



NJDOE News

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For Release: August 25, 2004

DOE Denies Charters for Jersey Shore and Great Falls Charter Schools

Citing continued concerns over operations and governance, the state Department of Education (DOE) announced this week it has denied charters for the Great Falls Charter School in Paterson, Passaic County, and for the Jersey Shore Charter School in Oceanport, Monmouth County.

"We continue to work very hard with the founders and boards of trustees in order to give charter schools, and most importantly, their students, the best opportunities to succeed," Commissioner of Education William L. Librera said. "But we are adamant when we say we want to see children enrolled in entities that have a viable chance to survive. Regarding these two charter schools, this is sadly not the case."

Commissioner Librera informed the schools of his decision after the founders of both prospective schools failed to provide the Department of Education with assurances that school enrollment, staffing and facilities were adequate. The DOE had previously approved applications for both schools, which would have opened their doors for the first time next month.

"Every prospective charter school represents a chance for students and their families to choose a different type of educational experience," Commissioner Librera said. "We established charter schools in this state with choice and opportunity for students as our foremost goals. We want to see successful charter school applicants offer a high quality educational alternative for students."

In his letters to the two prospective charter schools, Commissioner Librera cited the following reasons for the denials at each school, respectively:

- Jersey Shore: ". the deficiencies in the documentation and the substantive operational and governance problems in evidence"; and
- Great Falls: ". the deficiencies in the documentation submitted, missing documentation and the persistent failure to adhere to prescribed timelines."

"Unfortunately, despite our repeated attempts, we have been unable to receive appropriate assurances in these areas from these two schools," Commissioner Librera said. "Without these assurances, we cannot allow students to attend them."

The DOE had ongoing discussions over the summer with representatives from both Great Falls and Jersey Shore that covered the lack of progress made in the following areas: securing a school site, hiring appropriate staff and establishing set enrollment numbers. In each case, the DOE had not received appropriate documentation from both schools in areas essential to successfully operating a public school by the August 16th deadline.

The Jersey Shore Charter School application was approved to enroll a maximum of 180 students in grades five to seven, with a four-year projection of serving 240 students in grades five through eight from Eatontown, Oceanport Borough and West Long Branch in Monmouth County.

The Great Falls Charter School application was approved to enroll a maximum of 162 students in grades six to eight, with a four-year maximum enrollment of 324 students in the same grades from the City of Paterson in Passaic County.

Charter schools are permitted under a state law enacted in 1996. A charter school is a type of public school that is given greater flexibility in curriculum and instruction. The law establishes charter schools as laboratories of educational innovation where new practices can be developed and implemented in schools.

Both schools have the right to appeal the Commissioner's decision to the State Board of Education.

For more information, please contact the Department of Education Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.

