



Testimony before the New Jersey Senate Education Committee

Trenton, New Jersey

May 18, 2015

- Good morning, I'm Reginald Lewis, Executive Director of The Chad School Foundation, based in Newark.
- I want to thank Chairwoman Ruiz and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to appear today.
- The Chad School Foundation evolved out of the former Chad Schools, which served as an independent, co-ed, non-sectarian school for well over 35 years in the City of Newark until its closure in 2005.
- In 2010, Chad relaunched as an education foundation – now -- focused on utilizing policy and advocacy vehicles to improve public schools, as well as expanding college access for high-achieving, economically-disadvantaged students.
- In recent weeks, Chad has expressed its support for PARCC and the need for New Jersey to remain steadfast in the continued struggle to close the achievement gap.

- As this Committee is well aware, when New Jersey joined over 40 states in 2010 by adopting more rigorous standards, it did so with an aim to increase college and career readiness for all students, especially disadvantaged students of color.
- We knew then, what we clearly know now – that the adoption of higher standards requires a more rigorous measure of student performance -- an assessment tool that would indeed measure skills not captured by the NJASK and/or HSPA.
- PARCC is not only aligned to those standards -- nearly universally supported in 2010 across various constituencies – but it will also provide vital information for districts, schools, and parents.
- It measures critical thinking, problem solving, and higher-order thinking skills that we know are essential skills for succeeding in college, a future career, and life.
- We commend this Committee for all its due-diligence and efforts to ensure that New Jersey remains on a path in support of high quality standards and assessments that best gauge student strengths and weaknesses.
- We respectfully urge the Committee to continue to carefully weigh any measure that would lead to unintended consequences for our state, and ultimately harm students.
- The focus must remain not only on providing all students the opportunity to learn at higher levels, but the implementation of an assessment tool that finally provides meaningful feedback to ensure that schools and districts can be held accountable to make this happen.