



NJDOE News

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New Jersey Wins Federal Grant for Character Education

New Jersey has won a \$2,780,939 federal grant to make existing school-based efforts to promote character education available to a broader group of students. The state will use the first year grant amount of \$641,000 to strengthen its existing partnerships with institutions and agencies that share the commitment of teaching the principles of character development and the responsibilities of citizenship.

"We competed in a field of nearly 230 applicants for our grant," said acting Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy. "New Jersey's grant award was the largest of the 35 awards made this year by the United States Department of Education for character education."

Character education is a term applied to teaching students core ethical concepts such as civics, citizenship, justice, responsibility and respect.

New Jersey's involvement in character education programs began more than 15 years ago, when a statewide advisory committee was formed to identify positive character traits that should be taught to all students. Subsequent efforts and partnerships resulted in character education program offerings in all of New Jersey's school districts.

The grant funds will be used to incorporate character education more fully into curriculum standards and student services by:

- Increasing the capacity of New Jersey schools to implement and sustain character education programs; and
- Evaluating the impact of character education by including students with disabilities, a population of students that previous efforts have not addressed adequately in New Jersey or elsewhere in the nation.

New Jersey will implement these new features with a group of national and statewide partners, including its primary partner, the New Jersey Center for Character Education at the Rutgers Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, along with the Community of Caring Project at the University of Utah, the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning at the Rutgers University in cooperation with the University of Illinois at Chicago, the Character Education Partnership in Washington, D.C., and program evaluators from Fordham University.

Since 1994, a total of 136 state and local education agencies have received federal character education grants. This year's total award was for \$15.5 million. To learn more about character education programs in New Jersey, click on the following link:

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/chared/>