, regardless of experience, constantly improve their practice. This new evaluation system will support teachers not only by providing more regular and consistent feedback, but also by tying professional development opportunities directly to their evaluation. Through the first two pilot years, this new system is being developed with the support of hundreds of educators on the ground across the state.
- **Model curriculum:** As educators across the state work to implement the new Common Core State Standards in math and English over the next two years, the Department of Education is in the process of developing a model curriculum that will serve as an optional resource to educators to help them turn the new standards into classroom instruction. This initiative is being led by the Department of Education with the support of current educators, and the first draft of this curriculum is currently posted on the Department's website. Through feedback from teachers, this model curriculum will be ready to launch by

September. <http://www.nj.gov/education/modelcurriculum/>

- **Data:** Through continued investment in the state's longitudinal data system, NJSMART, the Department continues its work to provide timely and actionable data to educators to help them succeed.