



Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday break with friends and family.

The Bergen County Academies was recently designated a “Model School in the Arts” by the New Jersey Arts Education Partnership. The schools selected for this honor scored in the top 10% of schools that provide education in all four arts disciplines: Dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.

A census was conducted in New Jersey during the 2005-2006 school year to determine the quality of arts education throughout the state. The census looked at resources such as access to art classes for elementary students and availability of dance and music education. The results of that report, *Within Our Power: The Progress, Plight and Promise of Arts Education for Every Child*, found that more than 75,000 students had no access to arts education, and 17% of high schools did not offer the minimum five-credit graduation requirement set by the state. On the positive side, New Jersey’s standards for Visual and Performing Arts were among the best in the country, and most students had access to music and the visual arts. The research also showed that connections between schools and community cultural resources provided promising opportunities for students. The report included a recommendation to analyze and research schools that scored in the highest percentage, and use those findings to mentor schools needing arts education improvement.

As a “Model School in the Arts,” the Academies will serve as a mentor to other schools. Small research teams will visit model schools in February and March, evaluating certain criteria and providing feedback to the participating schools on areas of strength as well as needed improvements. In June, BCA and the other NJ model schools will be recognized at the 2014 Governor’s Awards for Arts Education. This event will also mark the start of their participation in the mentoring process, which will include welcoming representatives from other school districts to visit and observe, as well as attending and presenting at state meetings and conferences.

This designation is a great honor, and speaks to the dedication and hard work of our distinguished faculty. We are justly proud of their accomplishments and committed to providing high-quality arts education to all students in the Bergen County Technical Schools district.

Sincerely,

Howard Lerner, Ed.D.