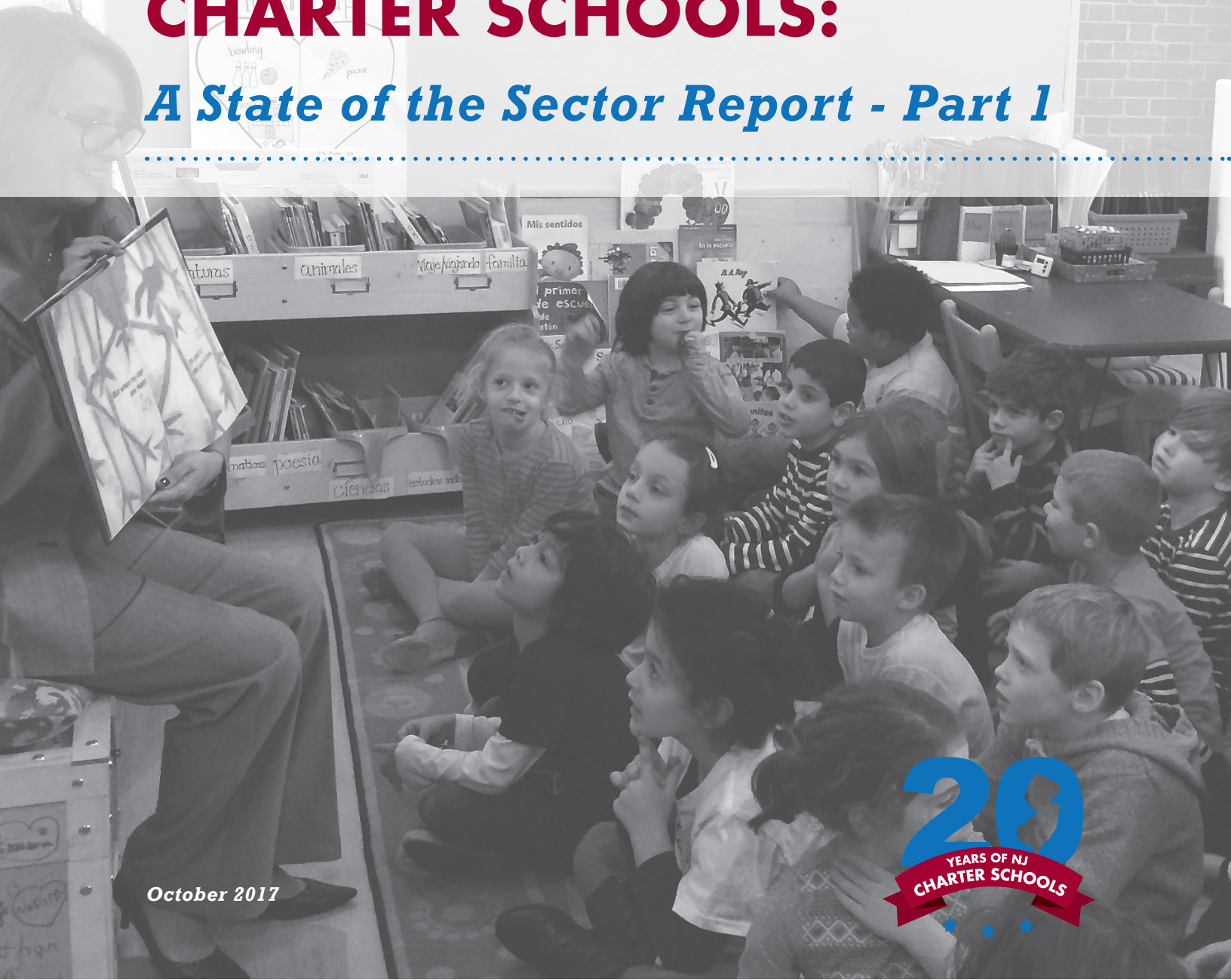
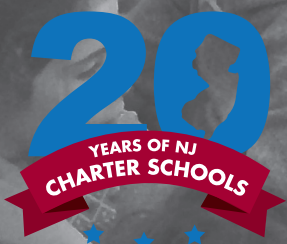


20 YEARS OF NEW JERSEY CHARTER SCHOOLS:

A State of the Sector Report - Part 1



October 2017



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a membership organization, the New Jersey Charter Schools Association (NJCSA) relies on the generous support of the charter schools in the state to ensure it is meeting its mission to advance quality public education for New Jersey's children through quality public charter schools. We want to thank all New Jersey charter schools for supporting NJCSA's efforts.

