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NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Christie Administration Hosts High Quality Partnership Summit

Education Institutions, Workforce Development Experts and Industry Leaders Meet to Strengthen New Jersey's Workforce and Businesses

WEST WINDSOR, N.J., May 26, 2016 – The Christie Administration today hosted a High Quality Partnership Summit where more than 300 business, education and workforce development stakeholders met to discuss and develop strategies for strengthening New Jersey's workforce and the state's key industries. The High Quality Partnership Summit was presented by the New Jersey Policy Academy, which is supported by the National Governors Association (NGA) and led by the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC), Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD), Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE), Department of Education (DOE) and the New Jersey Business and Industry Association (NJBIA).

"Our businesses and workforce thrive when workers obtain the skills and credentials desired by employers," said Commissioner Harold J. Wirths of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. "High quality partnerships are key to determining workforce investments that further careers and strengthen our industries."

The summit kicked-off with welcoming remarks from SETC Chairman Dennis Bone, Labor Commissioner Harold J. Wirths, Deputy Education Commissioner Peter Shulman, OSHE Chief of Staff Elizabeth Garlatti, NJBIA President Michele Siekerka and NGA Economic, Human Services and Workforce Director Martin Simon. Deputy Labor Commissioner Aaron R. Fichtner, PhD delivered the plenary address, outlining New Jersey's vision for creating a strong talent pipeline by connecting education and training systems with the needs of the state's economy.

"We must focus on building partnerships to ensure New Jersey's highly-skilled workforce remains competitive," said State Employment and Training Commission Chairman Dennis Bone. "I am proud of our collaborative efforts with the Department of Education, Department of Labor, Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the business community, with support from the National Governors Association, to build a sustainable pipeline of talent to fuel the state's economy now and in the future."

High quality partnerships comprise industry employers, partnered with education, workforce, organized labor and economic development experts that seek to utilize industry data to create career pathways that result in industry-valued credentials, certificates or degrees for workers. Led by the state's seven Talent Networks, high quality partnerships facilitate the development of specific area workforce strategies that prepare a skilled workforce and provide new career pathways for students and jobseekers.

The summit also featured a panel discussion on collaboration among workforce development partners featuring New Jersey employers who have partnered with higher education and nonprofit organizations to fulfill their workforce needs. Participants learned more about high quality partnerships through two breakout sessions—one on Talent Networks and another on developing regional and local high quality partnerships.

Last year, New Jersey was selected as one of ten states to receive a NGA Policy Academy grant of up to \$175,000 for planning and technical assistance to work collaboratively with other state agencies to increase the number of people with post-secondary, industry-valued credentials that are in demand by employers.

For more information about New Jersey's Talent Networks and High Quality Partnerships, contact NJTIPS@dol.nj.gov.

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SETC Chairman Dennis Bone, Labor Commissioner Harold J. Wirths, OSHE Chief of Staff Elizabeth Garlatti, NJBIA President Michele Siekerka, SETC Acting Executive Director Sheryl Hutchison, Mercer County College President Dr. Jianping Wang, NGA Director Martin Simon, Deputy Labor Commissioner Dr. Aaron Fichtner and Deputy Education Commissioner Peter Shulman at the High Quality Partnership Summit held at Mercer County College in West Windsor.