



NJDOE News

For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:

**Tom Rosenthal
Richard Vespucci
Jon Zlock
609-292-1126**

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DOE Releases [Character Education Report](#) *Key Component to Gov. McGreevey's 21-point Education Reform Plan*

The Department of Education (DOE) this week is proud to release the first-ever New Jersey Character Education Commission Report, approved by Governor James E. McGreevey and a key component of his Administration's 21-point education reform plan. The report, released Wednesday during a conference at the newly-established NJ Center for Character Education at Rutgers, outlines the future of character education in New Jersey.

"Character Education is a key component of Governor McGreevey's vision for the future of education in this state and it is an initiative the DOE wholeheartedly supports," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera. "As the Commission states in its thorough and well-researched report, Character Education in New Jersey should directly prepare our youth to lead better lives, guided by core values and ethical principles."

The central themes established by the Commission are support for and the impact of Character Education on students and school climate; parents' perspectives on Character Education; program support and continued funding; and using consultant organizations to implement Character Education programs.

The Commission organized the themes into five categories which will help guide the implementation of Character Education programs: promoting character education in families, schools and communities; developing school programs and curriculum; setting best practice standards; providing technical assistance, training and evaluation support; and maintaining state guidance and oversight.

New Jersey, which is the first state in the nation to provide state aid for implementing Character Education programs and services in schools, has seen important progress under the McGreevey Administration. Earlier this year, the New Jersey Center for Character Education was established at Rutgers University in Piscataway. More information about that program can be found here: <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/news/0211char.htm>.

Governor McGreevey established the New Jersey Character Education Commission — co-chaired by the Rev. Edwin Leahy of St. Benedict's Preparatory School, Dr. Moses William Howard of Bethany Baptist Church in Newark, Maud Dahme, State Board of Education President, and Dr. Clarence Hoover, superintendent of Vineland Public Schools — in February 2002.

The Character Education Center at Rutgers was key recommendation of the Commission, which released its report during the "Best Practices in Character Education: Creating Caring and Successful Schools" conference held there Wednesday, May 21.

At the Center, a total of 10 collaborating local education agency (LEA) partners will serve as the focus of intensive program development and evaluation efforts. The 10 LEAs, which represent the diversity of New Jersey schools, students and experiences with whole school reforms, will also serve as best practice demonstration sites.

The schools will additionally assist with professional development and dissemination activities as the Partnerships in Character Education project evolves.

Over the last year, the Commission collected information on best practices and other efforts from five different public hearings throughout the state. They then submitted their recommendations to Governor McGreevey in the form of the Character Education Report.

For more information about the Character Education program, please contact the DOE Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.