We also want to thank our partners, funders, and fellow advocates who work with us to ensure a strong and vibrant charter school sector in New Jersey. We work in collaboration with these individuals and organizations to realize our vision that every child in the State of New Jersey should have the opportunity to attend a high-quality public school that best meets his or her needs.

ABOUT NJCSA

Formed in 1999, the New Jersey Charter Schools Association is a 501(c)(3) membership association that represents the state's charter school community and, by extension, charter school students and their parents. NJCSA is committed to improving public education by:

- ★ ***Cultivating*** a robust network of new, high-quality charter schools that are able to meet the demands of the parents and the needs of the students they enroll.
- ★ ***Strengthening*** the capacity of existing charter schools to achieve strong outcomes for students as they move from good to great.
- ★ ***Promoting*** the charter school model and strong charter policy among external stakeholders and decision-makers.
- ★ ***Supporting*** success of the sector by creating an environment that encourages innovation, high-quality performance and accountability.

Table of Contents

Letter from the CEO	2
Charter School Basics	3
Charter Authorization in NJ	3
Executive Summary	4
NJ Charter Milestones	6
Charter Schools by the Numbers	8
Overall Charter Sector Performance	11
City Profile: Newark Charter Sector	14
★ <i>North Star: An Uncommon School</i>	18
City Profile: Camden Charter Sector	20
★ <i>LEAP Academy University: A Camden Success Story</i>	24
City Profile: Trenton Charter Sector	26
★ <i>Foundation Academy of Trenton: The Strings Program</i>	30
City Profile: Jersey City Charter Sector	32
★ <i>Soaring Heights: Unconventional Shared Leadership Model</i>	36
City Profile: Paterson Charter Sector	38
★ <i>Paterson CS for Science & Technology: Setting the Course for Success in College</i>	42
Innovation Stories	44
Unique School Models	
★ <i>Charter Tech High School (Somers Point): A School for the Performing Arts</i>	45
★ <i>Hoboken Dual Language (Hoboken): A Dual Language School That Gets Results</i>	46
★ <i>Ridge and Valley: A High-Performing School in Blairstown</i>	47
★ <i>Unity (Morris): Teaching the Importance of Sustainability</i>	48
Access and Equity in Charter Schools	
★ <i>LEAD (Newark): New Jersey's First Alternative Charter High School</i>	50
★ <i>Cresthaven Academy (Plainfield): The Future Is Bright</i>	51
Parent Perspectives	
★ <i>Elysian (Hoboken): Successfully Serving Students with Disabilities - A Mother's Perspective</i> ...	53
★ <i>KIPP TEAM (Newark): Ensuring Our Scholars Get To and Through College</i>	54
Methodology	55
Charting the Path Forward	56

Dear New Jersey Education Colleagues, Partners and Stakeholders,

Since the first public charter schools opened in New Jersey 20 years ago, the charter school sector has grown to serve approximately 50,000 students in 89 schools across every region of the state. Charter schools are located in our urban centers such as Newark, Camden, and Trenton as well as in rural parts of the state including Warren, Sussex, and Cumberland Counties. In fact, charter schools serve students in 40 different cities spanning 17 counties across the Garden State. Every child, regardless of where he or she lives, deserves access to a high-quality public school education. With more than 35,000 students on waitlists for access to a high-quality seat, New Jersey families are proving that public charter schools are a valued—and desired—option in the public education landscape.

