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## Charter School Parents Take to Trenton, Call on Governor Murphy to Reverse Department of Education's Charter School Denials and #LetMyChildLearn

**TRENTON, NJ - March 10, 2022** - Following February's denials of high-performing public charter schools, hundreds of parents and students, primarily families of color, from New Jersey's public charter schools took to the state's capitol, urging Governor Phil Murphy to direct Acting Department of Education Commissioner Angelica Allen-McMillan to reverse these harmful decisions and support the growth of high-quality charter schools in New Jersey. Hundreds of parents and students took to the Statehouse Annex, traveling from all across the state, to express their concerns of being uprooted from the schools that best fit their educational needs.

The #LetMyChildLearn campaign was launched following the New Jersey Department of Education's denial of expansions to high-performing charter schools in Newark, Trenton, Kearny, New Brunswick, and Paterson. Due to these denials, hundreds of students will no longer be able to remain at their schools throughout their educational careers. The campaign's goal is to provide families with the ability to share their perspective with the Governor directly while also ensuring that New Jersey leaders and lawmakers learn more about the important role that public charter schools play in the public education system through a statewide digital ad campaign. To date, 3,560 community members have sent 13,970 emails asking Governor Murphy to reverse the devastating decisions made by the Department of Education. No child should be shut out of a quality public school that is meeting their academic and social emotional needs.

"Charter School families are at the capitol today to let Governor Murphy and the Department of Education know how these decisions are affecting their lives," **said Harry Lee, President of NJPCSA.** "We are here today to ensure that the voices of parents and students are heard, especially when you realize that these decisions disproportionately impact our most vulnerable communities and will rip kids away from the schools they love."

"Our students were just starting to feel a return to normalcy following the COVID-19 pandemic and now they are being taken out of the schools they believe in," **said TJ Best, Government Affairs Director of NJPCSA.** "These denials are the direct opposite of Governor Murphy's commitment to supporting high-quality New Jersey public charter schools. We continue to urge the Department of Education to listen to our families and students and allow them to make the best decision for their children's educational careers."

With these denials, parents and students are worried, having to find other schools to attend and students will have to adjust to a new school environment midway through their K-12 educational experiences.

“My family has seen tremendous improvement in our son’s education during his time at Achievers. Having a special needs student, finding a school that best fits his needs can be difficult. With these denials, I am worried where my son will go for the rest of his high school career,” **said Sulmi Sarceno, a parent of an Achievers Early College Prep Charter School student in Trenton.** “I am worried for my son’s future and for his future education beyond high school if he has to move schools. We beg the Governor and Commissioner to consider how these decisions will truly affect these students”

“All of us at Hudson want to add grades 9-12 so that our kids can stay to complete their high school experience. We want to do that specifically at Hudson, the same school where our children found such great success in elementary and middle school,” **said Ana Simonelli, whose children attend Hudson Arts and Science Charter School in Kearny.** “For my family, this means my boys are at different schools this year and my youngest will have to change schools after grade 8. I cannot understand why this decision was made. It is not fair to my boys and their friends that they cannot go to a school that they love and that we know works for them.”

“The Murphy Administration’s rejections to allow great public charter schools to enroll more students are leaving parents with no options. With approximately 20,000 students on charter waiting lists, the future remains bleak for families demanding better school alternatives to overcome the trappings of generational poverty,” **said Jasmine Morrison, whose children attend North Star Academy in Newark.** “I’m unapologetic when I say I expect my kids’ public school to be a high expectations vessel that prepares them to thrive in the future workforce. I am a champion of expanding school options and charters like North Star Academy because the teachers and staff produce amazing academic outcomes and believe in my children.”

“I recently had to have a conversation with my daughter and tell her she will not have the chance to go to high school at Philip’s like she has dreamed,” **said Oscar James, a parent of a Philip’s Academy Charter School student in Newark.** “Hundreds of charter school parents are going to be immediately shut out of the schools their families love. Thousands more will be denied the opportunities they deserve. Because of this decision, my daughter has a glass ceiling on her future.”

“Achievers has been my home for the last three years. My teachers have pushed me to be the best person I can be and to succeed academically. Governor Murphy is taking away my future,” **said Aleslys Mong, a student at Achievers Early College Prep Charter School in Trenton.** “My education at Achievers allowed me to fall in love with coding and computer science. I don’t know how I can continue learning about my passion without the curriculum of my school. My education is in jeopardy.”

The parents, students, and staff who participated in today’s rally are hoping the actions today open up a discussion with Governor Murphy and Acting Education Commissioner Allen-McMillan to reverse the denials.

For more information about this campaign, visit [www.letmychildlearn.org](http://www.letmychildlearn.org). For photos from the event, [visit this link](#).

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### **About New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association**

The New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association (NJPCSA) is the non-profit membership association that represents the state's charter school community and, by extension, charter school students and their parents. There are currently 87 charter schools in New Jersey serving nearly 60,000 students. We are committed to advancing quality public education for New Jersey's children through the cultivation of excellent public charter schools. The Association seeks to influence legislative and policy environments, leverage collective advocacy, and provide resources to support our members in developing and operating high quality, public charter schools.