



NJDOE News

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State Board of Education Joins Vineland Students In Electronic Field Trip to Liberty Science Center

Increasing opportunities to spur student achievement was the subject of a demonstration highlighted at today's regular meeting of the State Board of Education. Members of the state board participated with students from the Johnstone School in Vineland, Cumberland County in a science lesson conducted by representatives from the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City, Hudson County. The event also showcased the distance learning partnership between New Jersey's 30 Abbott school districts and the Liberty Science Center.

"The Department of Education is engaged in a number of initiatives and partnerships designed to bring high quality instruction and distance learning to Abbott Districts," said Commissioner of Education David Hespe. "Our goal is that students in these 30 districts will have access to unlimited information and instructional resources, no matter where they are located, that will enable them to achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

"Today's event shows how videoconferencing technology supports standards-based instruction and shows how the department is acting to encourage the delivery of communication services to schools across the state," Commissioner Hespe said.

The Commissioner commended Bell Atlantic's Access New Jersey program for providing technical support and significant resources to New Jersey schools, and for making the demonstration possible. The program provides free distance learning classrooms to the Abbott school districts.

Students in Danielle Tramontana's fourth-grade class from the Johnstone School took part in a lesson from their classroom in Vineland that was taught in Jersey City by Mark Tronicke, field trip instructor, and Dr. Betty Faber, insect specialist, from the Liberty Science Center. The lesson focused on the life cycle of insects and their adaptations to the environment.

Dr. Jeffrey V. Osowski, assistant commissioner for the Department of Education's Division of Information and Management Services, noted that the state has supported an ongoing partnership between the science center and the Abbott districts.

"The Governor's budget for the past two years and for next year has included \$6 million so that Liberty Science Center could offer their services and resources to benefit the students specifically in the Abbott districts," Osowski said. "Benefits include family memberships, unlimited free passes, onsite and online field trips, and web-based resources."

The students from Vineland and the State Board of Education members participated in the 20-minute lesson by observing hissing cockroaches and cave cockroaches, and by asking questions related to their shape, behavior and habitat.

More information about the partnership between the Liberty Science Center, the Abbott school districts and Bell Atlantic's Access New Jersey program can be found by visiting the Department of Education's website:

<http://www.state.nj.us/education>