



## Christie Administration Announces \$12.7 Billion in Total Education Funding for Fiscal Year 2016

### *5th Consecutive Year of Historic Levels of State Aid for New Jersey Schools*

**For Immediate Release**

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**Trenton, NJ** – The Christie Administration today released state school-aid figures for fiscal year 2016 that again exceed last year with total school aid earmarked at over \$12.7 billion, the fifth straight year of historic levels of state funding for New Jersey schools.

Yesterday, Gov. Christie proposed a \$33.8 billion fiscal 2016 budget that ensures no school district will lose K-12 aid from FY 2015 levels. New Jersey law requires state aid to school districts to be announced within two days of the governor's budget address.

In addition to more than \$9 billion in direct school aid, the FY 2016 budget continues to provide school districts with other significant financial support, including \$884 million for school construction debt service, and nearly \$2.9 billion for teachers' pension, Social Security and post-retirement medical benefits.

"State funding for New Jersey's public schools is once again at the highest level ever, in spite of economic challenges," said Education Commissioner David C. Hespe. "This budget is another example of this Administration's commitment to supporting education in New Jersey."

More than a quarter of the fiscal year 2016 state budget is proposed for direct aid to New Jersey schools, which are ranked among the highest in the nation in per-pupil spending.

All school districts will continue to receive as much K-12 aid as last year, including the continuation of the Per-Pupil Growth Aid and PARCC Readiness Aid they received this past year. In addition, some districts may take advantage of other available funding streams, including:

**School Choice:** Gov. Christie signed into law the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program in September 2010, allowing students to attend school at a participating choice district. At the time, the state had a limited pilot program with 15 participating districts. The Choice program has rapidly grown in popularity, increasing to 130 districts by this current school year. The governor has proposed an additional appropriation of \$3.3 million, which will bring the total funding to nearly \$52.5 million next year, anticipated to serve more than 5,500 students.

**Opportunity Scholarship Grants:** Acting on his belief that every New Jersey child deserves a high quality education regardless of zip code, the Governor's proposed budget includes \$2 million for scholarship grants to allow children in chronically failing schools to attend alternate educational placements. This pilot program will help provide opportunities for children with no other options.

**Extraordinary Costs of Special Education:** Gov. Christie's proposed budget continues funding of \$165 million for Extraordinary Costs of Special Education. Local schools have noted that these costs have impacted their local budgets. This funding covers a portion of a district's expenses over \$40,000 per student for children who are served in-district, or a portion of expenses over \$55,000 for students who are served outside the district.

**Preschool Aid:** The proposed fiscal year 2016 budget increases funding for preschool education by \$2.7 million, to a total of \$655.5 million. This is due to anticipated growth in the number of children enrolled in qualifying preschool programs. State aid will help fund more than 50,000 students attending preschool programs in 142 districts.

District-by-district state aid allocations are online at [www.nj.gov/education/stateaid/1516/](http://www.nj.gov/education/stateaid/1516/).