



EDUCATION

Education is not only the great equalizer in our democracy; it is the single greatest investment New Jersey can make in its economic growth. From preschool through college, we need to make sure that we provide our young people with the tools they need to thrive in the global economy and live up to their full potential.

Quality Public Education For Every Child

New Jersey has some of the best schools in the nation, but it also has a glaring achievement gap and many schools that are still struggling. A strong public education system is the best way to ensure that all children in New Jersey have the supports and opportunities they need to succeed.

- **Restore and fund all of New Jersey's public schools according to the law.** The School Funding Reform Act was designed to ensure that every child, regardless of where they live, has the opportunity to receive a quality public education. As governor, Senator Buono will restore the school funding formula required by existing law, protecting supports for children who are at-risk, those with special needs, and those who speak English as a second language.
- **Expand quality preschool and full-day kindergarten programs.** Early childhood education is one of the most effective ways to close the achievement gap. Children who begin their education with quality pre-school have better educational outcomes, socialization skills, and increased opportunities as they go through life. Full-day kindergarten allows our children to continue their growth. As governor, Senator Buono will make expanding early childhood education a top priority, giving our at-risk students the leg up they need to succeed.
- **Restore funding for before- and after-school care programs.** Before- and after-school programs provide students with meaningful recreation and enrichment opportunities and ensure the process of learning continues even outside the classroom. Restoring funding to these programs will be critical to helping our students thrive.

Increasing College- And Career-Readiness

Too many students today graduate high school without basic skills needed to succeed in 21st century workforce jobs and postsecondary education courses. By ensuring students leave high school better prepared, graduates who enter the workforce can find better jobs and have the foundational knowledge they need to succeed in college.

- **Raise standards to prepare students for 21st century jobs.** Rigorous educational standards for student performance are necessary to prepare our kids for success in obtaining 21st century jobs. Success in meeting those standards must be subject to research-based, meaningful academic assessments that are fair, transparent, and accurate. Senator Buono believes that students, teachers, and administrators should be subject to continuous evaluation designed to improve performance and educational outcomes.
- **Recruit and train more qualified science and math teachers.** New Jersey faces a shortage of science and math teachers, putting students that wish to pursue science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—or ‘STEM’—fields in college at a disadvantage. As governor, Senator Buono will address this shortage by expanding programs to credential our existing teachers in science and mathematics.

Supporting Kids, Supporting Educators

Educators shape the minds of tomorrow in the classrooms of today. As governor, Senator Buono will work with New Jersey’s educators to make sure they can provide our children with the quality education they deserve.

- **Attract the most qualified teachers and administrators.** Talented, professional school administrators have a significant impact on the performance of our teachers and the success of our children. New Jersey needs teachers with expertise in subject matter and teaching methods, as well as administrators with strong leadership and management skills. As governor, Senator Buono will use the power of her office to attract talented and qualified administrators who will support teachers and improve student performance in our public schools.
- **Provide teachers with the resources they need to succeed.** Like their students, teachers must strive to learn even after they leave the classroom. Meaningful teacher evaluations through classroom observations can give new and old teachers alike the information and tools they need to enhance their teaching skills.

Creating Safe Learning Environments For Students

A safe learning environment is critical to ensuring our students can learn effectively. As governor, Senator Buono will strive to make our schools places where children can develop their minds and grow into well-rounded adults.

- **Ensure health and safety of our children by repairing our crumbling schools.** Every day in New Jersey, children, teachers, and school faculty are forced to work in buildings that are crumbling before their eyes. This limits the ability to teach and learn and can cause illness or injury if left unattended. As governor, Senator Buono will accelerate use of the \$3.9 billion in authorized school construction funds to address long-neglected maintenance and overcrowding in our classrooms.
- **Continue efforts to end bullying in schools.** Children can’t learn in an environment they fear. We must do everything possible to ensure our schools are spaces of positive reinforcement where our children can learn and grow. Senator Buono was an early champion of New Jersey’s

anti-bullying laws. As governor, she will work with school administrators, teachers, and counselors to ensure that these laws are implemented and enforced to the fullest extent.

A Renewed Commitment To Our Public Colleges And Universities

Higher education is the gateway to creating a skilled workforce. Yet every year, New Jersey experiences a net loss of 30,000 college students. As governor, Senator Buono will take bold and immediate action to ensure the best and brightest students will stay and learn in New Jersey today and contribute to our skilled workforce tomorrow.

- **Make tuition at our colleges and universities more affordable.** New Jersey's public institutions of higher education have some of the highest in-state tuition rates in the nation. At the same time, New Jersey has consistently underfunded these institutions, passing the costs on to students. From our four-year institutions to our county colleges and vocational schools, we must renew our commitment to investing in higher education and funding scholarship programs that make college more affordable and accessible to our young people.
- **Give parents the tools to save for their children's higher education.** The average student at a New Jersey college or university graduates with over \$27,000 in debt. This debt puts tremendous strain on New Jersey families and inhibits the economic freedom of graduating students as they enter the job market. Creating up-front tax deductions for the NJ BEST college savings program will encourage families to save for their children's tuition expenses, reduce debt, and increase long term savings.
- **Develop a fair and consistent way to fund higher education.** New Jersey currently operates without a consistent and predictable method to fund higher education, which has made it difficult for colleges and universities to plan for the future needs of their students. As governor, Senator Buono will commit to finally developing a fair and consistent system to fund our public colleges and universities.
- **Partner the business community with institutions of higher learning.** New Jersey is home to world-renowned colleges and universities. We must capitalize on these centers of innovation by partnering the business community with our public colleges and universities, allowing them to share resources and create jobs for recent graduates.

Fulfilling The Promise Of Higher Education For New Jersey's Dreamers

- **Bringing tuition equality to New Jersey.** When the children of undocumented immigrants graduate high school, they have no affordable option for a postsecondary education. Allowing these students – young people who had no power to decide whether or not to come to this country – to pay in-state tuition rates will empower them to pursue a degree, become part of our skilled workforce, and contribute to the economic growth of our state.