



NJDOE News

Contact: Richard Vespucci
For Release: January 11, 2001

Whitman Administration Announces Approval of [Nine New Charter Schools](#)

Commissioner of Education David Hespe today announced the state's approval of nine new charter schools, bringing the total number of approved charter schools to 72.

"All signs continue to point to the success of charter schools in New Jersey," said Governor Christie Whitman, who praised the charter school movement in her State-of-the-State address on Tuesday. "Each day, students are given new opportunities to grow and learn in a new and innovative learning environment.

"I am so proud to see that the charter school program we established is doing so well in its formative years. I am confident that charter schools will continue to thrive for years to come."

Commissioner Hespe made today's announcement held at the Queen City Academy Charter School in Plainfield. Before congratulating the successful applicants, Hespe toured the school, which opened in September 2000 for 72 students in grades K-6.

"Charter schools continue to be popular avenues of choice for families who are planning their children's education," Commissioner Hespe said. "Of the 54 charter schools now in operation, 76 percent report that they maintain a combined waiting list of more than 4,000 students.

"We are proud of the charter school movement in our state and the choice it is providing," the Commissioner said. "You, as parents, teachers and community members have answered the call to create strong, viable, high-quality schools."

New Jersey's 54 charter schools currently enroll 10,538 students from more than 220 communities in New Jersey. In September 2001, 68 charter schools are scheduled to open their doors to 15,945 students. The 14 new schools consist of nine previously approved schools that had opted for a planning year and five of the nine new schools announced today. Four of the new charter schools have opted for a planning year in 2001-02.

The nine new charter schools are:

- Atlantic City International Community Charter School, Atlantic City
- Bergen Hope Charter School, Lyndhurst Township, North Arlington, Rutherford
- Green Willow Charter School, Mahwah Township, Ramsey, Saddle River, Upper Saddle River
- Martha Chaneyfield-Palmer Science and Technology Charter School, Newark
- Performance Learning Regional Charter School, Belleville, Bloomfield Township, Glen Ridge, Nutley
- Gilliard Charter School, Jersey City
- University Academy Charter School, Jersey City
- Hope Academy Charter School, Asbury Park
- Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology, Paterson

Charter schools are permitted under a state law enacted by Governor Whitman 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 places where educational innovation with fewer regulations can be carried out for possible use of successful programs and practices in schools throughout New Jersey.

Some innovations in charter schools are found in their organizational structure, longer school day and academic year and use of different classroom groupings for learning, such as multi-age classrooms. Charter schools often have a curricular focus (ecosystem, performing arts, etc.) and emphasize themes such as citizenship and community service.

Charter schools have an average enrollment of 193 students, making them smaller than other public schools. Their average charter school class size of 17 students is also smaller than their counterparts in other public schools.

High levels of student attendance and parental involvement are reported by charter schools. The average student attendance rate in charter schools was 94 percent in 1999-2000. More than 50 percent of all parents of charter

school students attend major school functions.

Today's announcement completes the fifth round of charter school applications. Since 1997, the Department of Education has received 186 charter school applications. In the latest round, the Commissioner approved nine of 24 completed applications.

Applications consist of two major sections: a fiscal plan and an academic/implementation plan. The Commissioner thanked all applicants for participating in the process, and invited unsuccessful applicants to strengthen their proposals and re-apply in the future.

Attached is a list of the new charter schools. For more information about the charter school movement in New Jersey, visit the Department of Education website:

www.state.nj.us/education