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## Governor Christie Sees Improved College Readiness for At-Risk High School Students Through Community College Program

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### *Investment in College Readiness Now Helps Students Prepare for College*

**TRENTON, NJ** – As part of his efforts to ensure at-risk high school students are armed with the academic skills necessary to succeed in college, Governor Chris Christie today met with Camden County College students enrolled in College Readiness Now, a partnership between high schools and community colleges that provides a growing number of students with remedial classes.

"College Readiness Now is already producing tangible results, helping thousands of students become proficient in key subject areas that they need to advance in college and build successful careers," said Governor Christie. "Our investment in this program makes a world of difference, empowering participants with the skills and confidence to reach their full potential in college and the workforce, while preventing drop outs and curbing student debt issues."

College Readiness Now provides cost-free remedial classes for college credit to high school students who would otherwise have to pay for remedial classes after graduation. As a pilot program in the 2013-2014 school year, College Readiness Now served 921 students from disadvantaged backgrounds who were not college-ready in English and/or mathematics. Sixty-five high schools partnered with 18 community colleges in the program that was funded with \$620,000 in federal College Access Challenge grants from the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE).

In the current school year, a total of \$1.25 million in funding – \$750,000 in Federal Title I funding from the Department of Education and \$500,000 in federal grants through OSHE – was allocated for the program. There are 92 high schools partnering with 19 community colleges to serve 1,860 high school students.

College Readiness Now has been successful in helping high school students transition to college. In Camden County, 54 percent of program participants enrolled in Camden County College or a public 4-year college. In Atlantic and Cape May counties, 97 percent of the students completing the program enrolled in Atlantic Cape Community College as freshmen, and in Bergen County, 92 percent of the students completing the program enrolled in Bergen Community College.

Governor Christie has allocated \$1 million for College Readiness Now in the proposed Fiscal Year 2017 state budget. That funding would significantly expand the program, reaching many more students across the state.

Another successful partnership between local school districts and colleges, Dual Enrollment, is also credited with helping over 10,000 high school students transition to college. Dual Enrollment programs offer simultaneous credit for high school and college attendance, again at no cost, saving students thousands of dollars in tuition and fees. National studies show conclusively that if a student completes even one college course while in high school, that student's chances of graduating from college increases significantly.

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### Transcript:

**Governor Christie:** Today is one of those moments when, something that started for me in 2010, continued in 2012, is now concluding itself as an idea in 2016. The idea that Cooper Medical School and Rowan University could put together a world class faculty, attract top notch students, train them and educate them here in the City of Camden and then have them go forth from today, as someone said earlier, as ambassadors for your school, for this community and

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for the quality of the education that you've received here. It's probably hard for any of you to fully grasp how important you are in the renaissance of this city. But your faith and confidence to come and be educated here in the City of Camden helped to spread faith and confidence to others in the private sector, to other governmental agencies and to the citizens of this city, both residents and business citizens that in fact, there could be a new day dawning for this city. You are the first tangible evidence of Camden's future. And I am extraordinarily proud to be here with you today to make that acknowledgement to each and every one of you directly. You have great responsibilities ahead of you and also extraordinary opportunities. I'm confident that you'll use your judgement to make the most of those opportunities, and to meet as aggressively as you possible can, each one of those responsibilities. Responsibilities to patients and their families, who will look to you for answers they cannot comprehend. And for comfort only that you, based upon your knowledge and experience can provide. To those you work with every day, your colleagues to be generous in sharing your wisdom and your opinions without regard to whether you think they'll be well received at the moment or not. You have an obligation to share the gifts that God has given each and every one of you, and this education is one of those, but more importantly it's the heart and soul that each of you possess in wanting to serve others. As a physician that will lead you to be providing extraordinary comfort and service to many of those that you will encounter over the course of your career. Lastly, I'd say this to you as a parent of someone who is graduating this year too, it also may be a little bit hard for you to comprehend how extraordinarily proud your parents and loved ones are of you today and what a sense of investment they feel in what you have accomplished. I can recall that the night that the son, our oldest son, who is graduating in a few weeks, was born. And he was born in a hospital very close to my parent's home. And after everything looked fine and he was off in his bassinet then getting his first feeding with his mother it was time for me to get out of there. And instead of going directly home I stopped at my parent's house and I walked in and I said I can't stay for long I just want to tell you one thing, I'm sorry. My parents said, you're sorry? It's a great day you gave us our first grandchild, what are you sorry about. I said I'm sorry because remember all the times you told me that I would never really understand how you felt until I had a child of my own? I've only had one for 7 hours and I already get it. And I'm sorry for saying you were stupid for saying something like that. I'd say the same thing to all of you today, for those graduates who are not yet parents themselves, I want you to understand how extraordinary a day this is for your parents and your loved ones who are here and those who couldn't be here but are sharing the moment with you. Receiving a medical degree and becoming a physician in this country is a great great achievement and brings with it a great sense of pride for all those who are associated with you. So yes you have great opportunities and great responsibilities ahead of you, tomorrow. But for today, enjoy with them all that you have achieved. Revel in the fact that you have gotten to this moment, for many of you I'm sure you've been thinking about it for a long long time. Don't worry about the responsibilities and the opportunities today. Be with your families and enjoy this moment with them because believe me, as a parent myself, I could tell you I am confident that they are extraordinarily proud of you, as am I. Congratulations.

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