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Governor Christie Highlights Charter School Opportunities That Will Secure The Future For New Jersey's Next Generation

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Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie today toured the innovative and growing Thomas Edison Energy Smart Charter School (TEECs) in Franklin Township, Somerset County, continuing his mission to improve New Jersey's public education system and marking the 20th anniversary of the state Charter School Act.

"Seeing students excited and exceling in an innovative environment, it's no wonder seats in this growing public school are so sought-after by area families," Governor Christie said. "As a Tier-1 school, TEECS is inspiring more cutting-edge classrooms across New Jersey where students have exposure and opportunities that will allow them reach their full academic potentials and grow into an up-and-coming workforce. To that end, in the days and weeks ahead, my administration will continue to facilitate the expansion of successful public charter schools and the opening of new ones, unlocking the potential and supporting the success of students not always realized in a traditional school environment."

TEECs is a tuition-free K-7 charter school that will be relocating this fall to a new facility on Pierce Street in Somerset. It is the first school in New Jersey offering a green/renewable energy focused curriculum. TEECS has an enrollment of 336 students that is expected to grow by 27 percent to 426 students in the upcoming school year, as it adds an eighth grade class.

Charter schools have grown significantly across New Jersey during Governor Christie's Administration, with charter school enrollment nearly doubling from 21,687 students in the 2009-10 school year to more than 40,000 in the 2014-15 school year. By 2017, there will be over 50,000 authorized charter seats in New Jersey, as the Governor remains devoted to aggressively prioritizing regulatory relief for charter schools.

In February, the state Department of Education approved the expansion of 16 charter schools, renewed the charters of 19 schools, and so far approved 3 new schools to open in the 2017-2018 school year. Three new charter schools, approved last year, will be opening in the 2016-2017 school year. The administration has stood strong in its position that all schools must be accountable to its parents, student and communities, supporting the closure of 17 charter schools due to academic, operational or financial deficiencies.

In his proposed Fiscal Year 2017 State Budget, Governor Christie has, for the third consecutive year, proposed a record-high investment in K-12 public schools of more than \$13 billion, including funds that will help newly approved charter schools create opportunities for New Jersey's many at-risk youth in Newark and other urban areas.

In districts such as Newark and Camden, charter schools are educating nearly 30 percent of the public school population, charter schools are a valued option in the public education system and that every child, regardless of his or her ZIP code, deserves access to a thriving school.

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Press Contact:

Brian Murray
609-777-2600

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Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000