The “**20 Years of New Jersey Charter Schools: A State of the Sector Report**” was researched and written to provide all stakeholders (parents and families, legislators, charter schools, partners, education organizations, etc.) with important information and facts about where we’ve been, where we are, and what the future holds for charter schools in New Jersey. Much of the news in this report is positive—public charter schools are serving educationally disadvantaged students with a high-quality public education. While public charter schools are relatively new entities in the state, our

research demonstrates that, overall, New Jersey public charter schools are providing strong educational options for students, especially in our urban centers where public charter schools are successfully narrowing the performance gap.

A major goal of **New Jersey’s Charter School Program Act of 1995** was to encourage the use of new and innovative learning methods and to share those best practices with other public schools in the state. Public charter schools have increased autonomy over curriculum, staffing, and operations in exchange for increased accountability. This “charter bargain” is central to the premise of charter schooling and allows charter schools to innovate to meet the needs of diverse learners. This report highlights the many innovations occurring in the charter sector as well as the potential for more charter-district collaboration to ensure that *every* student, both charter and district, benefits from the promise of public charter schools.

As the demand for public charter schools grows and the debate around the success of public charter schools intensifies, there are many lessons to be learned. We believe that in order to continue to achieve progress in the next 20 years, we must ensure that we have the best interests of students and families in mind. There are four key areas that I believe we must focus on:

Opportunity

Charter schools are providing parents and families with excellent educational opportunities that put students on the path to success in college and career.



There are thousands of children in New Jersey on waitlists that want to attend a public charter school. We must ensure that ALL high-quality charter schools have the opportunity to serve more students desperately in need of a high-quality option.

Quality

Quantity without quality is self-defeating. We believe that the public charter school community in New Jersey is one of the strongest in the country and should continue to be held to the highest standards to ensure that student outcomes are at the forefront.

Equity

Access and equity in public charter schools is a highly debated topic. We must strive to ensure that every New Jersey charter school provides equitable access to all students, especially the highest need students, including students requiring special education services, students who are English language learners, students who qualify for free or reduced-price

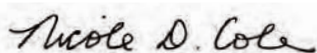
lunch, and other underserved or at-risk populations.

At NJCSA, we have worked with charter schools to conduct weighted lotteries for at-risk students and we have supported the implementation of universal enrollment systems to ensure that every student has access to a high-quality school.

Innovation and Collaboration

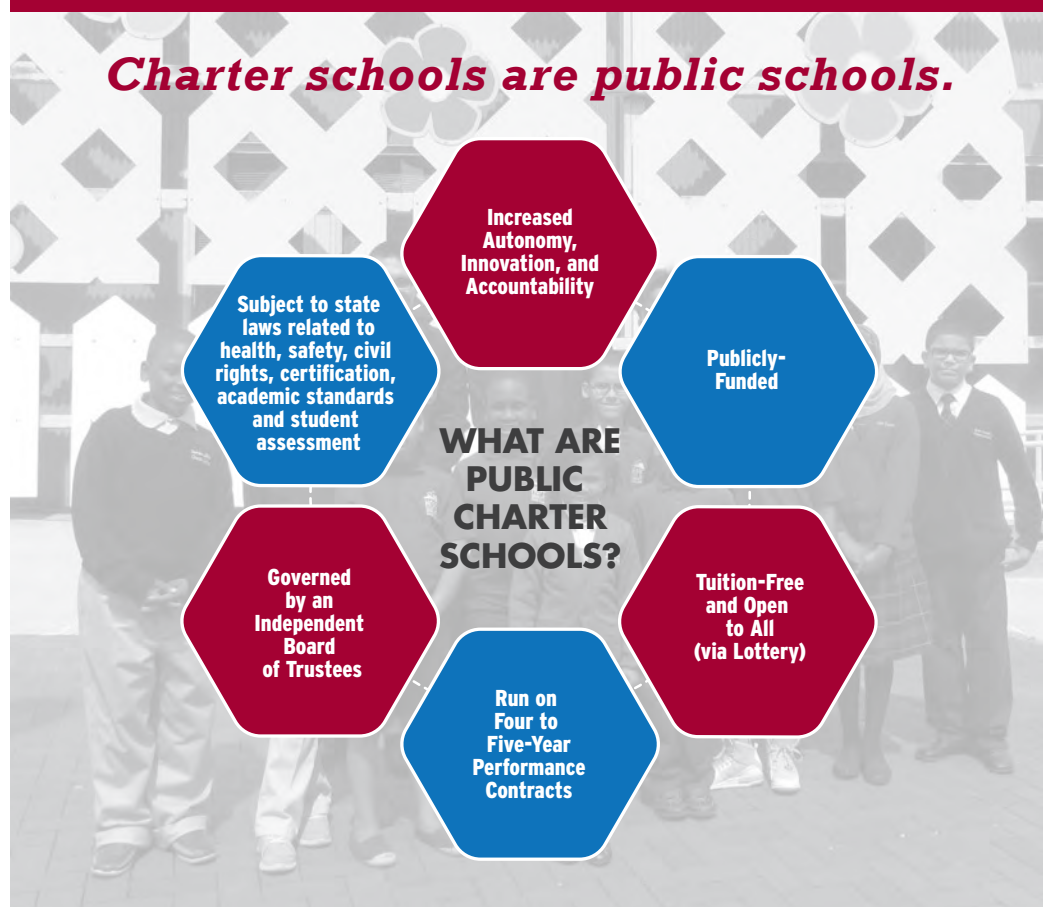
Public charter schools have a tremendous opportunity to use their flexibility to find unique solutions in areas such as school models, curriculum, governance, leadership structures, and operations. While collaboration is happening in cities like Newark and Camden, we must ramp up our efforts to share these innovations and best practices with the larger education community in New Jersey.

