



Q. What methods do you support for bringing the quality of all schools in NJ up to the level enjoyed by students at our best schools?

Chris Christie (Republican) - We need to change the way we approach education in our state. In order to guarantee universal access to quality schools, New Jersey must ensure parents have the choice to send their children to successful schools, quality teachers and assurances that their tax dollars are getting to the child. I will strongly advocate for the introduction of competition within our education system by expanding the number of charter schools to allow parents the chance to remove their child from a failing school in favor of alternatives. Charter schools have reported high academic performance while providing rich and well-rounded educations at significantly lower costs. In Jersey City alone, there are thousands on waiting lists to be enrolled in more cost effective and better alternatives to the

Jon Corzine (Democratic) - Education is a top priority. I've fought to strengthen education by focusing on resources, rigor and accountability. I've increased total funding for education by over \$1.8 billion since 2006. My new school funding formula distributes resources fairly and ensures that all at-risk kids have access to a good education, regardless of where they live. I also restarted construction of schools and authorized \$3.9 billion in additional funding for school construction.

Our investment in education is paying off. New Jersey students have the highest AP test scores in America. We lead the nation in closing the achievement gap between white and black students. Our investment in preschool is also paying off: preschool students in the former Abbott districts showed significant improvements in reading and math skills.

Jason Cullen (People Not Politics) - We must create an environment where there is competition. I believe that towns and cities should develop voucher and tax-credit systems to encourage more private and home schooling. We also need to hold our teachers and administrators responsible for providing the best education; to hold performance and quality over job security. If a town or city is unable to provide a topnotch education, the municipality should offer these options to allow the best opportunities for the students.

Christopher Daggett (Independent for New Jersey) – It is time for a change – a change that focuses on accountability and performance, and that reexamines fundamental assumptions about such institutions as high school graduation tests, tenure, and the public education monopoly. When elected, we will revamp the system for tenure, ending lifetime tenure for new teachers and replacing it with five-year, performance-based renewable contracts with merit pay opportunities and increased supervision in the classroom. We also will abolish the 'back door' process known as the Special Review Assessment, a program that allows students who could not pass the high school proficiency exam a route to earn a diploma. We will expand opportunities for more school

choice, including supporting a program whereby students in failing schools could receive scholarships to attend a school of

Kenneth Kaplan (Libertarian Party) – Under a tuition based educational system, students would not be stuck in a “bad” district. They could enroll in a school that was more inclined to meet their educational needs and their parents’ expectations. Bad schools, whose enrollments would shrink, would soon go out of business.

Joshua Leinsdorf (Fair Election Party) - Every high school student needs a laptop computer. Currently, students with computers excel, while those without them provide the excuse for low standards. The laptops can be bought with the money saved by asking middle and high school students to take transit buses to school where possible, rather than yellow school buses. This will save half a billion dollars a year.

Putting students on public transit will permit high school days to begin at a reasonable hour, which studies show would be the one change having the greatest impact on improving academic performance. Making students walk ten minutes will help reduce obesity, which is threatening to overwhelm the health care system with a youth diabetes epidemic in the next five years.

Alvin Lindsay (Lindsay for Governor) - The methods that are in place now have helped the quality of all schools in NJ. I do not think anything should be changed. Any candidate who wants to change the way things are in the educational system should not be elected. Watch out Teachers.

David Meiswinkle (Middle Class Empowerment) - New Jersey taxpayers pay top dollar for their education and many of the districts are performing at basement levels. This situation can not be tolerated. The Abbot School districts seem to be notorious for sucking up State monies but not producing results. It would not hurt to run some schools as if it were a military school, with discipline and accountability; or to run the classroom as a good football or basketball coach would run his practices. We also need teachers with passion for their subjects who can relate with the students and bring the subject to them so they can see the connection with their life and its betterment. Vouchers should be offered in situations were the students is prevented from excelling.

Gregory Pason (Socialist Party USA) - We need to invest in public education with equitable, per-pupil funding to insure quality education for all. This includes tuition-free pre-K and post secondary education for all qualified residents. We also need to enact legislation which removes military recruiters from our schools and rejects Washington’s “no child left behind” policy.

Kostas Petris (For the People) – Every school has it ups and downs. I believe it all starts from the home and the parenting of the students. If the parents do not care it is more likely that the student will not care. If the parent talks to their child of the importance of school and keeps the child in line, it is most likely the student will care. I as governor would to talk to the parents in news media and make sure that they understand this. It is very important to the student, the school and the staff.

After that it is up to the school to provide the teachers that care about their job and for the welfare of the student from their teachings. I would not support

Gary Steele (Leadership, Independence, Vision) – New Jersey is under the impression that money is the answer to the problems which plague under-performing schools. There can be nothing further from the truth. Money is not the answer. We have witnessed over the last 30 years, billions of dollars spent with no improvement. The answer is as simple as it is hard. It is the parents. The parents must be involved in their children's education. There must also be a financial stake in the local schools by the local population. Right now, the citizens who live in the cities with under-performing schools do not have a financial stake in their schools. Most of the money comes from Trenton. A voucher can be implemented to force schools to be competitive.

Gary Stein (Independent, multiple slogans) – Merit pay for Principals and Superintendents? I did quite a bit of substitute teaching several years ago. The teachers aren't the problem, the Principals are. Do the principals back teachers who stand up to students who bring cell phone, ipods, blackberries etc. to school and into the classroom? Not the ones I saw; that's one example. It's- get the kids onto the school buses on time, or else! To the principals and superintendents, I say, if the shoe doesn't fit.....question said specifically "level enjoyed by students at our best schools?"

P.S. I'd issue an executive order forbidding the printing of school handbooks and save a bunch of money. The handbooks I saw, all mentioned that cell phones, and i-pods are prohibited in the classroom.