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Contact: Peter Peretzman
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Commissioner of Education Distributes Incentive Payments and Laptop Computers to Preschool Teachers under "Teach New Jersey Reach the World Program"

Commissioner of Education Vito A. Gagliardi, Sr. today marked the successful implementation of the "Teach New Jersey Reach the World" initiative by presenting cash incentives and laptop computers to 12 preschool teachers. This week the Department of Education began distributing incentives to the first round of teachers who qualified for the program. "Teach New Jersey Reach the World" is a special program established by Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco in order to attract high quality individuals to teach preschool in New Jersey's thirty special needs districts.

During the week's activities eligible teachers received half of the year-one cash incentive, either \$1750 for those with a Grade Point Average ranging from 2.75—2.99 or \$3000 for those with a GPA over 3.0. Since the program was established by Acting Governor DiFrancesco earlier this year, 158 teachers have been deemed to be eligible for the rewards. The department is currently reviewing 85 additional applications for eligibility and the department continues to receive applications on a daily basis.

"I am very pleased that 'Teach New Jersey Reach the World' has attracted so many talented individuals to teach in our Abbott preschool programs," said Commissioner Gagliardi. "We have created a high quality preschool program in the Abbott districts. This initiative has helped ensure that we have high-quality preschool teachers preparing our youngest children for success in Kindergarten."

Each candidate for the program must have a BA degree with a liberal arts or pure science major. In addition, candidates must not be currently teaching in a New Jersey public school or a community preschool program under contract with an Abbott district, must not have taught in a NJ public school for at least two years, not be on official leave from a NJ public school district, or not have any official status with a New Jersey public school district. All candidates must have a minimum GPA of 2.75 in a completed undergraduate, post-baccalaureate or graduate degree program, hold one of the following teaching certificates and meet the requirements listed:

1. Preschool through Grade 3 (P-3) certificate

- Certificate of eligibility (CE)
- Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS)
- Standard Certificate

2. New Jersey Nursery School Certificate

3. New Jersey Elementary School Certificate

- Must have completed at least 2 years of full time teaching in a preschool setting under a valid state certificate.

Teachers who qualify for a first year incentive and continue to teach in an Abbott district or community program are eligible for non-cash incentives in years two, three and four of the program. These incentives include either student loan forgiveness and/or tuition coupons for graduate studies in education at a New Jersey college or university.