

The Christie Education Record

Governor Christie's Strong Education Reforms Are Ensuring Access To A Quality Education For Every Child

Today, Governor Chris Christie visited the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark to highlight his administration's strong record on improving urban education. The Governor has been committed to providing urban students with opportunities for a better education and future, setting annual records in funding for public schools.

Governor Christie has changed the education narrative in New Jersey by being a vocal leader for school choice and charter school programs. By creating and expanding those investments, the Christie Administration has provided more seats in better classrooms for students who happen to live within chronically failing school districts.

HISTORIC PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING

Setting The Record For Investing In Education Over Seven Years:

For the seventh consecutive year, Governor Christie's most-recent budget ensures the highest amount of school aid supporting Pre-K through Grade 12 public education in New Jersey history. The Fiscal Year 2018 budget, which included a historic contribution of the lottery enterprise to support the State's pension systems, provides nearly **\$14 billion** for education, an increase of **\$681.2 million** from Fiscal Year 2017.

Governor Christie has increased education funding annually:

- Fiscal year 2017, by \$525.2 million.
- Fiscal year 2016, by \$691 million.
- Fiscal year 2015, by 63.7 million.
- Fiscal year 2014, by \$721.4 million.
- Fiscal year 2013, by \$686.4 million.
- Fiscal year 2012, by \$229.4 million.

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

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:

- Transformed the existing tenure system to provide powerful tools to identify effective and ineffective teachers;
- Strengthened the supports available to help all teachers improve their craft;
- For the first time, tied the acquisition, maintenance, and loss of tenure to a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom;

- Dramatically reduced the time and cost it takes to remove educators who are repeatedly ineffective at improving student outcomes.

As part of TEACHNJ, the State Board of Education approved AchieveNJ as the improved educator evaluation and support system for educators. The AchieveNJ evaluation system first went into effect during the 2013-14 school year and has been used over the last three years to help districts better identify their best educators and those who need more support.

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

Teachers in Newark continue to be able to earn raises and are eligible for additional bonuses based on annual performance evaluations that include measuring the progress being made by their students. The teacher contract in Newark enables the district to retain and reward the best teachers and improve the quality of education for their students:

- Teachers 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.
- The best performing teachers also will be eligible to earn bonuses based on performance – up to \$5,000 for receiving a "Highly Effective" rating on their annual evaluation.

Taking The Lead to Turn Around Failing Camden Schools:

In March 2013, continuing to act on his firm commitment to ensure that every New Jersey child has access to a high-quality education, Governor Christie took decisive, bipartisan action in Camden schools to fix a broken system and end the persistent failure to deliver results for the city's children. With the support of leadership in the City of Camden, education advocates across New Jersey, and members of both parties, the Christie Administration took over the management of the Camden School District.

The Christie Administration has assigned some of the most successful statewide and national administrators to work in the Camden School District, including:

- Three former New Jersey Superintendents;
- One former New Jersey Assistant Superintendent;
- The former Chief Financial Officer of the New York City Public Schools;
- A former partner at KPMG Consulting; and
- The hands-on support of the Department to implement new evaluation systems aligned to the TEACHNJ Act.

Since 2013, New Jersey has been implementing school-by-school improvement plans to improve student outcomes in district schools. Beyond investment in district-run schools, the Christie Administration is committed to ensuring that every child in Camden has access to a high-quality education, regardless of whether that student is in a district, charter, vocational, or Renaissance school. The state has already taken several steps to increase and strengthen existing options:

- Opened three new charter schools in Camden to increase options at the elementary school level.
- Opened three Renaissance school projects - KIPP Cooper Norcross, Camden Prep, and Mastery Schools of Camden - in the fall of 2014.

- KIPP Cooper Norcross and Camden Prep opened in 2014 to serve kindergarten students, while Mastery Schools of Camden opened in two facilities serving grades K-2 and K-5.
- Currently, KIPP Cooper Norcross serves students in grades K-8. Camden Prep serves students in grades K-5. Mastery Schools of Camden operates five facilities serving students in grades K-9.

In August 2013, Governor Christie named Paymon Rouhanifard as the first State Superintendent of the Camden School District. In July 2016, Superintendent Rouhanifard's contract was renewed for another three years.

