

Contact: Laura Gaviria

laura@statesideaffairs.com

High Performing Charter Schools in Trenton and Jersey City to Receive \$4.25M in Funding to Serve More Public School Students

Funding for Two Trenton Schools Contingent Upon DOE Approval in February

HAMILTON, NJ – January 11, 2023 – Today, the New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association (NJPCSA) announced plans to provide \$4.25 million to three public charter schools from the Association’s Charter School Program (CSP) grant from the US Department of Education. After a rigorous review process that included charter school experts from across the country, Achievers Early College Prep Charter School and Paul Robeson Charter School in Trenton will each receive \$1.5 million and Kindle Education, a new public charter school set to open in 2023 in Jersey City, will receive \$1.25 million.

“The Association is proud to award these high-performing charter schools with these grants to increase the number of high-quality educational seats in the State and expand opportunities for all students, particularly traditionally underserved students, to attend public charter schools,” **said Harry Lee, President of NJPCSA.** “With these grants, we are unequivocally demonstrating our confidence in these schools to deliver on their promise to students, families, and their communities.”

Two of the three of these subgrant awardees will only be eligible to receive this life-changing funding for their communities if their expansion requests are approved by the Department of Education this year. Both Achievers and Robeson were approved for similar grants in NJPCSA’s grant cycle last year but the funds were ultimately not released when the DOE denied their requests for expansion. Both schools made expansion requests again this fall and are expecting a decision in February 2023.

This investment in charter schools in Trenton and Jersey City follows the NJ Department of Education’s late December release of statewide student achievement data that verified that public charter schools are best positioned to improve student learning, particularly for low-income students of color. The [data shows](#) Black and Latino public charter school students are twice as likely to be at grade level.

In Trenton, students at [Achievers Early College Prep Charter School](#) and [Paul Robeson Charter School](#) are nearly three times more likely to meet grade level standards than their district peers in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Current 9th graders at Achievers closed in on the state average in ELA while high school students at Achievers outperformed their district peers by more than 37 points and are nearly four times more likely to be reading at grade level.

“I am beyond proud of all my students at Achievers Early College Prep,” **said Osen Osagie, Co-Founder and Executive Director of the school.** “Our students have overcome so many struggles, from the global pandemic to our school’s grade expansion being denied last year. They have continued to apply themselves and these scores prove it.”

“Our entire school community is very grateful for, and energized by, the opportunity that CSP funding would provide for our program,” **said Freya Lund, School Director at Paul Robeson Charter School.** “Our students, families and staff consistently demonstrate a relentless commitment to quality outcomes for all students. We are hopeful that our demonstrated impact over time results in the ability to serve more students and put these funds toward continuing and enhancing our overall school experience for all stakeholders.”

In addition to NJPCSA's investment in these school communities, the Association launched the #LetMyChildLearn campaign in November 2022. The campaign features parent voices encouraging the NJ Department of Education to allow students to remain in the schools they love and for more students to have access to a great public school education. The pending expansion request decisions could impact existing students attending charter schools, as well as the more than 20,000 students on wait lists.

[Kindle Education Public Charter School](#) was already approved this past fall by the Department of Education to open a new public charter school in Jersey City. Kindle Education will open in the fall of 2023 with grades 6 and 7 and plans to grow each year until the school serves grades 6-12.

"We are thrilled to serve the diverse families of Jersey City," said DJ Hartigan and Katie Hahn, co-founders of Kindle Education Public Charter School. "This CSP funding, in addition to the general support of the NJPCSA, will go a long way towards ensuring that we meet the needs of every student who walks through our doors."

"Families can't wait any longer and we must continue to invest in what works. Our charter leaders and teachers remain committed to meeting the immense challenges of this moment so that more students can recover socially, emotionally and academically," **concluded Lee.**

For more information about charter schools in New Jersey, visit www.njcharters.org and for information on the #LetMyChildLearn campaign, visit www.letmychildlearn.org.

Background on the Charter School Program (CSP)

In 2020, the New Jersey Public Charter School Association was awarded a \$63.2 million Charter School Program (CSP) grant from the US Department of Education to increase the number of high-quality educational seats in the state of New Jersey. The program's purpose is to *"expand opportunities for all students, particularly traditionally underserved students, to attend charter schools and meet challenging State academic standards."*

As the recipient of this federal CSP grant, the Association acts as a pass-through entity, using federal funds to administer a competitive subgrant program for which the operators of new, expanding, and replicating charter schools are eligible to apply. The subgrant process is competitive and only the applicants who receive the highest scores are eligible to receive funding. The base funding amount for each subgrant award is \$1 million, with applicants eligible to earn two \$250,000 escalators, for a maximum award of \$1.5 million, based on their satisfaction of absolute and proportional enrollment targets that demonstrate a commitment to educating at-risk students.

Applications for the Association's third subgrant award competition were due on October 28, 2022. Applications for this competition were received and each application was scored by a panel of at least three peer reviewers. The peer reviewers were chosen for their varying degrees of charter school expertise, policy knowledge, and experience in curriculum development and implementation. This third round of the subgrant competition selected these three applicants for funding up to a total of \$4.25M. Since having received funding from the US DOE, NJPCSA has awarded \$22,750,000 to 17 charter schools over three rounds of awards. We have also conditionally approved two additional awards totaling \$3,000,000 pending the approval of the schools' expansion requests by the Department of Education on February 1, 2023. This will bring us to a total of 19 awards totaling \$25,750,000.

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 85 charter schools in New Jersey serving 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.

###