Get the Facts
New Jersey's Public Charter Schools

SEPTMBER 2023

What Is a Public Charter School?
Charter schools are free, nonprofit public schools that are open to all students. They operate with more flexibility than traditional public schools in exchange for increased accountability including rigorous financial, academic and operational standards.

New Jersey Has
85
Charter Schools
In 44 Cities
And 18 Counties

More Than
60,000
Students
28,000
Charter Waitlist Total

KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

- 45% Black
- 40% Latino
- 69% Low-Income Households
- 10% Special Needs
- 6% English Language Learners

Charter schools serve 14% of all public school Black students.
Charter schools serve 6% of all public school Latino students.

PERFORMANCE

2021-22 Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELA</th>
<th>CHARTERS</th>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades 3-10</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Grades 3-8</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
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Charter students are 43% more likely to read at grade level, and 49% more likely to do math at grade level.

Black and Latino and low-income Students are thriving in New Jersey’s public charter schools and outperforming their district and statewide counterparts.

Economically Disadvantaged Charter Students

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Black and Latino Charter Students

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Sources:
- Enrollment Counts (2022-23 NJDOE Fall Enrollment File(ENR)), Waitlist (2021-22 Charter School Annual Reports)

Public charter and renaissance schools serve 1 in 5 public school students in N.J/s 31 poorest communities (former Abbott/SDA districts).
Public charter schools, on average, spend $1,500 per student for school buildings—money that would otherwise be spent on teachers or students in the classroom—but they have been excluded from most state facilities funding.

Newark’s Charter Schools

Providing a World Class Education

75% of Newark’s charter school students are enrolled in a school beating the odds vs. 16% in the district.*

*2020 study from MarGrady Research

Newark charter schools post best student learning gains in the nation

Students learn more in Newark public charter schools with gains of **48 additional days per year in reading** and **73 additional days per year in math** when compared to the state average accounting for student characteristics. This outpaces the national finding that public charter school students nationally gained 16 days in reading and 6 days in math.

Source: 2022 Newark City Study; 2023 Stanford CREDO Report

Funding

Public Charter Schools Are Deeply Underfunded

More than 60,000 public school students in charter schools are not funded equitably in New Jersey. On average, public charter schools receive approximately $4,600 less per student per year when compared to traditional district schools. Public charter schools also spend, on average, $1,500 per student on facilities, and while the State has provided $18.6 billion since 2001 to traditional district schools for school construction, public charter schools have received only $35 million for minor building improvements.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO FAMILIES

Public charter schools have greater flexibility to bring in new and creative approaches, and with that flexibility comes greater accountability. Public charter schools:

- Provide financial reports to the state and conduct an annual audit
- Must meet all state and federal education standards
- Must be renewed every five years—and face closure if not delivering results

Autonomy Empowers Creativity

Public charter schools have more autonomy over their budgets, curriculum, and personnel than traditional districts. Teachers at public charter schools are empowered to use creative approaches to meet the individual needs of students in their classroom. Public charter schools include incredibly diverse learning models, including:

- **Hoboken Dual Language Charter School** provides an exceptional education in Spanish and English to develop engaged, well-rounded bilingual citizens with a global and multicultural perspective.

- **CAPS Asbury Park**, which serves 95% Black and Latino students, had the third largest gains in the state last year in English Language Arts (ELA), significantly outperforming peers throughout the state. CAPS improved in every single grade level in the core subjects thanks to a deep focus on small-group, intensive tutoring.

- **Unity Charter School** in Morristown infuses Education for Sustainability throughout the school culture. Student agency drives critical thinking and inspires advocacy through a constructivist learning approach so that students graduate ready to change the world for the better.