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## Delivering On The Promise

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Tags: [Budget and Spending](#)

*Bringing Performance Pay For Newark Teachers Marks Yet Another Milestone In Governor Christie's Effort To Deliver On The Promise Of A High-Quality Education For Every New Jersey Student*

*"Let's replace despair with hope in every classroom in New Jersey. Because I believe it is obscene to be satisfied. When the chance for a life filled with hope and opportunity is determined not by how hard you are willing to work but by where you happen to live. Not by your intelligence, but by your zip code."*  
 – Governor Chris Christie, State Of The State Address, January 17, 2012

### HISTORIC SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION

**Historic State Funding For Schools.** For the third year in a row, Governor Christie is increasing state spending for education. The Governor's proposed increase of \$97.3 million would bring total state aid to schools to nearly **\$9 billion**, marking the third year in a row of setting a historic high. No school district will receive less K-12 formula aid than the amount provided in fiscal year 2013.

**Funding For Opportunity Scholarship Demonstration Grants.** Acting on his belief that every New Jersey child deserves a high quality education regardless of zip code, Governor Christie is providing **\$2 million** in scholarship grants to allow children in chronically failing schools to attend out-of-district public schools or nonpublic schools.

**The Education Innovation Fund.** As part of Governor Christie's commitment to creating high quality school options for all students, the budget provides **\$5 million** for an Education Innovation Fund to help schools and educators implement new and innovative instructional models including the use of new teaching technology and online resources.

**An Increase In Funding For Tuition Aid Grants.** Governor Christie is increasing assistance for the neediest college students through Tuition Aid Grants. After increasing funding by \$31.5 million last year, the fiscal year 2014 budget proposes an additional **\$17 million** for nearly \$353 million in total funding.

**Funding For Independent Colleges.** Acting on his commitment to New Jersey's higher education system, Governor Christie's budget proposal provides **\$1 million** to independent colleges and universities.

### WORKING WITH ALL INVESTED PARTIES ON COMMON-SENSE SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE NEW JERSEY'S SCHOOLS

#### Working With Teachers To Bring Performance-Based Pay To Newark Schools:

For the first time in New Jersey history, teachers in Newark will earn raises and be eligible for additional bonuses based on annual performance evaluations that include measuring the progress being made by their students. This new contract will enable Newark to retain and reward the best teachers and improve the quality of education for their students:

Teachers will receive annual performance evaluations rating them as "Highly Effective," "Effective," "Partially Effective" or "Ineffective."

Teachers who earn a rating of "effective" or "highly effective" will qualify for annual raises while teachers who receive a less-than-satisfactory evaluation will remain frozen at their current salary level.

The best performing teachers will also be eligible to earn bonuses based on performance and need:

Up to \$5,000 for receiving a "Highly Effective" rating on their annual evaluation;

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Up to an additional \$5,000 for receiving a "Highly Effective" rating while working in one of the districts lowest performing schools;

Up to an additional \$2,500 bonus a "Highly Effective" rating while working in a hard-to-staff subject;

These awards are cumulative, meaning that a "Highly Effective" teacher, working in a hard-to-staff subject field at one of the districts lowest performing schools can earn a bonus of up to \$12,500.

#### **Historic Bipartisan Changes To The Nation's Oldest Tenure Law:**

Marking the first extensive reform of New Jersey's tenure law in over 100 years, Governor Christie signed into law the Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey (TEACHNJ) Act, a sweeping, bipartisan overhaul of the oldest tenure law in the nation. The legislation:

Transforms the existing tenure system to now provide powerful tools to identify effective and ineffective teachers;

Strengthens the supports available to help all teachers improve their craft;

For the first time, ties the acquisition, maintenance, and loss of tenure to a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom;

Dramatically reduces the time and cost it takes to remove educators who are repeatedly ineffective in improving student outcomes.

The law was the result of nearly two years of consistent and vocal advocacy for real education reform by Governor Christie and good faith, bipartisan cooperation with members of the legislature, education reform advocates, and stakeholder groups.

#### **One Billion Dollars In Education Funding Increases Over Two Years:**

Governor Christie's fiscal year 2013 budget represents a commitment to provide both the resources and reforms to deliver opportunity to every New Jersey child with \$200 million in increased education aid and a bold reform agenda for education in New Jersey.

In fiscal year 2012, Governor Christie increased education spending by \$855 million;

In fiscal year 2013, Governor Christie increased his commitment to New Jersey schools and students by providing an additional \$200 million; and

Under Governor Christie, State aid to education will have been increased by more than \$1 billion since fiscal year 2011, with State education aid totaling \$8.9 billion in the fiscal year 2013 budget.

This is the largest appropriation of State funding for education in New Jersey history.

#### **FOCUSING ON STUDENTS STUCK IN FAILING SCHOOLS**

Putting the opportunity of a quality education within every child's reach, no matter where they live or their economic circumstances is an issue of vital importance to the future of the state and the country as a whole. Governor Christie has worked to improve the quality of urban education through key reforms.

#### **Focusing On The Lowest Performing Schools:**

The Christie Administration has undertaken bold reform to turn around the state's persistently failing schools. As one of the first states in the country to receive flexibility from No Child Left Behind, the Department of Education is recognizing high performing "Reward" schools and shifting significant resources and support to "Priority" and "Focus" schools, those schools that are the lowest performing in the state or that have significant achievement gaps. The Department is providing the day-to-day support of dozens of expert educators through Regional Achievement Centers to help these schools improve.

