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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 17, 2015

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Mayor Fulop and Hudson County Executive DeGise to Cut Ribbon on New Facility for Explore 2000 Middle School

JERSEY CITY- Mayor Steven M. Fulop, Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise, Hudson County Schools of Technology Superintendent Frank Gargiulo, Hudson County Schools of Technology Board President Craig Guy, and Explore 2000 Middle School Principal Amy Lin-Rodriguez held a ribbon cutting ceremony today at the new facility for Explore 2000 Middle School, located at 180 9th Street in Jersey City. The new facility will provide 6th, 7th and 8th grade students throughout Hudson County the opportunity to engage in a unique and stimulating STEM-based curriculum.

“We are very excited to have a STEM school in Jersey City and to have a middle school with a special focus on experiential project-based learning,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “Providing middle school students with a rigorous curriculum based in the STEM fields of science, math, engineering and technology, will help them develop important skills in this growing field, giving students the tools necessary to succeed in high school, college and beyond.”

Explore 2000 is a high performing middle school run by the Hudson County Schools of Technology. The middle school’s previous location, at 525 Montgomery Street, is the site of the current HCST Jersey City campus. Through a partnership between the Jersey City Redevelopment Agency and the Hudson County Executive’s Office, a new, specialized facility has been created for the STEM-focused middle school.

“This ribbon cutting represents the wonderful things that can be accomplished when County and City Government are working together to better our community’s future,” said **County Executive Tom DeGise**. “This excellent program has found a home thanks to Mayor Fulop and his administration.”

“We are very excited to be bringing this program to the downtown Jersey City area,” added **HCST Superintendent Frank Gargiulo**. “It is a great opportunity for children to experience a modern way of learning in this great environment.”

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The new facility will allow the school to expand its student population over a five-year period, from 80 students in grades 6-8 during the 2015-2016 school year to roughly 240 students by the 2019-2020 school year. The school's new location will also allow for an expansion of the unique project-based STEM curricula to its core subject areas and traditional learning labs.

The 2013-2014 New Jersey School Performance Report rated Explore 2000's academic performance as 'high' when compared to schools across the state, and 'very high' when compared to its peers. Additionally, the school is meeting 100 percent of its performance targets in the area of academic achievement, according to the data. The school's new enhanced and specialized facility will only help to improve the Explore 2000's high academic performance ranking statewide.

"The students and staff of Explore 2000 are beyond excited and appreciative for this opportunity to open in our own facility," said **Explore 2000 Middle School Principal Amy Lin-Rodriguez**. "In doing so, we are finally able to expand and offer our unique learning environment to more Hudson County students."

In addition to being used by the Explore 2000 Middle School, the County will also use the new facility to offer robust adult career education programs after school hours and on weekends, including advanced manufacturing classes, ESL and GED programs.

For more information on Explore 2000 and the Hudson County Schools of Technology please visit <http://www.hcstonline.org/>

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Steven M. Fulop at 201-376-0699 or jenniferm@icnj.org////