



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

### NEWS RELEASE

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### **GOV. CHRISTIE WHITMAN OPENS EDUCATION SUMMIT; MEETING TO DEVELOP PLANS FOR EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HELPING STUDENTS ACQUIRE WORKPLACE SKILLS**

Stating that parents, business and each and every citizen of New Jersey have a responsibility for ensuring that children become productive and responsible citizens, Gov. Christie Whitman today opened the second New Jersey Education Summit. The Summit's goal is to develop plans for implementing the state's new educational standards which will provide students with the skills they need to make the transition from school to the workplace.

"As employers -- and as parents -- you know that learning is truly everyone's business," Whitman said. "Each of us has a stake, and a responsibility, in making sure that all of our children become productive citizens, responsible members of their communities, and contributing members of our economy. New Jersey's future, quite literally, depends on it."

The Education Summit brought together teams of educators, parents, students and community representatives from a cross-section of 25 school districts in New Jersey in a partnership with business executives to develop plans for implementing the state's new Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards. The standards, which are part of the state's new academic standards, are the first step in assuring that students have the skills they need to become productive members of tomorrow's workforce.

"This is the exactly the sort of partnership that we need to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world," Whitman said.

"We've established rigorous academic standards for every classroom in the state," she said, "because we want to make sure our students are prepared to fill the jobs New Jersey companies will be creating in the years ahead."

Whitman pointed out that the workforce readiness standards have already been adopted by the State Board of Education and embraced by business leaders who are committed to implementing them.

Since the first Education Summit, 50 business executives and their firms have formed the Business Coalition for Educational Excellence with a goal of improving business education, Whitman said.

Gov. Whitman noted that substantial progress has also been made in achieving universal access to technology resources in all New Jersey schools, with Educational Technology Training Centers operating in all 21 counties as a result of legislation she signed last year.

In addition, the Governor said, Tech Corps New Jersey --- a consortium sponsored by the State Chamber of Commerce, Prudential, KMPG/Peat Marwick, and Bell Atlantic -- is providing schools with a wide variety of technology support and is contributing to the success of the Educational Technology Training Centers.

Moreover, Whitman said, in September she signed legislation creating a \$50 million fund to help the state's colleges and universities improve and expand their own technology infrastructure.

"Beginning this school year, we've made available some \$250 million for distance learning network aid. Over the next five years, this aid will help create a statewide learning network," the Governor said. "Once that network's in place, our students from Sparta to Cape May will be able to share in the many unique resources our schools have to offer."

"I set the goal of bringing high technology to every classroom in the state by the time school opens in the year 2001 -- and we are going to reach that goal," she added.

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