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Public Charter Schools, Families, Leaders Intervene Into School Desegregation Lawsuit

Lawsuit Unfairly Blames Charter Schools For School Segregation

Profiles of Parent Intervenors Available Here: <https://njcharters.org/advocacy/lan-vs-state-of-nj/>

NEW JERSEY - Today, a group of New Jersey public charter school parents, schools, and the state charter schools association filed a motion to intervene in *Latino Action Network v. State of New Jersey*, a lawsuit filed in May 2018.

The intervenors, who include parents from Newark, Trenton, and Edison and a public charter school in Jersey City, agree with the plaintiffs that integrated schools are a worthy goal and a positive thing for children. However, the intervenors strongly disagree with the plaintiffs when they inexplicably accuse public charter schools of being part of the school segregation problem in New Jersey.

A [recent, exhaustive study](#) of school segregation published by the Urban Institute found that New Jersey's public charter schools did not contribute to school segregation in the Garden State, further undermining the claims of the plaintiffs.

"This lawsuit's claim that public charter schools are contributing to school segregation is objectively false," said **Harry Lee, President of the New Jersey Charter Schools Association**. "Our highest obligation as a state is to provide a quality public school for every child, regardless of their race, zip code, or income. Public charter schools are providing this for thousands of New Jersey families, while also helping to make our schools more diverse in many communities across the state."

"We're filing this motion to ensure that charter schools can no longer be scapegoated for school segregation," said **Lisa Scruggs, a veteran litigator with the Duane Morris law firm**. "New Jersey's public charter schools are giving families much-needed options, and parents deserve the right to choose them."

New Jersey public charter schools are part of the solution, not the problem. They are actually providing a remedy to school segregation. Unlike most traditional public schools, New Jersey's charter schools are permitted to serve children across municipal boundaries, allowing them to break down barriers of race and zip code. This has led to the creation of many intentionally diverse charter schools. In fact, three of the most diverse schools in the state are charter schools. Underscoring our ongoing commitment to this work, NJCSA will continue its



partnership with the Diverse Charter Schools Coalition to support more diverse-by-design schools in New Jersey through effective research, advocacy, and outreach.

“My son goes to a diverse charter school that’s not in our community, but we were still allowed to choose it,” said **Ana Maria De La Roche, a parent intervenor from Edison**. “This lawsuit is way off when it claims charter schools are causing segregation - for my family, we’ve chosen to attend a charter school that celebrates its diversity.”

In their lawsuit, the Latino Action Network v. New Jersey, the Plaintiffs cite data that notes that charter schools serve a disproportionate number of Black and Latino students in New Jersey - without noting that most charter schools operate in urban districts where a large majority of Black and Latino students live. Most importantly, they fail to acknowledge that public charter schools are providing children in urban districts with a high-quality education, and by doing so, make the implicit and erroneous assumption that schools serving predominantly students of color are inherently low-performing.

35,000 students across New Jersey are on waiting lists for public charter schools, the majority of whom live in urban communities. Public charter schools are in high demand because their students are achieving at a high level. Statewide, public charter school students are 40 percent more likely than their peers to read on grade level and 49 percent more likely than their peers to do math on grade level, according to 2018 state test results.

“My son and daughter’s public charter school is a great school close to home, where they can go to school with students and teachers that reflect our community,” said **Tafshier Cosby-Thomas, a parent intervenor from Newark**. “Integrated schools are a good thing and diversity is important. But we need quality schools in all our neighborhoods, even in communities where residential integration has not been achieved yet. Parents should not have to choose between supporting existing good public schools and pursuing integration.”

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