**Priority Schools:** A Priority school is a school that has been identified as among the lowest-performing schools in the state over the past three years. There are 75 Priority Schools. Priority schools in this category have an overall three-year proficiency rate of 31.6% or lower.

**Focus Schools:** A Focus School is a school that has room for improvement in areas that are specific to the school. As part of the process, Focus Schools will receive targeted and tailored solutions to meet the school's unique needs. There are 183 Focus schools.

#### **The Urban Hope Act:**

The Urban Hope Act is designed to expand the education options available for children and parents who are trapped in some of New Jersey's school districts with the largest achievement gaps.

The bill authorizes the conversion of failing schools into renaissance schools in three of our highest needs districts: Camden, Trenton, and Newark.

Districts are able to partner with one or more nonprofits to construct as many as four "renaissance schools" in each district.

Each nonprofit must have a proven track record of operating quality schools in low-achieving districts and commit to both building the new school's facilities as well as offering a rigorous academic program designed to prepare every student for college, career, and beyond.

Renaissance schools will be subject to the same standards as any other public school and will be evaluated annually by the Department of Education to determine whether they are meeting their goals and improving student achievement.

The nonprofits must have experience operating schools in low-achieving districts and commit to both building a new school and offering a rigorous academic program designed to prepare every student for college, career, and beyond.

#### **Expanding Educational Opportunities For Children And Families:**

Governor Christie has improved the authorizing and application process, encouraged more charter school applicants, created greater flexibility with administration and finances, and allowed districts to convert failing public schools into charters. The Christie Administration has increased the overall number of charter schools in New Jersey to 86, while relentlessly focusing on quality and holding all schools accountable for results by closing 5 low-performing charter schools.

The Christie Administration approved the expansion of several of the state's highest performing charter schools.

TEAM Academy, a network of KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) schools in Newark, will add a new elementary school campus, ultimately serving 500 additional students.

North Star Academy, also in Newark, will continue to grow current schools and plans to add a new elementary and middle school campus, ultimately serving 590 new students.

According to an independent report by The Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO), "Compared to the educational gains that charter students would have had in a traditional public school (TPS), the analysis shows that students in New Jersey charter schools on average make larger learning gains in both reading and mathematics:

**In Newark:** "When we investigate the learning impacts of Newark charter schools separately, we find that their results are larger in reading and math than the overall state results."

"On average, charter students in New Jersey gain an additional two months of learning in reading over their TPS counterparts. In math, the advantage for charter students is about three months of additional learning in one school year. Charter students in Newark gain an additional seven and a half months in reading and nine months in math."

**Among Black Students:** "Black students enrolled in charter schools show significantly better performance in reading and math compared to Black students in TPS."

**Among Hispanic Students:** "In both math and reading, Hispanic students in charter schools perform significantly better than Hispanic students in TPS."

Since taking office, state funding to support the local share of funding for students transferring out-of-district to approved school choice districts has increased by \$13,292,000.

Announced pilot educational program between Harlem Children's Zone and City of Paterson.

#### **Inter-District School Choice Program:**

The Interdistrict School Choice Program was permanently signed into law by Governor Christie in September 2010 and fully implemented beginning with the 2011-12 school year. The program is designed to increase educational opportunities for students and their families by providing students with the option of attending a public school outside their district of residence without cost to their parents.

This school choice program enables students to choose to go to a school outside their district of residence if the selected school is participating in the choice program.

Transportation of up to 20 miles will be provided to a student going to a choice school if the student meets the eligibility requirements of state law and the transportation will cost no more than \$884.

If the cost of the transportation will exceed that amount, the parent will be given the opportunity to pay the additional amount, or may choose to receive \$884 as aid in lieu of transportation.

*Enrollment has tripled in the past three years to 3,357 students in 2012-13, and it is anticipated to grow to more than 6,000 in 2013-14.*

#### **Putting The Right People In Charge:**

*Commissioner of Education Christopher Cerf:*

Governor Christie nominated Chris Cerf as Commissioner of Education in December 2010. He was formally sworn in on July 31, 2012 after serving as acting commissioner since January 18, 2011. As Commissioner, Cerf oversees 2,500 public schools, 1.4 million students, and 110,000 teachers in over 600 school districts.

Focused on closing New Jersey's academic achievement gap while substantially raising the achievement level of all New Jersey students, Commissioner Cerf is working to make New Jersey's education system, already one of the best-performing systems in the country, into one focused on accelerating student learning, expanding quality choice offerings, and preparing students for college and careers.

*Newark Superintendent Cami Anderson:*

Taking action on his commitment to implement bold education reforms in Newark and across New Jersey that put results for children first, Governor Chris Christie named Cami Anderson superintendent of the Newark Public Schools

in May 2011. Prior to working in Newark, Anderson served as the superintendent of Alternative High Schools and Programming for the New York City Department of Education.

Under Anderson's leadership, New York City DoE completely overhauled its alternative GED program and launched several new initiatives aimed at helping overage but under credited teens and adults earn their diploma.

Anderson was also instrumental in shutting down a program in the city's schools that removed pregnant students from the classroom and hindered their education.

Anderson's efforts to help at-risk students stay in the classroom were major contributors to New York City's rising graduation rates and declining drop-out rates of the past five years.

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**Press Contact:**  
Michael Drewniak  
Kevin Roberts  
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-6000