On Track For Graduation. Camden's graduation rate has increased for the fifth straight year, and stands at 70 percent for the 2015 - 2016 school year. (Leslie Brody, Camden Graduation Rate Hits 70%, [Wall Street Journal](#), 12/12/16)

- Since 2012, Camden City School District's graduation rate rose from 49 to 70 percent while the dropout rate fell from 21 to 12 percent.
- Students with IEPs continue to make gains with a graduation rate of 64 percent, up 26 points from 2012
- The dropout rate for English language learners is down a quarter since 2012, and the dropout rate for African-American students has been cut in half.

LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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 are 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.

Three Renaissance schools have since opened in Camden, run by non-profit organizations that have experience operating schools in low-achieving districts. These operators have committed to both building new schools and offering rigorous academic programs designed to prepare every student for college, career, and beyond.

- Currently, KIPP Cooper Norcross serves students in grades K-8. Camden Prep serves students in grades K-5. Mastery Schools of Camden operates five facilities serving students in grades K-9.

Inter-District School Choice Program:

The Inter-District School Choice Program was permanently signed into law by Governor Christie in September 2010 and 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.

- Transportation of up to 20 miles is 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 \$1,000.
- If the cost of the transportation exceeds that amount, the parent is given the opportunity to pay the additional amount, or may choose to receive \$1,000 as aid in lieu of transportation.
- 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 over \$40 million.
- School choice funding has increased commensurately, and has surpassed \$55 million in fiscal year 2018.

Enrollment has increased more than five-fold since the law went into effect in fiscal year 2011. More than 5,270 students will participate in the program in 130 school districts during the 2017-18 school year.

INCREASED ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOLS

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 89 in the current fiscal year, while relentlessly focusing on quality and holding all schools accountable for results as 21 low-performing charter schools have closed during the past eight years.

The Host District Support Aid funding category created in fiscal year 2017 continued in fiscal year 2018, and ensured the base per pupil funding provided to charter schools is not less than the prior year base per pupil funding. In addition, the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program is increasing 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.

The Fiscal Year 2018 budget is projected to **support more than 52,000 charter school students and more than 5,000 choice students in 129 choice districts.**

Governor Christie continues to support educational options for our children by providing over \$51 million for Charter School Aid in fiscal year 2018. This is in addition to the tens of millions of dollars in State Aid that flow through the districts to charter schools. In certain districts, like Newark and Camden, charter and Renaissance schools are educating more than one out of every four of the public school population.

Easing The Regulatory Burden Facing Charter Schools

In 2016 while speaking at the 8th annual New Jersey Charter Schools Conference, Governor Christie announced a series of reforms born from input received through meetings with charter school leaders in the fall of 2015. The New Jersey State Board adopted these reforms in 2017. Among the reforms adopted were:

- The state will allow single-gender charter schools and single-purpose charter schools for educationally disadvantaged or traditionally underserved students, provided that the charter school's application meets appropriate criteria and complies with State and Federal laws.
- Charter renewal will be expedited for schools with a track record of high academic performance and no fiscal or organizational issues. Charter schools that do not meet fiscal management/compliance standards or present concerns regarding their fiscal viability will remain subject to deeper review.
- Language has been added to explicitly allow weighted lotteries for educationally disadvantaged students.
- Redundancies have been reduced by removing the requirement that charters send corrective action plans to the Executive County Superintendent as they already are submitted to the DOE Charter Office.
- The funding monitoring requirement has been relaxed due to the new charter performance system. DOE will continue to monitor if charter schools are adequately allocating funds to impact what is happening in the classroom. And, the new regulations update and simplify cash fund procedures.
- Districts are now required to report to DOE, on a rolling basis, any closed, unused or unoccupied school facilities available for lease that would be posted online in order to facilitate cooperation between districts and charter schools.
- Satellite campus regulations have been redefined to allow charter schools to operate on multiple campuses within their approved district or region of residence. The requirement that charter leases cannot exceed the length of the charter – a barrier to obtaining financing – will be removed.
- New regulations clarify that charter schools may use State and local funds to rehabilitate, expand or reconstruct an existing facility.
- The Christie Administration approved the expansion of several of the state's highest performing charter schools.
 - In March, 20 charter schools were approved to expand to provide approximately 5,000 additional seats in high performing schools in the coming years.
- 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."
- According to a 2015 independent [report](#) on Urban Charter Schools by The Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO), students enrolled in charter schools in Newark, on average, make statistically significantly greater gains in both reading and math compared to their counterparts

enrolled in Newark's traditional public schools. While, in Newark, charter schools on average are doing a better job of closing achievement gaps than are traditional public schools.

