

Governor Phil Murphy

photo: view of NJ Trenton DOM

# Governor Murphy Signs Executive Order Establishing Task Force to Help Address Public School Staff Shortages Across New Jersey

11/10/2022

**TRENTON** – With the ongoing national shortage of school staff impacting school districts across New Jersey, Governor Phil Murphy announced at the annual New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) Convention today that he has signed an executive order establishing a task force to help the State address the challenges facing our educational workforce. The Task Force on Public School Staff Shortages in New Jersey created under Executive Order No. 309 will develop short and long-term recommendations to increase the quantity of K-12 school staff – including teachers and support staff – in the State.

In addition to providing the aforementioned recommendations, the task force will also explore best practices and innovative ways to recruit and retain school staff. The task force will also identify best practices and resources to increase the pipeline of teachers and educational support candidates.

The task force will be established within the Office of the Governor and will be comprised of no more than 25 members, including the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Education, school administrators, including superintendents that represent a separate and distinct sector of the diverse student population across New Jersey, school board representatives, as well as representatives from various education-related associations, and members appointed upon the recommendation of legislative leaders. The task force will be chaired by the Chief Policy Advisor to the Governor.

"As one of the highest-rated states in the nation for public K-12 education, New Jersey prides ourselves on the quality of education we provide our children," said **Governor Murphy**. "Unfortunately, our state is no exception to the national teacher shortage currently straining our education system. With a critical need for learning recovery and acceleration as well as mental health support for our students, teachers and other school staff are more essential than ever. This task force will help us better understand how we can address ongoing shortages in our state in order to grow this critical workforce on behalf of New Jersey's students."

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is reporting a 25 percent decrease in the number of teaching certifications being issued today compared to those being issued a decade ago. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing shortages, especially in high-demand areas (https://urldefense.com/v3/\_https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F2Furldefense.com%2Fv3%2F\_https%3A%2F2Ft.e2ma.net%2Fclick%2Fbq0gji%2Ffpmwuu%2F20c4x0\_\*3B!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAlMYP75sV19bTJH7u7gOsekTAPbz2NcCoZwFvW4N0PQXM7ZaYw9f0p4\*24&data=05\*7C01\*7Cmichael.yaple\*40doe.nj.gov\*7C6e22b6ba01fe472deb4108dac363dbdd\*7C4b4f7312dd094959b666d5b6dc8f4b4\*7C0\*7C0c38037130920169000\*7CUnknown\*7CTWfPbGZsb38b0). As special education, science, math, and bilingual education.

Factors (https://urldefense.com/v3/\_https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F2Furldefense.com%2Fv3%2F\_https%3A%2F2Ft.e2ma.net%2Fclick%2Fbq0gji%2Ffpmwuu%2F2fd4x0\_\*3B!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAlMYP75sV19bTJH7u7gOsekTAPbz2NcCoZwFvW4N0PQXM7ZaYw9f0p4\*24&data=05\*7C01\*7Cmichael.yaple\*40doe.nj.gov\*7C6e22b6ba01fe472deb4108dac363dbdd\*7C4b4f7312dd094959b666d5b6dc8f4b4\*7C0\*7C0c38037130920169000\*7CUnknown\*7CTWfPbGZsb38b0) to the widespread shortage of school staff include inadequate compensation, increased retirements during the COVID-19 pandemic, a lack of respect for the profession, and a dwindling pool of qualified candidates.

"I applaud Governor Murphy for establishing a task force to address the critical school staff shortage our school districts are facing," said **Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. "This task force will collaborate on methods to restore stability to the teaching profession and ensure students receive the quality education they deserve."

This executive order is another step in the Murphy Administration's ongoing efforts to ensure New Jersey children receive a high-quality education. Those efforts include increasing the school funding formula by more than \$1.8 billion since 2018 and expanding access to pre-K.

As per legislation (https://urldefense.com/v3/\_https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F2Furldefense.com%2Fv3%2F\_https%3A%2F2Ft.e2ma.net%2Fclick%2Fbq0gji%2Ffpmwuu%2F2f4e4x0\_\*3B!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAlMYP75sV19bTJH7u7gOsekTAPbz2NcCoZwFvW4N0PQXM7ZaYw9f0p4\*24&data=05\*7C01\*7Cmichael.yaple\*40doe.nj.gov\*7C6e22b6ba01fe472deb4108dac363dbdd\*7C4b4f7312dd094959b666d5b6dc8f4b4\*7C0\*7C0c38037130920169000\*7CUnknown\*7CTWfPbGZsb38b0) Governor signed earlier this year, NJDOE is currently in the process of creating a comprehensive report on the number of vacant, new, and eliminated teaching positions, the anticipated number of upcoming retirements, and the reasons why teachers are leaving their jobs in order to help officials understand the current state of New Jersey's teaching field.

The Governor also met with First Lady Dr. Jill Biden and other members of the Biden-Harris Administration in August this year to discuss the national teacher shortage and ways to address it. Governor Murphy understands that supportive, adequately-staffed classrooms are important to improving both educator and youth mental health – which is the focus of his Chairman's Initiative for the National Governor's Association.

"We are pleased that Gov. Murphy is convening this critical task force," said **NJEA President Sean M. Spiller**. "The teacher and staff shortage is real and it's affecting students, including many of the most vulnerable, who are not receiving the full support they need and deserve. This task force will bring together experts, including classroom-level practitioners who experience this challenge every day and are committed to overcoming it. We look forward to working with our fellow public education advocates to propose serious, achievable solutions that will address the problem immediately and strengthen our public schools for years to come."

The Task Force on Public School Staff Shortages in New Jersey will have until January 31, 2023 to provide their initial recommendations to the Governor.

For a copy of Executive Order No. 309, click here (https://urldefense.com/v3/\_https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F2Furldefense.com%2Fv3%2F\_https%3A%2F2Ft.e2ma.net%2Fclick%2Fbq0gji%2Ffpmwuu%2F2bef4x0\_\*3B!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAlMYP75sV19bTJH7u7gOsekTAPbz2NcCoZwFvW4N0PQXM7ZaYw9f0p4\*24&data=05\*7C01\*7Cmichael.yaple\*40doe.nj.gov\*7C6e22b6ba01fe472deb4108dac363dbdd\*7C4b4f7312dd094959b666d5b6dc8f4b4\*7C0\*7C0c38037130920169000\*7CUnknown\*7CTWfPbGZsb38b0).

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