



## **NJDOE News**

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**For Release: July 22, 2002**

### **[Second Annual Report Released For Interdistrict Public School Choice Program](#)**

A trial program permitting interdistrict public school choice in New Jersey is benefiting students, schools and communities where it has been implemented, according to the second annual report for the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program.

The recently released report summarizes the first two years of the program and, as required by law, includes recommendations that the program be continued and modified. The Legislature adopted the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program Act of 1999 to give public school students and their families a way to attend public school in a community other than the one in which they live, free of charge.

The pilot was launched in 2000-01 by 10 districts. Thirteen school districts are expected to participate in the program in the 2002-03 school year. The pilot program will expire in June 2005 unless reauthorized by the Legislature.

"The school choice program has been effective in increasing educational opportunities for students and parents in the communities surrounding choice districts," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera. "Overall, the program has been successful and there is increasing interest statewide in expanding the program.

"While the school choice program has given some students and parents a public school choice, there are many more that would like to have a similar choice," Commissioner Librera said.

Student participants doubled in the second year of the Interdistrict Public School Choice Pilot Program to 189, up from 94 students in the first year. The Department of Education expects another 206 students to join the program this year, for a total of 489 participating students.

School districts participating in the school choice program report that participation in the program has helped them to improve or increase program offerings, reduce class size, lower the lower property tax burden, hire teachers and purchase technology equipment.

The Joint Committee on the Public Schools is required by statute to commission an independent study of the first two years of the school choice program and then issue a report based on the study and the Commissioner's annual reports. The Joint Committee's report, scheduled to be issued in January 2003, is expected to contain recommendations on the future of the school choice program.

NOTE: To access the report on the Department of Education's Web site, use the following link:

**[www.state.nj.us/education](http://www.state.nj.us/education)**