



NEWS RELEASE

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NEW JERSEY PIONEERS WOODROW WILSON TEACHING FELLOWSHIP ON EAST COAST Gov. Christie Announces Program to Recruit STEM Teachers and Change Teacher Prep in NJ

TRENTON, N.J. (December 7, 2012) – Governor Chris Christie announced today that New Jersey will become the first East Coast state to launch the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship, with nearly \$9 million in support from a consortium of foundations and private funders.

Created by the Princeton-based Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, the Fellowship recruits top science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) college graduates and career changers and prepares them to teach in high-need schools. The program ultimately seeks to transform the way teacher candidates are prepared.

“Excellence in education begins in the classroom,” said Governor Chris Christie. “Today, we are taking another important step to ensure our teachers are prepared before they are placed in high-need schools. It only makes sense that we give our teachers the experience and the tools they need before they are placed in challenging environments. Thanks to the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and our five New Jersey higher education institutions participating in this program, teachers will be ready to make a difference in struggling districts where their help is needed most.”

Five New Jersey institutions—The College of New Jersey, Montclair State University, Rowan University, Rutgers University-Camden, and William Paterson University—will participate, developing model master’s-level teacher preparation programs. Fellows will go through a rigorous one-year program in local school classrooms, a clinically based approach similar to that of medical schools.

Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellows receive \$30,000 stipends to use during the master’s program. In exchange, they commit to teach in a high-need urban or rural school in New Jersey for three years, with ongoing mentoring.

“Study after study shows that teachers are the single most important in-school factor in improving student achievement,” said Arthur Levine, president of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. “That’s the overarching goal for these Woodrow Wilson New Jersey Teaching Fellows. New Jersey overproduces elementary school teachers but underproduces middle- and high-school STEM teachers, and 30 to 40 percent of New Jersey teachers leave the profession during their first three years in the classroom—more in high-need districts. So there’s a genuine need for these new teachers, and for innovative preparation that will help keep them in the classroom.”

Twelve New Jersey school districts will partner with the state’s participating universities to provide clinical experience for the Teaching Fellows—a full academic year in a high-need, high-functioning school, where Fellows will learn onsite the way residents in a teaching hospital do. The 12 districts include Trenton, Ewing, Lawrence, and New Brunswick, working with TCNJ; Newark and Orange, working with Montclair State; Paterson, working with William Paterson University; and Camden, Pemberton, and several rural districts, working jointly with Rowan and Rutgers-Camden.

“We say it time and time again: teachers matter, so we must recruit, train, evaluate and support them in a way that has the greatest impact in our classrooms,” said Education Commissioner Chris Cerf. “I am thrilled we are the first East Coast state to be part of the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellows as this partnership underscores an important need: with predicted job growth in the STEM fields outpacing all others, we must focus on developing the relevant skills in our students now. Recruiting and training future teachers with strong STEM backgrounds means we are creating opportunities for our students to meet the future demands in the marketplace.”

Beginning this fall, the university partners have 18 to 21 months to tailor programs that meet the Fellowship's standards for intensive clinical work and rigorous related coursework. The first Fellows will be selected in spring 2014, start their academic programs in fall 2014, and be ready to teach in fall 2015.

"This fellowship program provides a tremendous opportunity to support and strengthen teacher preparation programs to meet the current and emerging need for exceptional teachers, especially in our most challenged communities," said Secretary of Higher Education Rochelle Hendricks. "Rapidly changing demographics and global competition require that we revamp and revitalize teacher education. This innovative program will ensure that our new teachers have the intensive preparation, the cultural awareness and classroom experience they need to be successful."

Current funding will enable the participating colleges and universities to enroll ten Fellows per year initially. These institutions will receive matching grants to redevelop their teacher preparation programs based on a set of standards set by the Foundation in conjunction with national experts. Given the state's shortage of secondary-level STEM teachers, the Foundation is looking for additional partners and funders to expand the program. "If the program is able to expand to its eventual \$13.6 million target," Levine said, "it will produce enough Fellows to fill nearly all anticipated STEM vacancies in the 12 participating districts."

Major funders for the Fellowship in New Jersey include the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, M. Brian and Sandy Maher, the Overdeck Family Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the PSEG Foundation, the JP Morgan Chase Foundation, the Schumann Fund for New Jersey, Educational Testing Service, the William E. Simon Foundation, and Jennifer A. Chalsty, with additional funding from a number of other foundations and philanthropists.

"With the imminent wave of teacher retirements, there is nothing more important than recruiting and training the next generation of teachers," said Chris Daggett, president and CEO of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. "The Dodge Foundation's focus on education in New Jersey supports public schools – particularly in our high needs districts – to help prepare students for 21st century careers and challenges. We care about high quality teacher training programs and believe that the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship ultimately will lead to transformative change in our schools and for our students. We are pleased to join our fellow funders in this pioneering effort."

National Movement in STEM Teaching

The Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship is contributing to President Barack Obama's goal of recruiting and preparing 100,000 new STEM teachers nationwide. The program received a specific White House endorsement in January 2010, and has quickly become a nationally known model.

The first state to launch the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship, in 2009, was Indiana, followed by Michigan and Ohio. Across the three states, 17 colleges and universities have rethought their preparation and mentoring for new teachers, with over 200 Fellows currently teaching and nearly 200 more in preparation. A range of foundations and private funders, including Lilly Endowment Inc., the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and a consortium of Ohio foundations, as well as state and federal funds, have supported the Fellowship in these three initial states. The New Jersey program brings the total commitment to the Fellowship to nearly \$80 million.

Levine said that at least four more states have been in discussion with the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation about creating their own Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowships.

Founded in 1945, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation (www.woodrow.org) prepares the nation's best minds to meet its most important challenges, working through education. The Foundation supports its Fellows as the next generation of leaders shaping American society.

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation (www.grdodge.org) is a private foundation based in Morristown, New Jersey. Established in 1974, it focuses on issues critical to New Jersey in the areas of Arts, Education, Environment and Media and funds organizations that have a direct, meaningful impact on the state. The Dodge Foundation's mission is to support leadership, collaboration and innovation for a better New Jersey.