



NJDOE News

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The Parents' Circle Videoconference Creates a Virtual Meeting of Parents with the Department of Education

Education Commissioner David Hespe is inviting parents to participate in a special videoconference on January 30 that will provide them with valuable information on how they can help their children meet the new Core Curriculum Content Standards. The Parents' Circle Videoconference will be held from 7 to 8:15 p.m. at multiple locations across the state. (List of sites attached)

"In recognition of our parents' essential role in their children's education," said Commissioner Hespe, "the Department of Education has developed a series of resources designed to guide parents as they help their children meet the state's standards.

"We began this outreach effort in November with the launching of a special parents' program on our web site called the Parents' Circle," the Commissioner added. "The Parents' Circle is designed to help parents understand the new initiatives being taken to assess student performance and raise standards."

The videoconference will provide parents with information about Families Achieving the New Standards (FANS) project in math, science, and technology and Gaining Achievement in the New Standards (GAINS) for the areas of world languages and language arts literacy. The FANS project and the GAINS project for language arts literacy are being developed by the Department of Education in collaboration with Rutgers University. The GAINS project for world languages is a partnership with Fairleigh Dickinson University.

At the videoconference, representatives from the universities will present useful information to parents on what these projects entail and how to gain access to the workshops and materials that are being developed to guide parents in understanding the standards and how to help their children achieve the standards.

"I fully recognize how busy parents are, which makes it difficult for the department to communicate as effectively as we would like," the Commissioner emphasized. "That is why we have taken measures such as this videoconference and the Parents' Circle to give parents the opportunity to have direct access to information that affects their children's lives."

"We need to enlist parents as full participants in their children's education," said Commissioner Hespe. "Parents need to understand that standards are not important in the abstract, they are important because they guide parents and educators in knowing what knowledge and skills to teach our children to help them succeed in school and in life."

Another resource to be featured at the videoconference is the New Jersey Professional Education Port (NJPEP) web site that implements Governor Whitman's vision for a virtual academy that she called for in her 2000 State-of-the-State address. A major goal of this exciting professional development site is to inform the entire education community, as well as parents, about the content and implementation of the Core Curriculum Content Standards and their related statewide assessments.

One portion of NJPEP to be further explained at the videoconference is the tutorial developed for the department entitled *Interpreting Test Results*. This tutorial will help educators and parents understand student performance on the state assessments at grades 4, 8, and 11 and use information gleaned from the tests to improve student achievement.

For the most up-to-date list of locations for the videoconference, access the Parents' Circle at www.state.nj.us/njded/parents and click on the videoconference icon.

Attachment: [List of sites to date with contact persons for the Parents' Circle Videoconference.](#)