



Christie Administration Announces \$1.25M Investment in Teacher Leadership

For Immediate Release

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Date: October 21, 2014

Trenton, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Education has posted two new competitive grant opportunities to strengthen understanding of the state's key education initiatives and enable a number of outstanding educators to have a broader impact, Acting Commissioner of Education David Hespe announced today.

Of the total grant amount, \$1 million is to be allocated for districts to select groups of educators as "Achievement Coaches" who will earn stipends to expand their skills at an intensive summer institute and provide turn-key training to their peers. The remaining \$250,000 will be given to teams of district educators and administrators to design professional learning sessions related to teaching methods, standards alignment and evidence-based decision-making.

"We have so many outstanding educators in New Jersey," Acting Commissioner Hespe said. "This is our chance to expand their impact beyond their schools and classrooms. We know many districts are looking for more guidance to support evaluation and professional learning, and we believe we should invest in our educators to lead this work."

Since 2011, the state has piloted and implemented AchieveNJ, a new statewide educator evaluation and support system. Collaboration with educators has been a hallmark of this initiative from the beginning, from the pilot programs to state and local advisory committees to ongoing support and discussions in school districts. The grants announced today will put teachers at the center of a statewide effort to improve the quality of training, resources and feedback for teachers during their continued implementation of AchieveNJ.

"While I'm proud of the extensive support and guidance that our state team provides, it is critical to get educators more involved with designing and providing the guidance they feel is needed most," said Acting Commissioner Hespe. State officials will work with grant recipients to support the production of high-quality materials and to prepare the Achievement Coaches for these leadership roles.

"Listening to teachers and leaders across the state, we are hearing more specific feedback about additional supports that would help all educators," explained Peter Shulman, the state's Chief Talent Officer/Assistant Commissioner of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness. "The Achievement Coaches program is about so much more than evaluation – it is about empowering some of our best teachers and leaders to develop and deliver professional learning opportunities to help their peers reach the same high standards they've set for themselves."

Mark Mautone, the newly announced 2014-15 New Jersey Teacher of the Year and a member of the state's evaluation advisory committee, voiced his support for this effort. "These grants will provide an opportunity for educators to be recognized for their talents and encourage their educational leadership," he said. "Providing educators with compensation to participate in this initiative recognizes the value they will provide in the role. When opportunities are presented to educators to improve an essential part of the educational process, we need to engage in those opportunities to ensure that the process results in positive outcomes for educators and students."

More information is available on the [AchieveNJ website](#).