- **K-8 Schools:**
 - From 2009 to 2014, charter schools serving K-8 students improved 6 percentage points in Language Arts Literacy and 15 percentage points in Mathematics, in the aggregate, on the NJASK.
 - Based on NJASK data in 2014, 64 out of 74 charter schools outperformed their comparative districts in language arts literacy.
 - Based on NJASK data in 2014, 64 out of 74 charter schools outperformed their comparative districts in mathematics.
- **High Schools:**
 - From 2009 to 2014, charter schools serving high school students improved 17 percentage points in both Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics, in the aggregate, on the 'Banked' HSPA.
 - Based on HSPA data, in 2014, 15 out of 15 charter schools outperformed their comparative districts in language arts literacy.
 - Based on HSPA data, in 2014, 12 out of 15 charter schools outperformed their comparative districts in mathematics.
 - Across all charter schools in 2014, the graduation rate was 90% compared to a state-wide graduation rate of 89.

2016 Charter Schools PARCC Data

Charter schools continue to outperform their district counterparts. In the elementary grades 3-5, 63 percent of charters outperformed the average across their district elementary schools in Math and 84 percent did so in ELA. In the middle school grades 6-8, 84 percent of charter schools outperformed their district middle school average in Math and 89 percent did so in ELA.

Charter schools serving grades 6-8 showed impressive gains in academic performance, as measured by median School Growth Percentiles (mSGPs). Almost half of all charters serving grades 6-8 achieved growth scores that are better than those of two-thirds of all public schools serving grades 6-8 in the state.

- **Newark Charter Schools PARCC Performance**
 - Charter schools in Newark are effectively accelerating student learning: in a district typically underperforming statewide achievement results, for two consecutive years students in grades 3-8 in Newark charter schools have met or exceeded expectations on PARCC assessments at the same rate as their peers around the state. For example, in 2015-16, the last year with available data, 51 percent of students in grades 3-8 in Newark charter schools met or exceeded expectations on a PARCC assessment in ELA compared to 50 percent of students in grades 3-8 across the state. In the same year, the percent of students in grades 3-8 who met or exceeded expectations on a PARCC assessment in math was 43 percent for Newark charter school students compared to 43 percent statewide.
 - Charter schools in Newark are effectively accelerating student learning for traditionally underserved subgroups: Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and minority students enrolled in grades 3-8 in Newark charter schools are meeting or exceeding expectations on PARCC assessments at a greater rate than their counterparts

across the state. For example, in 2015-16, 63 percent of Hispanic students enrolled in grades 3-8 in Newark charter schools met or exceeded expectations on a PARCC assessment in ELA compared to 36 percent of Hispanic students statewide.

- Newark charter schools have virtually eliminated the achievement gap for economically disadvantaged students. In 2015-16, statewide proficiency rates for students eligible for free or reduced price lunch trailed those for non-eligible students by 30 percentage points in both ELA and math. Those gaps shrink to 3 and 2 percentage points, respectively, in Newark charter schools.

Improving Oversight

The Christie Administration has worked to improve accountability for charter schools by instituting an oversight program that sets clear expectations for charter school performance and serves as the basis for school evaluation, monitoring, and intervention.

- [The Performance Framework](#) sets the academic, organizational and fiscal standards by which all New Jersey public charter schools are evaluated, informing officials about school performance and sustainability.
- NJDOE officials expanded the rigorous standards and metrics by which each and every public charter school is evaluated. This enabled NJDOE officials to take multiple factors into account when evaluating public charter schools across the state.

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF URBAN EDUCATION

Despite funding levels that consistently rate among the highest in the nation on a per pupil basis, New Jersey continues to have one of the largest achievement gaps in the country. The past 40 years have demonstrated that just spending more money alone will not close the achievement gap, and that it matters not only how much money is spent but how well it is spent.

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. The Department of Education is using the shift from No Child Left Behind to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as an opportunity to align its accountability and support systems to more accurately measure student, school, and district performance. Under New Jersey's recently approved ESSA State Plan, the Department unveiled the establishment of Comprehensive Support Networks (CSNs) to improve the delivery of critical assistance to schools identified for targeted or comprehensive support under ESSA.

