



NJDOE News

Contact: Richard Vespucci
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Commissioner Announces New Technology Initiative for School Administrators

Commissioner of Education David Hespe today announced a new initiative to help school superintendents and principals become informed leaders who can use technology in their daily tasks and who support and encourage teachers' use of technology to enhance student learning.

The three-year initiative, known as the New Jersey Educational Leadership Institutes for Technology in Education -- or NJ ELITE -- is a partnership venture conducted by the Department of Education with the New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA) and the New Jersey Principals' and Supervisors' Association (NJPSA). It will be funded by a \$5.1 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's State Leadership Development Plan. Bill Gates is the Chief Executive Officer of the Microsoft Corporation.

"Technology now plays a vital and essential role in how students learn in New Jersey," said Commissioner Hespe. "Our previous initiatives have focused on issues such as wiring schools to accommodate new technology, training teachers to use technology to help their students achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards, and to bridge the 'digital divide' between students who live in disadvantaged communities and their peers in other districts.

"Through NJ ELITE, we can focus on providing opportunities for all of New Jersey's school leaders to familiarize themselves with how technology can help them in their own careers and contribute to their students' success," Hespe said.

"New Jersey has supported systemic change and technology integration for some time," said Governor Christie Whitman. "We welcome this opportunity to extend professional development opportunities to our school leaders. More than 3,400 public and nonpublic principals and superintendents will benefit from NJ ELITE."

The program will begin next month with a pilot group of school leaders selected by the department along with the NJASA and NJPSA. The pilot group of invited superintendents and principals will participate in the first six-month stage of the program. During that time, they will be asked to participate in a maximum of seven institutes involving a specific topic in educational technology. The inaugural group will be asked to provide feedback and generally assist in shaping the NJ ELITE program for its remaining five stages.

The institutes will be offered at approximately 30 sites, including NJASA, NJPSA, the state's Educational Technology Training Centers (ETTCs) and various business-based locations. Additional partners will provide facilities and trainers for the institute sessions.

NJ ELITE will focus on developing skills and gaining knowledge to effectively integrate technology into the learning environment, while enhancing leadership skills to encourage data-driven decisions regarding instruction and management. For example, one of the institutes will address technology capacity in light of the recent school construction program, including planning, connectivity, high-speed access and equipment needs. Content will be provided by experts in facilities infrastructure.

Since NJ ELITE is a challenge grant, participants must pay a \$150 fee for each institute. However, the program will award a digital camera valued at \$1,000 to each participant who completes a minimum of three institutes and a seminar. In addition, each participant will be eligible for a drawing to win technology equipment valued at more than \$100,000.