



Christie Administration Unveils 2014 School Performance Reportsâ€” Includes Career and Technical Education Participation

For Immediate Release

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Trenton, NJ â€” The Department of Education today released School Performance Reports for the 2013-14 school year, including a new metric â€” student participation in Career and Technical Education programs.

New Jersey's public school system consistently ranks among the strongest in the nation, and the School Performance Reports provide citizens with a tool to view key performance indicators that provide insight into academic achievement as measured by statewide assessments, metrics of student growth, and whether students are on track for success in college and career.

"Each year the School Performance Reports present information designed to give local districts a more complete snapshot of where their schools stand in terms of how well their students are moving toward college and career readiness," said Education Commissioner David C. Hespe. "The extensive amounts of information in the reports also provide citizens and parents with meaningful data with which to judge how well their schools are doing in educating their children."

The reports show that approximately 19 percent of New Jersey's high school students completed at least one course in an approved Career and Technical Education program statewide.

About the Performance Reports

This is the third year the Department has issued its School Performance Reports that provide comprehensive data on school performance.

The reports include a color-coded guide to help readers identify whether schools met individual or statewide targets in specific areas. The reports also include "progress targets" that measure how effectively each school and subgroup has progressed toward cutting the achievement gap since the starting point of the 2010-11 school year.

Another element of the reports is the "peer school comparison," which has replaced the outdated District Factor Group (DFG) method of comparing communities by socioeconomic status. The peer school approach more accurately provides insight into school performance by comparing schools to approximately 30 other schools that have similar grade configurations and students with similar demographic characteristics such as limited English proficiency, eligibility for free or reduced lunch, or participation in special education programming.

Career and Technical Education Data Added

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is being included in the School Performance Reports for the first time this year pursuant to a new law Governor Christie signed less than two months ago. CTE provides students with opportunities to attain academic, technical and professional skills that are essential for success in 21st Century careers. Through authentic learning experiences, informed by standards and expectations of business and industry, CTE programs enhance students' career readiness and options for the future.

The CTE participation rate on the performance report captures the percentage of all high school students who completed at least one course in any Department-approved program during the 2013-14 school year. An approved CTE program must include a coherent sequence of at least three courses aligned to academic and technical standards. Students enrolled in CTE programs may also earn industry-recognized credentials and/or college credit for specific courses.

During the 2013-14 school year, 78,797 students participated in 909 approved CTE programs. Of those, 482 programs were at county vocational schools and 427 were at comprehensive high schools.

CTE programs are organized into 16 career clusters, such as Business Management and Administration; Health Sciences; Hospitality & Tourism; Information Technology; and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). These programs provide broad foundational skills as well as occupationally-specific skills which are critical to students' career-readiness in these fields.

"Participating in CTE programs allows students to gain a better understanding of their interests and talents while developing skills and dispositions that are essential in today's fast-paced global economy," said Susan Martz,

Assistant Commissioner for Student Services and Career Readiness. "Students in CTE programs learn about a variety of options available to help prepare them for the careers of tomorrow."

All approved CTE programs are required to have partnerships with employers in order to align their programs to current and emerging labor market needs. Employers help shape the curricula and often provide opportunities for mentoring and work-based learning experiences for students which allow students to experience firsthand the expectations of employers.

"In addressing our mission to prepare all New Jersey students to be college- and career-ready, it is clear that CTE offers a range of options for students to embark on a career pathway that may not only lead them directly to the workforce, but may also place them on a trajectory to a college degree," said Martz. "Since CTE partners with employers and higher education, students are uniquely prepared with employability skills while understanding the need for lifelong learning."

Other Improvements

In addition to this year's addition of CTE programs, the performance reports also include student participation in the ACT-PLAN, alongside student participation in the PSAT. These additions build on last year's improvements, which included providing data on participation in arts instruction; more accurate measurements of postsecondary education plans for high school graduates; participation and outcomes in the rigorous International Baccalaureate (IB) coursework; and participation in the ACT college-placement test, as well as the SAT.

The School Performance Reports were created collaboratively with the input of members of the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA), the New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA), the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), and the New Jersey Parent Teacher Association (NJPTA).

The School Performance reports can be accessed online at: <http://homeroom5.doe.state.nj.us/pr/>