



Christie Administration Partners with Private Sector to Strengthen College and Career Readiness for Students in Urban Areas

Asbury Park, Camden and Newark Students Participate in “Jobs for America’s Graduates” Pilot Program

For Immediate Release

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Wayne, NJ - Furthering Governor Christie’s commitment to ensuring that all students in New Jersey are college and career ready, students enrolled in a new pilot program designed to introduce them to career opportunities that only a high school diploma can attract, today heard firsthand advice and inspiration from education and business leaders at Toys “R” Us, Inc. The event, held at Toys “R”Us headquarters in Wayne, kicked off the start of the Jobs for America’s Graduates pilot program, (JAG-NJ) jointly run by the Department of Education and Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

“We’re very excited about the launch of JAG in New Jersey,” said Acting Education Commissioner Chris Cerf. “This program is the perfect example of how state government, schools, and the private sector can work together to help students prepare for the demands of the 21st century while making sure that all students, regardless of zip code, have both the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college and life.”

Approximately 70 students from Asbury Park High School, Barringer High School in Newark, and Camden High School are the first to participate in JAG-NJ. Students in the pilot high schools have been involved in activities such as preparing job preparedness workshops, gaining real-life work experience, meetings with representatives of area colleges, and discussing “work-world” scenarios prepared by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

“The Department of Labor and Workforce Development is pleased to partner with the Department of Education to provide funding for this very worthwhile program,” said Labor Commissioner Harold J. Wirths. “We recognize the importance of mentoring students from high unemployment areas and giving them an opportunity to gain and practice skills they can use in their professional lives as they develop into successful adults.”

Jobs for America’s Graduates has been motivating students to succeed in 33 states since it was first established in 1979. New Jersey joined the program this year after obtaining a grant of \$500,000 in federal Workforce Investment Act funding. The Department of Education and Department of Labor and Workforce Development will be working with local schools and corporate partners like Toys “R” Us to build a strong foundation so that the program can expand and sustain itself with private funding beginning in 2013-14.

Students attending today’s event participated in a 90-minute workshop during which they spoke with Toys “R” Us, Inc. staff who discussed the kinds of jobs they held and the requirements for them. While visiting Toys “R” Us headquarters, students also had lunch with Toys “R” Us executives and a tour of the campus helping students understand the different aspects of working for a global retailer.

JAG is a non-profit youth development program dedicated to helping at-risk young people graduate from high school and make successful transitions to postsecondary education or meaningful employment. JAG has served over 800,000 youth since its inception and is currently helping 42,000 young people in 800 schools in 33 states to achieve academic, career and life success.

To learn more about JAG online, visit: www.jag.org.

Note: Media outlets are encouraged to contact DOE for more program details.



Toys "R" Us mascot Geoffrey the Giraffe surrounded by students in the Jobs for America's Graduates programs from Asbury Park High School and Barringer High School in Newark; and Assistant Commissioner Mary Ellen Clark, New Jersey Labor Department; and Major George W. Paffendorf, New Jersey Labor Department, State Director, New Jersey Youth Corps.