



Department of Education Approves 9 Charter Schools to Open in September

New "Performance Frameworks" Will Help Department Continue Improvement of Oversight and Accountability for Charter Schools

For Immediate Release

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Trenton, NJ - Demonstrating the Christie Administration's strong support for increasing the number of high-quality school options for New Jersey students, the Department today approved 9 charter schools to open in September, bringing the total number of charter schools in New Jersey to 86. In addition, the Department continues to improve oversight and accountability for charter schools by instituting new Performance Frameworks that will set clear expectations for charter school performance and will serve as the basis for school evaluation, monitoring, and intervention.

"We are deeply committed to ensuring that every student in New Jersey has access to a high-quality public school option that is a good fit for them, no matter whether that is a district, charter, magnet, or vocational school," said Acting Commissioner Chris Cerf. "We are confident that the charter schools we approved today will provide great options for the children of New Jersey."

As part of the annual charter authorizing process, the Department of Education conducts a "preparedness review" to evaluate whether a charter applicant approved in a previous round has the academic and operational capacity in place to offer a strong educational program. Applicants are required to submit documentation of compliance with state regulations to the Department—this year by June 30—and department staff conduct a site visit of the school facility. The Commissioner and Department staff then review this information to determine which applicants will receive their final charter to open their doors in September.

"We must hold a high bar for any school that serves New Jersey students, and we are confident that these schools have the academic and operational components in place to provide a high-quality choice on day one," said Acting Commissioner Cerf.

The Performance Framework for all new charter schools announced today will set clear expectations for schools and will evaluate them in three areas: whether the school is an academic success; whether the school is financially viable; and whether the school is equitable and organizationally sound. The Department will introduce a Performance Framework for all existing charter schools by the end of the summer.

This Framework will help to define charter school success and create a comprehensive and systemic review process for all charter schools. Schools will be assessed in a number of areas, such as how the school compares to similar "peer" schools; progress of individual subgroups of students and the school as a whole over time; whether the school is financially healthy and sustainable; whether the school has equitable admissions and enrollment practices to serve all students; and whether the school offers a safe and structured learning environment.

Through a partnership with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) over the past two years, the Department has increased its oversight and accountability for charter schools. During that time the Department has opened 18 new schools, closed 5 schools for poor academic performance or organizational and fiscal issues, and put another 13 schools on probation.

"According to data over the past several years, charter schools on average across the state are outperforming other district options for students in high-need communities. However, we must also be honest that just as some district schools are failing students, some charter schools in New Jersey are also not performing at the level their students deserve," said Acting Commissioner Cerf. "Charter schools are granted autonomy in exchange for accountability, and we at the state level will continue to hold all charter schools accountable for results to ensure that they offer all students a high-quality education and an equality of opportunity."

The new Performance Framework can be found here:

<http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/PerformanceFramework.pdf>

In addition to the 9 schools that are opening, another 13 schools were granted a planning year during which those schools will continue to develop the academic and operational components of the school, which are crucial to ensuring that it will be successful when it opens the following year. Another 10 schools were not granted a planning year and will not receive a final charter because they failed to demonstrate sufficient progress towards

readiness.

The list of schools and their final status is as follows:

Charter Schools Granted Final Approval	
Name	District
City Invincible Charter School	Camden
Knowledge A to Z Charter School	Camden
Thomas Edison Energy Charter School	Franklin Township (Including Somerset), North Brunswick, South Brunswick
Beloved Charter School	Jersey City
Merit Preparatory of Newark Charter School	Newark
Newark Prep	Newark
Paulo Freire Charter School	Newark
100 Legacy	Newark, Irvington
Benjamin Banneker	Willingboro
Charter Schools Granted a Planning Year	
Name	District
Atlantic City Community Charter School	Atlantic City
Charter School for Global Leadership	Camden
Camden Community Charter School	Camden
Hope Community Charter School	Camden City
Excellence Charter School	Camden City
New Jersey Virtual Charter School	Camden, Perth Amboy, Neptune, Paterson
Arete Charter School	East Orange, Orange
Jersey City Global Charter School	Jersey City
Forest Hill Charter School	Newark
NJ Virtual Academy Charter School	Newark
Trenton Scholars Charter School	Trenton
Merit Preparatory of Trenton Charter School	Trenton City
Compass Academy Charter School	Vineland
Charter Schools Denied Final Approval	
Name	District
Regis Academy Charter School	Cherry Hill
DREAM Prep Academy	Jersey City
Promise CS for Excellence	Linden, Elizabeth, Roselle
Lillie Mae Jenkins Charter School	Newark
New Day Charter HS	Newark
Spirit Prep	Newark
Bright Horizons	Penns Grove, Carney's Point
Princeton International Academy Charter School	South Brunswick, Princeton Regional, West Windsor-Plainsboro
Shalom Academy Charter School	Teaneck
Willingboro Academy Charter School	Willingboro