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Commissioner Gagliardi Announces Summer Conference on Character Education

Commissioner of Education Vito A. Gagliardi today announced that the Department of Education is co-sponsoring a summer character education conference with the School of Education at Fairleigh Dickinson University. The conference, entitled *Summer Institute II - Social Emotional Learning: Research Validated Models for Character Education*, will be held from August 21 through August 23 at Fairleigh Dickinson's Florham-Madison campus.

"Character education should be integrated into all aspects of every school's curriculum, culture and climate," Commissioner Gagliardi said. "This institute will provide school district staff with valuable guidance, materials and instruction to continue their commitment to develop good character in students and staff. I encourage all schools to take advantage of this opportunity for technical assistance and training."

Administrators, educators, counselors and character education coordinators who participate in the three-day institute will receive specific training in a variety of New Jersey Character Education Programs of Merit that have been found to be well-researched and effective. Each participant who completes the institute will receive a certificate confirming professional development hours.

School districts have the option of sending a team of educators to receive in-depth training in one model; or they may send individual team members for training in different models, if they have not yet selected a character education program.

The conference registration deadline is July 10, 2001. For more information about the summer conference, contact Pat Cantelmo, School of Education, Fairleigh Dickinson University, 201-692-2631.

Completing its first year, the New Jersey Character Education Partnership is designed to help public school educators adopt high quality character education programs that will meet the developmental needs of students by promoting pro-social student behaviors and creating a caring, disciplined school climate conducive to learning.

The state committed \$4.75 million to fund the first year of the program, with 99 percent of New Jersey public school districts and approved charter schools participating in the voluntary initiative. The Governor's budget for 2001-02 includes \$4.75 million for second year expansion of programs.