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Report Highlights Importance of Nonpublic Schools; Governor Cites Reference to Opportunity Scholarship Act

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Tags: [Education](#)

Trenton, NJ - The Governor's Study Commission on New Jersey's Nonpublic Schools, in a report released today by the Christie Administration, pointed out that nonpublic schools save New Jersey residents more than \$2.7 billion annually in operating costs while providing parents and students with expanded educational options for their children.

"I would like to thank Assemblyman Schaer and the Commission for its hard work, and I will take its recommendations under consideration," said Gov. Chris Christie. "The section of the report supporting tax credits for scholarship programs is especially important. Many states provide such tax credits, and we support providing them here in New Jersey, as well. They would immediately expand the scholarship assistance available to poor and working families, and with it the educational opportunities available to their children."

The Study Commission report states that nonpublic schools provide choice and opportunity for more than 160,000 students in New Jersey, and it shows that there are also important economic reasons to keep private schools strong.

In the five years between 2004 and 2009, the financial stresses affecting New Jersey's families caused enrollment in privately managed schools to decline by 29,810. Most of these students entered the public education system, and the report calculates that this is now costing taxpayers more than \$430 million a year in increased public school expenses. It would be far cheaper for taxpayers to provide scholarship assistance to working families so they could once again consider private school options for their children.

Education Commissioner Bret Schundler welcomed the "creative suggestions" offered by the Commission, which was established under former Governor Jon Corzine in December 2009. "The report highlights the fact that a few thousand dollars of financial assistance can make it possible for a child to attend a privately managed school, and save taxpayers three to five times as much in public education costs," said Schundler.

To help keep privately managed schools affordable for families, the report recommends that the state increase funding for the transportation assistance it provides them, by raising it in line with inflation. The report also recommends an increase in support for nursing services for privately managed schools. Support should also be provided, the report argues, for technology and special education classes.

A failure to keep private sector schools affordable will cause more school failures, dramatically increase the cost of our public education sector, push up taxes and - the report concludes - further strain the already "perilous state of our economy."

To view the report, go to http://nj.gov/governor/news/reports/pdf/20100720_np_schools.pdf

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