Comprehensive Schools: A school is identified as in need of "comprehensive support and improvement" if overall performance is low, as measured by the accountability system outlined in the ESSA state plan:

- Bottom 5 percent of Title I schools
- Schools with less than 67 percent graduation rate

- Title I schools identified as in need of targeted support and improvement for three or more consecutive years

Targeted Schools: A school is identified as in need of “targeted support and improvement” if low-performing subgroups are identified through the accountability system outlined in the ESSA state plan:

- Schools where student groups perform at or below the bottom 5 percent of schools
- Schools with student groups who are “consistently underperforming” as defined by the state

The CSN consists of a central office team which oversees the operation and performance of four regional network teams, while also leveraging expertise and resources within county and program offices. The CSN will work with district-level leaders, in addition to school leaders, to identify the needs of subgroups across schools and use evidence-based practices to improve student and school performance. The CSN will then work with districts to build internal capacity for leadership and instructional coaching using data to drive decision making at the district, school, classroom, and individual student levels.

College Readiness Now Program:

The College Readiness Now Program is designed to reach high school students who are struggling academically, with a focus on low-income students, and enroll them in transition courses before they graduate high school to better prepare them for college. In the initial pilot program, 19 community colleges in partnership with 65 high schools across the state successfully participated.

College Readiness Now is heading into its fourth year of programming in New Jersey, with \$1 million in funding committed to helping at-risk students prepare for college level coursework before they graduate high school. Participation throughout the State has more than doubled since the first year of state funding for this program, increasing to 135 partnerships between county colleges and high schools.

College Credit Now

The College Credit Now program, often referred to as dual enrollment, offers juniors and seniors the opportunity to take college-level courses while still in high school. Over 19,500 New Jersey high school students enrolled in dual enrollment courses during the 2016-2017 academic year. In some cases, high school students have earned associate degrees prior to graduating from high school.

GREATER SUPPORT FOR NEW JERSEY’S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM AND STUDENTS

Resources for Higher Education Institutions and Students. Under the Governor’s fiscal year 2018 budget, total State support is over **\$2.2 billion**.

Funding For Tuition Aid Grants. To ensure an affordable in-state college education is available to all, TAG grants are available at 56 public and private institutions across New Jersey. Since taking office, Governor Christie has increased State funding for the TAG program by over **71 percent**, to a total of **\$425.9 million in Fiscal Year 2018**. More than 68,000 full-time undergraduate students attending school in New Jersey will receive support from TAG.

Governor’s Urban Scholarship – The Governor’s Urban Scholarship program will add a sixth class, and will now support an estimated 600 scholars from targeted school districts.

NEW JERSEY'S HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE AT HIGHEST LEVEL SINCE USE OF NEW FEDERAL CALCULATION

New Jersey's high school graduation rate rose again in 2016, with 90.1 percent in 2016 from 89.7 percent in 2015. This marks the fifth straight year that the statewide high school graduation rate has increased.

The Class of 2011 was the first graduating class to begin using the federally-mandated methodology for calculating the graduation rate, and since then, the state's high school graduation rate has increased by 7.1 percentage points from 83 percent in 2011. Below is a summary of 2016 graduation rates by student subgroups compared to the 2011 results:

- African American students graduated at a rate of 82.1 percent in 2016, an increase of 13.1 percentage points from 2011 when it was 69 percent.
- 83.4 percent of Hispanic students graduated in 2016, a 10.4 percentage point increase from 2011 when it was 73 percent.
- 94.2 percent of white students graduated in 2016, an increase from 90 percent in 2011.
- 96.7 percent of Asian students graduated in 2016, an increase from 93 percent in 2011.
- Economically-disadvantaged students graduated at a rate of 82.7 percent in 2016, an increase of 11.7 percentage points from 2011 when it was 71 percent.
- 74.7 percent of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students graduated in 2016, an increase of 16.7 percentage points from 68 percent in 2011.
- Students with disabilities graduated at a rate of 78.8 percent in 2016, an increase from 73 percent in 2011.

The Department of Education also calculated the five-year graduation rate for students that began high school in 2011. While the four-year graduation rate last year was 89.7 percent for the class of 2015, the graduation rate that included students who continued on for a fifth year was 91.3 percent.