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## Two New Jersey Charter Schools Receive Lighthouse Awards from the New Jersey Department of Education

*Learning Community Charter School was Recognized for Increasing Diversity in the Teacher Workforce while The Barack Obama Green Charter High School was Acknowledged for Increasing Equity in Course Enrollment*

Two New Jersey charter schools are among the seven districts to receive a Lighthouse Award from the New Jersey Department of Education. This award recognizes district and charter schools that have demonstrated measurable progress towards equitable outcomes in areas such as increasing post-secondary enrollment, diversity in the teacher workforce, course enrollment and disciplinary outcomes.

The two charter schools to be recognized are Learning Community Charter School in Jersey City for increasing diversity in the teacher workforce and the Barack Obama Green Charter High School in Plainfield for increasing equity in course enrollment.

“New Jersey charter schools offer educators the flexibility and autonomy to develop policies and coursework that best meet the needs of their students,” **said Harry Lee, President and CEO of the New Jersey Public Charter School Association.** “Having two of our schools be recognized as Lighthouse districts is an incredible achievement that reflects the work our teachers and school leaders are doing every day to provide students with a quality education.”

Learning Community Charter School (LCCS) serves 638 students in grades Pre-K through 8. To increase diversity in the teacher workforce, LCCS offers paid internships for aspiring teachers enrolled at New Jersey City University, provides support for faculty members of color through the BIPOC Leadership Committee, and conducts extensive outreach to all families and policy makers. For the 2021-22 school year, BIPOC employees make up 41 percent of the LCCS staff and are represented in the school’s leadership team and STEM, English, health and safety departments. Roughly 34 percent of students are Black or Latinx.

“When the educators in our classrooms are reflective of the communities they serve, our students become even more empowered and motivated to achieve academic success,” **said Colin Hogan, Head of School of Learning Community Charter School.** “We are incredibly proud to be a leader for New Jersey schools in diversifying the classroom and look forward to continuing to identify new ways to support our teaching staff.”

The Barack Obama Green Charter High School serves 232 students in grades 9 through 12, 81 percent of whom come from an economically disadvantaged family. By listening to students’ voices and identifying ways to help them achieve, the school successfully increased the number of Advanced Placement

courses it offered. As a result, more students enrolled in rigorous coursework and are achieving higher testing scores than in previous years. Two years after implementing this, the Barack Obama Green Charter High School was recognized for having an AP Capstone program.

“At the Barack Obama Green Charter High School, we have found that students who are given the opportunity to enroll in course-work that interests them are more eager to challenge themselves in the classroom,” **said Erin Richardson, Head of School for the Barack Obama Green Charter School.** “We are honored to be recognized by the state for our commitment to our students and their long-term academic success.”

More about the Lighthouse Awards each school received [can be found here.](#)

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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 approximately 57,000 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.