



January 5, 2011 - State Achievement Tests Show Need for Christie Reform Agenda; Zip Code Equals Destiny as Low-Income Students Continue to Post Low Scores

For Immediate Release:

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Trenton, NJ - State achievement test results released today show why New Jersey needs to push forward with Governor Christie's education reform agenda as the achievement gap between wealthy and low-income students remained at roughly 30 percent.

"Governor Christie and I believe that all children deserve an excellent education, no matter where they live and no matter what their economic background is. Today's assessment data underscores the need for reform, so that all children, regardless of their zip code and income level, can get a quality education," said acting Commissioner Rochelle Hendricks. "We need to close the achievement gap, particularly between wealthy and low-income students, by making the necessary reforms crucial to bringing positive change and innovation to our classrooms."

The Governor's proposed reforms to improve New Jersey's public schools challenge the status quo and move toward a system that demands accountability, rewards highly effective teachers, utilizes performance measures and ensures each and every child receives the quality education they deserve. These reforms would:

- 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.
- Provide families with more and better choices by expanding access to charter schools and other public schools.

"This administration is dedicated to transforming a system that has fallen short of the needs of parents and children," acting Commissioner Hendricks said.

State achievement test scores released today show mixed results, with language arts scores lower than they were last year, but higher than they were in 2008. Math scores showed some small increases in the early years, but scores declined in the 7th and 8th grades. Results also indicated there was no gender gap in the areas of Math and Science. State graduation examination results were essentially flat - with little change over the past nine years.

Under the federal No Child Left Behind law, every student is required to be assessed in grades 3 through 8 and one time in high school in Language Arts Literacy and Math. In Science, students are required to be assessed in 4th and 8th grades, and once in high school.

Assessment results can be found here:

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/achievement/2011/>

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