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56 New Districts Join the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program, Providing Better Educational Opportunities for Students and Families

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Trenton, NJ -- Fifty-six new districts will take part in the Interdistrict Public School Choice program in the 2011-2012 school year, increasing and improving educational opportunities for children and families, Acting Education Commissioner Chris Cerf announced today.

The Interdistrict Public School Choice program allows students the option of attending a public school outside their district of residence without cost to their parents.

"The Christie Administration wants all children to have the same hope and opportunity that comes with attending a school that fits their needs. The Interdistrict Public School Choice program empowers parents to make the best educational choices for their children, so they have the best chance for a successful future," Acting Commissioner Cerf said.

"I also want to commend the 56 districts for participating in the program. It's a clear sign that districts are taking steps to make better and more efficient use of their available space," the Acting Commissioner added. "Choice is good for students because it expands opportunities, and it benefits taxpayers because districts are tapping a new revenue source."

In the 2011-12 school year, students will be able to choose to go to a school outside their district of residence if the selected school is participating in the choice program. 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.

Currently, 15 districts are in the program. Today's announcement brings the total number of districts participating in the program to 71. The students benefiting from choosing their own public school will nearly triple, from about 1,000 students now to nearly 2,900 students in the fall.

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 choice school sets the number of openings per grade level. If there are more students requesting admission to the school than there are available openings, the school chooses the students by lottery. Any student currently attending New Jersey public schools is eligible to take advantage of this program.

Details on the program can be found here: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/choice>

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



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