



NJDOE News

For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:

Jon Zlock
Kathryn Forsyth, Director
609-292-1126

For Release: May 19, 2006

DOE to Kick-off National Governors Association "Reading to Achieve" Initiative

A new advisory panel that focuses on improving adolescent literacy in New Jersey will meet this Monday to begin designing a program for students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.

The work is funded by a \$50,000 National Governors Association (NGA) Reading to Achieve grant.

"This grant helps us address a nationwide concern," said Lucille E. Davy, acting Commissioner of the Department of Education. "We need our children to be better readers. In New Jersey, this means we will extend our existing efforts from pre-K to elementary schools into our middle and high schools. We want our students focused on reading from the time they start school to the time they graduate."

The advisory group has four goals:

- Address growing literacy concerns by creating research-based reading practices and programs for all grade levels;
- Communicate these efforts to both the general public and the state's education community;
- Coordinate reading services within the department; and
- Establish a Web site that will emphasize best practices, include training and research, and serve as a resource for school districts statewide.

The advisory panel will begin their work by looking at opportunities to expand the Literacy is Essential to Adolescent Development and Success (LEADS) program, a middle school literacy pilot effort the DOE began last year. Key components of the LEADS program include ensuring classroom libraries carry a minimum of 300 titles, assigning students daily writing assignments and oral presentations, requiring an uninterrupted reading block of 120 to 160 minutes per day, and emphasizing small group instruction.

Acting Commissioner Davy, Special Assistant to the Commissioner for Literacy Fred Carrigg, acting Assistant Commissioner for Educational Programs and Assessment Dr. Jay Doolan, and Assemblywoman Nellie Pou are among those who make up the 16-member panel.

For more information, please contact the Department of Education Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.