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The Christie Reform Agenda: Putting New Jersey's Children First By Challenging the System

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Governor's education reforms challenge the status quo by putting student achievement first, empowering parents and rewarding teachers

Trenton, NJ – Only days after joining Newark Mayor Cory Booker and Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg to announce a bipartisan education reform plan for Newark schools, Governor Chris Christie continued to provide the strong leadership needed to advance a reform agenda for public education throughout the State of New Jersey. Speaking with families and community leaders at a town hall in Old Bridge, Governor Chris Christie unveiled the first pieces of a far-reaching reform agenda to improve New Jersey public schools by challenging the status quo and transforming a system that has fallen short of the needs of parents and children.

Despite some of the highest levels of education spending in the entire nation, New Jersey's public schools continue to confront a critical achievement gap that shortchanges our children. For example, the achievement gap between wealthy and low-income 8th graders in math is nearly the same as it was 19 years ago; the gap between at-risk 4th graders and those not at-risk has remained nearly unchanged over the past 13 years. 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.

Governor Christie's Reform Agenda will bring necessary and long overdue reform to the public education system by making teacher effectiveness and student achievement the driving forces behind public policies and practices. The first step toward innovation in the public school system means focusing on accountability.

"As a proud product of New Jersey's public schools, I want nothing more than to see our public education system give our children the quality education they deserve," said Governor Christie. "Yet, if we are to be successful in our reform efforts, we must be honest about our shortcomings, candid about our failures, and open to the necessary reforms that are crucial to bringing positive change and innovation to our classrooms, no matter their zip code.

"For too long we have accepted low expectations and failure – particularly in our urban school districts – which has stolen hope from generations of New Jersey families. Today, we begin to put an end to the cycle of inaction by challenging the status quo, demanding more for our children and restoring the promise of a brighter future for every one of our communities," Governor Christie concluded.

Governor Christie is proposing reforms to reward innovative and effective teaching, expand opportunities for New Jersey's best teachers, and put student achievement at the center of educator evaluations. Governor Christie is challenging the education establishment with reforms to:

- Promote Innovative and Effective Teaching by Valuing Student Achievement Over Seniority.
- Demand Accountability and Results for New Jersey's Children with Data-Supported Evaluations.
- Expand Opportunities for Great Teachers to Succeed.
- Ensure Our Children Have Well-Prepared Teachers.

Governor Christie also recognizes that through empowerment, parents can become better advocates for quality education for their children and increase accountability in our schools. The Governor's reforms will work to:

- Engage Families in Their Children's Education with Improved Access to Information.
- Improve Outreach and Communications Efforts to Parents and Families.

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

Also, a copy of Executive Order 42 can be found attached to this email. Executive Order 42 establishes the New Jersey Educator Effectiveness Task Force, which is further detailed in the subsequent fact sheet on the Christie Reform Agenda.

- [Governor Christie's Reform Proposals for Education \[pdf 285kB\]](#)
- [Executive Order 42 \[pdf 20kB\]](#)

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