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The Christie Reform Agenda: Education is the Civil Rights Issue of Today

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Trenton, NJ - After laying out the first proposals of his far-reaching Reform Agenda to improve New Jersey public schools, Governor Chris Christie today outlined additional reform measures to challenge New Jersey's public education system to deliver results for children and parents. Joined by Harlem Children's Zone Founder and CEO Geoffrey Canada, Hoboken Mayor Dawn Zimmer and a large crowd of families and community leaders, Governor Christie detailed specific plans to empower parents with greater school choice and access, expand high-quality charter schools and spur innovative learning. By challenging the education status quo, Governor Christie is providing the leadership and solutions necessary to provide positive alternatives to perpetually failing schools.

"We cannot continue to ask children and families stuck in chronically failing public schools to wait any longer. Quite simply, parents and children deserve a choice," said Governor Christie. "We must be able to fulfill our obligation to provide parents and their children with educational alternatives that include expanding high quality charter schools and providing interdistrict public school options. By giving parents the power of choice, we are ensuring that students will have the opportunities they deserve for a bright and successful future."

The need for improved school choice is clear. Today, 104,000 students are trapped in 205 chronically failing schools in New Jersey. In 2009, forty percent of New Jersey's African-American and 32 percent of Hispanic students were unable to meet basic standards on a national test. Likewise, New Jersey's education system has failed to prepare vast numbers of students with the critical skills required to be competitive in college or the workforce. In 2009, nearly 30 percent of all 8th graders statewide lacked basic math skills.

"With strong leadership and a commitment that never strays from putting the best interest of our children first, change can come. In Harlem, we've proved that together, through community and partnerships and real diligence, we can create a radically different kind of environment for our young people to grow up in this country," said Geoffrey Canada. "I am proud to stand with Governor Christie and move forward with our shared belief that change must start now, with the local and state leaders acting to restore the hope and promise of a better life for our children."

Governor Christie's reforms remove hurdles and roadblocks to expanding and growing New Jersey's best charter schools, opens the doors to world-class charter school operators, gives parents greater educational choices, and provides flexibility for charters to get back to their core purpose – getting results for children through greater innovation and creativity. The Governor is providing alternatives to failing schools by:

- **Giving All Children the Same Hope and Opportunity that Comes from a Top-Notch Education**
 - Attract the Nation's Best Charter School Operators to New Jersey
 - Increase Charter School Authorizing Capacity
 - Promote Charter Best Practices
 - Spur Charter Innovation and Creativity
 - Provide for Greater Equity Between Traditional Public and Charter Public Schools.
- **Giving Children and Parents Hope by Aggressively and Immediately Implementing Interdistrict School Choice Law**
- **Provide Rapid Relief for Children in Failing Schools by Urging the Legislature to Immediately Act on the Bipartisan Opportunity Scholarship Act**

On Tuesday, Governor Christie outlined the first part of his plan to improve New Jersey's educational system with proposals to reward innovative and effective teaching, expand opportunities for New Jersey's best teachers, and put student achievement at the center of educator evaluations. The Governor also outlined proposals to empower parents to become better advocates for quality education for their children and increase accountability in our schools. Read more about Tuesday's announcement [here](#). Find out more about the Christie Reform Agenda [here](#).

Additional details of Governor Christie's Reform Proposals for education outlined today can be found as a PDF attachment to this release.

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