

\$4M in grants benefit teachers of math, science

N.J. colleges to host training courses

By **KATHLEEN CARROLL**
STAFF WRITER

Some 350 New Jersey math and science teachers will sharpen their skills at the state's universities this school year, thanks to \$4 million in federal grants aimed at preparing students for high-tech jobs, officials said Tuesday.

That's the second local cash infusion in recent months aimed at improving math and science teaching, as policymakers and advocates work to improve the quality of the nation's future labor pool.

Some \$1.3 million will go to Montclair State and William Paterson universities, which will offer summer programs and course work for elementary and middle school teachers throughout the year. In May, Montclair State announced it had received \$11 million in grants for similar training initiatives, from federal and state agencies and a private foundation.

The new programs, funded by the federal Education Department, will update teachers' expertise and train them in new ways to use

technology in the classroom. Other grantees include Rutgers University, Stevens Institute of Technology, Stockton College and Rowan University.

Such programs are poised to grow as lawmakers work to insulate the United States from losing jobs to foreign competition.

Last week, Congress approved a package of bills dubbed "competitiveness" legislation, which would create task forces to identify and fund high-quality math study, establish grants for math and science majors who agree to teach in struggling schools and improve teacher recruitment and training. President Bush, who created a separate math advisory panel last year, is expected to sign the bills into law.

New Jersey and the nation suffer from persistent teacher shortages in math and science subjects, and three out of four fourth-grade math and science teachers have no special training in those subjects, according to the federal Education Department.

"The evidence is clear that

young people who are proficient in mathematics and science are in greater demand than ever," state Education Commissioner Lucille Davy said. "Their future success as well as their contribution to the success of New Jersey's economy will be largely dependent on how much they learn, and how well they are taught."

Where the funds are put to work

■ **Elementary Creative University School Partnerships: \$2.4 million state grant**

Gives elementary school teachers expert training by Montclair State University researchers, in summer workshops and special sessions throughout the school year.

■ **National Science Foundation's Graduate Teaching Fellows: \$2.8 million federal grant**

Brings Montclair State University graduate students into classrooms to act as resident scientists and mathematicians and introduce hands-on lessons for English language learners.

■ **Prudential Teaching Fellows: \$1.6 million grant from the foundation of Prudential Financial**

Recruits and mentors 15 math and science majors each year to become teachers in the Newark public schools, in exchange for free tuition and special training.



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