



For Immediate Release

September 19, 2017

New Jersey Launches '65 by '25: Many Paths One Future' Campaign

*Higher Education, Labor, K-12 Educators Partner with Business and Industry
for a Competitive, Innovative and Prosperous New Jersey*

Princeton, N.J. -- More than 100 education, business and industry leaders took part in the official launch Tuesday of New Jersey's **65 by '25: Many Paths, One Future** campaign at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Headquarters in Princeton.

With the pace of innovation rapidly accelerating, New Jersey must provide real economic opportunities for residents by supporting and creating pathways for everyone to acquire the skills and education that will help them secure rewarding careers. According to the latest data available, 50.2 percent of New Jersey's workers have some level of education or training beyond high school -- well short of the 65 percent economists say will be needed by 2025 to meet the demand for a skilled labor workforce equipped with high-quality, industry-valued post-secondary credentials.

The **65 by '25: Many Paths, One Future** campaign will help New Jersey reach the higher level of education and training that will be needed in the next few years. The campaign is led collaboratively by the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the Department of Education.

Aaron R. Fichtner, commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, said more partnerships between business and industry will be the key to the campaign's future success.

"New Jersey's highly skilled, productive and innovative workforce is our state's greatest economic advantage. To stay competitive in this ever-changing world, employers must work closely with colleges, universities, and high schools to expand internships and apprenticeships and create more pathways to industry-valued credentials," Commissioner Fichtner said.

The keynote address at the launch, stressing the urgent need for action, was delivered by Jamie Merisotis, president and chief executive officer of the Lumina Foundation, which provided the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education a \$100,000 attainment goal challenge grant in August.

"We applaud the State of New Jersey for its commitment to increasing education attainment beyond high school," said Merisotis. "Today's workplace demands a greater breadth and depth of talent and New Jersey is wise to pursue a strategy focused on ensuring its residents possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in our rapidly changing labor market."

“Now is the time for public and private organizations, education and industry, community organizations and policy makers to work together toward a common future,” Secretary of Higher Education Rochelle Hendricks said. “College degrees are one pathway to success, but not everyone will need a degree. Short-term certificates can provide industry-valued credentials. Our goal is aspirational, but the need is real. Together, we can reach the goal.”

New Jersey Department of Education Commissioner Kimberley Harrington emphasized the importance of elementary school students being aware of the many pathways to success in life.

“The NJDOE strongly believes each and every student in New Jersey deserves to have the skill set to make the choice after high school to follow their passion through whatever pathway they choose,” Commissioner Harrington said. “The 65 by 25 initiative will help districts connect with businesses to provide students the opportunity to obtain industry-recognized credentials that will assist them in achieving their goals.”

During the event, Rowan University, Lockheed Martin Corporation, the New Jersey Innovation Institute (NJII) and the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) were presented Innovation and Partnership awards for their high-quality collaborations.

Accepting the award on behalf of their organizations were Rowan University President Ali Houshmand; NJII President and Chief Executive Officer Donald Sebastian; NJIT Provost Fadi Deek and Lockheed Martin executives James Sheridan, Carmen Valentino, Jennifer Vacco and Robert Regensburger.

New Jersey’s move toward establishing a formal attainment goal began in May 2015, when The Governor’s Higher Education Council issued a report, *Strategic Priorities for New Jersey Higher Education*, in which it recommended that 65 percent of New Jerseyans attain a post-secondary degree or certification by 2025.

Regional summits will be held in the months ahead with the goal of establishing a strategic plan for action. Colleges, universities, businesses, industries and government officials will be invited to participate.

Media Contacts:

Alan Guenther, Office of the Secretary of Higher Education
Alan.guenther@oshe.nj.gov
(609) 984-2804

Karla Bardinas, Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Karla.bardinas@dol.nj.gov
(609) 984-2841