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**PRESS RELEASE**

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## ***New Jersey education commissioner Christopher Cerf wins 2013 Urban Innovator Award***

**New York, NY:** Focusing on long-neglected issues in New Jersey public education, education commissioner Christopher Cerf is transforming the Garden State. The education commissioner in New Jersey oversees 2,500 public schools, 1.4 million students, and 110,000 teachers in more than 600 school districts. Cerf has led education reform by making decisions centered on children, not adults.

On January 31, 2014, the Manhattan Institute's Center for State and Local Leadership presented its annual Urban Innovator Award to New Jersey's state commissioner of education **Christopher Cerf**.

"I'm honored that the Manhattan Institute has chosen to spotlight the work that we are doing in New Jersey to ensure that all children, regardless of birth circumstance, have access to a high quality education." commissioner Cerf continued, "Change is never easy, but we have taken significant steps forward in New Jersey to intervene in our lowest-performing schools, rewrite the nation's oldest tenure law, and expand high-quality choices for our neediest students. I'm proud of our accomplishments, but hope that we can use this opportunity to discuss even more ways to advance to quality of public education for all of our students."

Under Cerf's leadership since 2011, New Jersey evolved from a laggard to a leader in education reform. The Garden State implemented numerous efforts: tenure reform, Newark's historic teacher' contract, support for effective charters, renaissance schools in Camden, Newark, and Trenton, inter-district choice. These changes foster choice, competition, accountability, and improve student achievement.

The non-partisan Urban Innovator Award has been awarded annually since 2000. Previous award winners include Rhode Island state treasurer Gina Raimondo, Chicago mayor Richard Daley, Florida governor Jeb Bush, Miami mayor Manuel Diaz, Philadelphia schools chief Paul Vallas, Renee Glover, president and CEO of the Atlanta Housing Authority, and Michelle Rhee, former chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools and founder and CEO of Students First.

**To learn more about this year's award, contact Ray Niemiec at [646-839-3335](tel:646-839-3335) or  
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For more information on the Manhattan Institute's Urban Innovator Award, please visit [http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ui\\_winners.htm](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ui_winners.htm)

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