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## **NJPCSA Celebrates New Jersey's Public Charter Schools During National Charter Schools Week**

**HAMILTON, NJ - May 9, 2022** - New Jersey's public charter schools are celebrating National Charter Schools Week (May 8-14) across the Garden State. Free, public, and open to all, public charter schools serve an important role, educating nearly 60,000 students in 87 schools across 40 cities in 18 of 21 counties throughout New Jersey. Since the first charter schools opened in 1997, public charter schools have delivered exceptional academic outcomes for students who need high-quality classrooms most. More than 20,000 students currently sit on charter school wait lists across the state.

Spanning the gamut from the arts and sciences to dual languages, New Jersey public charter schools offer a variety of programmatic models so parents can choose the school that best meets the needs of their children. This year marks the 30th annual National Charter Schools Week with a theme of Charter Schools Rising. Throughout the nation, there are nearly 7,700 charter schools and campuses, educating 3.6 million students.

"Public charter schools are providing safe, welcoming school environments for students and families throughout New Jersey in order to accelerate student learning as we all recover from the pandemic, particularly in our urban communities," said **Harry Lee, President and CEO of the New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association**. "Charter school educators work each and every day to ensure that their students can reach their full potential, and we are using this week to highlight their successes and demonstrate to our leaders that we need to expand options for families, not limit them."

Earlier this spring, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) released school and district-level results from last fall's Start Strong assessments. Administered in September and October of 2021, Start Strong is New Jersey's first statewide exam that provides insight on how the coronavirus pandemic and related school closures impacted student learning throughout New Jersey. Analysis shows students in the state's five largest charter cities - Newark, Trenton, Camden, Jersey City, and Paterson - are 32 percent more likely to approach or meet grade level standards in English language arts (ELA) and 55 percent more likely to approach or meet grade level standards in mathematics compared to their traditional district peers. These results clearly demonstrate that public charter schools have accelerated student learning for low-income students of color during a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. Data from Trenton was especially strong, with charters 78 percent and 157 percent more likely to approach or exceed grade level standards in ELA and in math, respectively. Despite these strong results, New Jersey charter schools receive on average \$4,600 less in funding per student than traditional district schools and do not receive adequate facilities funding.

### **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. For more information, visit [www.njcharters.org](http://www.njcharters.org).

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