



Number of Students and Districts Participating in the Christie Administration's Interdistrict Choice Program Increases for 2012-13 School Year

Governor Commits an Additional \$14.2 Million to Expand School Choice for New Jersey Families

For Immediate Release

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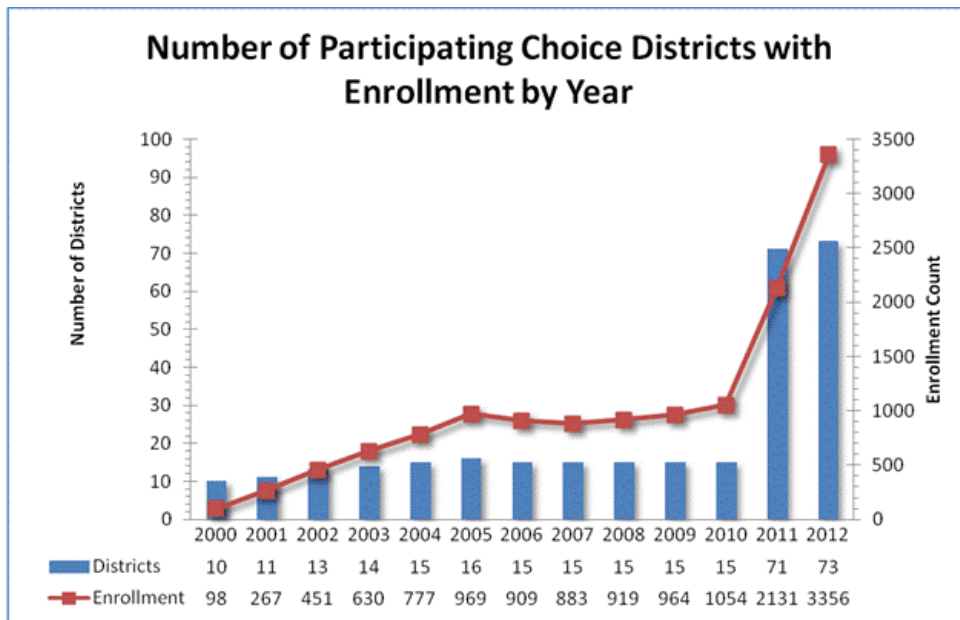
Date: March 14 2012

Trenton, NJ - Demonstrating a continued commitment to the expansion of the Interdistrict Choice Program, student enrollment in the program has tripled over the past three years to a projected 3,356 students in 73 districts in 2012-13. To support the continued growth of the program, Governor Christie has dedicated an additional \$14.2 million for the Interdistrict School Choice program in the FY 2013 state budget, as part of a \$212.5 million increase in K-12 state aid and a total of \$7.8 billion in K-12 formula aid - the most in New Jersey history. In the current 2011-12 school year, there are 2,131 participating students in 71 districts.

“Every child in New Jersey deserves a choice of where they attend school, both so that they can attend a high-quality school and so they can find a program that is a good fit for them” said Acting Commissioner Chris Cerf. “The Interdistrict choice program is a win for families because it provides choice to their children and is a win for districts because it allows them to maximize enrollment and more efficiently use space in their schools.”

The Interdistrict School Choice Program was signed into law by Governor Christie on September 10, 2010, after several years as a small pilot. Any student in the state is eligible to enroll in the Interdistrict Choice program, regardless of whether or not their home district is participating. Transportation of up to 20 miles, or funds to pay for transportation, will be provided by the district of residence to a student going to a choice school. If the school is outside of the 20-mile radius, transportation will be the responsibility of the student, parents or guardians. District participation in the program is optional. The decision to apply to participate is made by the local board of education. The district then sends an application to the Department of Education for processing and review.

The chart below demonstrates the growth of the program over the past decade. The deadline for districts to apply to participate in the Interdistrict Choice Program for the 2013-14 school year is April 30, 2012. Applications can be obtained by emailing pschoice@doe.nj.gov.



A list of schools participating in the program can be found here: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/choice/districts/>

Feedback from South Hunterdon Regional School District:

School Choice has offered a demographic solution for South Hunterdon that we previously only dreamed about. We are a unique district. By New Jersey standards, we are both geographically isolated and sparsely populated. Consequently, we had low enrollments and high costs per pupil. We knew we needed more students, but we had no idea how to bring them in. We sought tuition students, knowing we had a lot to offer, but we think prospective

parents found the dual requirements of paying tuition and transporting their children daunting. By moving aid to receiving districts and helping with transportation costs, School Choice removed two significant barriers for parents seeking alternatives for their kids. We were thrilled to finally open our nurturing educational haven to more of the state's young people! And thanks to School Choice, all of our students are now members of a diverse learning community that more closely approximates the global reality. Well done, New Jersey! And thank you.

Marie Collins, South Hunterdon Regional High School District Board Member

Feedback from Gateway Regional School District

As a small district with less than 1,000 students, welcoming choice students has allowed the continuation of a wide range of academic courses and extracurricular activities. Choice funding has enabled Gateway to increase the integration of technology in classrooms and provide additional support services for students in need. The blending of varied education and cultural experiences from both choice and resident students has created a diverse environment for the entire Gateway community.

Steven Hindman, Principal, Gateway Regional High School

Feedback from Quinton Township School District

In addition to expanding the diversity of our student population that we see as a benefit, the Choice Program allowed Quinton Township to hire a World Language Teacher. Students will now be able to expand their world view of communication and their perspective of the Spanish Culture.

Dr. Donna M. Agnew, Quinton Township School District