



Christie Administration Approves Two New Charter Schools

14 Schools Now Eligible to Open in 2013-2014 School Year

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 of Education (DOE) today approved 2 additional charter applications during the February approval round- Paterson Arts and Science and Paterson Collegiate Charter School. Paterson Arts and Science, along with 13 applications approved in previous application cycles, will be eligible to open in the 2013-2014 school year, while Paterson Collegiate Charter School requested to open in the 2014-15 school year, which was granted. This round of approvals represents the first time the Department has reserved the October expedited application round for applicants with a proven track record of success with nine applicants submitting proposals.

In order for these two successful applicants to be granted a final charter, they must first complete a "preparedness review," to ensure they have the academic, operational, leadership and organizational capacity to successfully meet the needs of children through high quality academic programs, financial viability, equitability, and organization soundness. After a review of the applicants' submission of this information in June 2013, the Commissioner will render a final approval decision on July 15 for charters to begin operation in September. Under the Christie Administration, a total of 46 schools have been approved for a charter with 25 schools receiving final approval to open their doors.

"The development of high quality charter schools is one way we are expanding public school options and improving student achievement for our students in underserved communities," said Commissioner Chris Cerf. "We firmly believe that it is a privilege to operate a school in New Jersey, and as an authorizer we are committed to holding schools to high standards through our approval process and accountability measures. We believe the schools approved today will provide our students and families with excellent educational opportunities."

Over the past two years, the Department has taken significant steps towards improving its charter authorizer responsibilities, which include both approving only high-quality new school applications as well as holding existing charter schools accountable for results. In partnership with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), the Department has strengthened its new school approval process and aligned it with national best practices. This includes a multi-stage review that consists of an in-person interview, a thorough review of both the school plan and capacity to implement that plan, the demonstrated need for the school in the proposed community, and the solicitation of input from the public.

To ensure that the quality of applications is strong, the Department's Charter Schools Office has invested in recruiting high-performing charter operators from across the country to expand into New Jersey, encouraging charter operators in New Jersey with a strong track record to grow, and conducting a needs analysis to identify other areas of the state where charter schools could offer choice in underserved communities. This collective work has resulted in the Department closing 5 schools for poor academic performance or organizational and fiscal issues and placing another 17 schools on probation in the last two years.

The approved charter applications are:

Name	Districts	Grades served (at scale)	Enrollment (at scale)
Paterson Arts & Science	Paterson	K-8	540
Paterson Collegiate Charter School	Paterson	K-5	548