

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 159

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey ("State") is committed to improving the quality of education for all New Jersey children; and

WHEREAS, my Administration believes that the educational success of each child depends upon rigorous standards, excellent educators, and high quality student assessments that measure the progress of student learning and the effectiveness of classroom instruction; and

WHEREAS, in June 2010, the New Jersey State Board of Education amended the Core Curriculum Content Standards to include the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts to provide clear guidelines for teachers and their pupils; and

WHEREAS, since 1990, the federal government has required the assessment of students and, beginning in 2015, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers ("PARCC") assessment will replace the current State assessments; and

WHEREAS, in August 2012, with unanimous bipartisan support from the Legislature, I signed into law the Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey ("TEACHNJ") Act, which is designed to raise student achievement by improving instruction through constructive feedback, evaluations, and professional support of teachers and school leaders; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Education, as part of the flexibility available under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, requires the State to use student growth data as a significant factor in the evaluation of teaching staff; and

WHEREAS, once implemented, the PARCC assessment will measure student learning and its results will be considered as one component, among others, as required in the evaluation of teaching staff under the TEACHNJ Act; and

WHEREAS, in order to determine if the Core Curriculum Content Standards and the PARCC assessment are appropriate to be implemented by school districts throughout New Jersey, a Study Commission composed of a broad range of education practitioners and experts should be established to review and make recommendations on the quality and effectiveness of all student assessments administered to K-12 students by the State, school districts, and individual schools, including those administered for college admission, college credit, and career pathways; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CHRIS CHRISTIE, Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. There is hereby created a Study Commission on the Use of Student Assessments in New Jersey (the "Study Commission").

2. The Study Commission shall consist of up to nine (9) members appointed by the Governor who shall serve at his pleasure. The Governor shall select a chairperson from among the members of the Study Commission. The Study Commission shall consist of individuals who have practical experience, knowledge, or expertise in the areas of education policy or administration. All members of the Study Commission shall serve without compensation. The Study Commission shall organize as soon as practicable after the appointment of its members.

3. The Study Commission is charged with presenting recommendations to the Governor regarding the quality and effectiveness of student assessments administered to K-12 students. In particular, the Study Commission shall consider and make recommendations on the volume, frequency, and impact of student assessments occurring throughout New Jersey school districts, and on the Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Common Core State Standards.

4. The Department of Education shall provide staff support to the Study Commission. The Study Commission shall be authorized to call upon any department, office, division, or agency of this State to supply it with any information, personnel, or other assistance available as the Study Commission deems necessary to discharge its duties under this Order. Each department, office, division, and agency of this State is hereby required, to the extent not inconsistent with law, to cooperate fully with the Study Commission within the limits of its statutory authority and to furnish the Study Commission with such assistance on as timely a basis as is necessary to accomplish the purposes of this Order. The Study Commission may consult with education stakeholders, practitioners, experts or other knowledgeable individuals in the public or private sector on any aspect of its mission.

5. The Study Commission shall issue an initial report containing its recommendations to the Governor no later than December 31, 2014. The Study Commission shall issue a final report to the Governor by July 31, 2015. The Study Commission shall expire upon the Governor's receipt of a report containing their final recommendations pursuant to this Executive Order.

6. The final report of the Study Commission shall be provided to the Legislature and shall be made available to the public.

7. This Order shall take effect immediately.

GIVEN, under my hand and seal this
14th day of July,
Two Thousand and Fourteen,
and of the Independence of
the United States, the Two
Hundred and Thirty-Ninth.

[seal]

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Christopher S. Porrino

Chief Counsel to the Governor