I hope that this report is of immense value to everyone with a vested interest in New Jersey's public education system. It is NJCSA's priority to provide evidence about the impact of public charter schools in the state and increase transparency through sharing data with all stakeholders. This report looks back at 20 years, assesses the current state of the sector, and outlines a path forward. I encourage you to read the report, discuss the findings, and support excellence in New Jersey's public education for every student in New Jersey.



Nicole Cole

Charter schools are public schools.



Charter Authorization in New Jersey

Authorization: The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is the state education agency and **sole authorizer of charter schools** in New Jersey. The Commissioner of Education, appointed by the Governor, has final authority in the approval, opening, monitoring and renewal of charters in New Jersey. The NJDOE has partnered with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) to authorize charter schools consistent with national best practices in charter school authorizing.

Oversight: Charter schools are granted an initial 4-year charter in New Jersey and all subsequent renewals are for 5-year terms. NJDOE and charter schools in the state sign a Charter Agreement which lays out the terms and conditions of operating a charter school in NJ. NJDOE utilizes a Performance Framework that sets expectations for charter school success in New Jersey. The Framework's guiding questions are:

- ★ Is the academic program a success?
- ★ Is the school financially viable?
- ★ Is the school equitable and organizationally sound?

For more information on how charter schools are held accountable in New Jersey, visit: <http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/accountability/>



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last 20 years, charter schools in New Jersey have proven to be a valued public education option for tens of thousands of families across the state. Although currently serving just 3% of all public school students statewide, charter schools have grown significantly, particularly in urban centers throughout New Jersey. Eighty-six percent of charter school students are Black or Hispanic and 72% come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. In Newark, charter schools are serving approximately 35% of all public school students in the city. In cities like Camden, Trenton, Paterson and Jersey City, the proportion of students being served by public charter schools continues to grow each year. As charters have grown in number and stature, there are several important research questions that this report addresses to gauge the health of the charter sector in New Jersey. The data and evidence provided in the *20 Years of New Jersey Charter Schools: A State of the Sector Report* provides important information about the number of families demanding seats in charter schools, the students that charter schools serve, how students in charter schools are performing, and how charter schools are contributing to and improving the overall public education landscape in New Jersey.

PERFORMANCE DATA

Statewide

★ Performance:

Although charter schools serve a much greater proportion of economically disadvantaged students (72% in charters vs. 38% in the state), charter schools are closing in on state averages on PARCC in grades 3-8.

- **English Language Arts:** In 2012, there was a 13-point gap between charter schools and the state average in grades 3-8. In 2016, that gap had closed to less than 3 percentage points.
- **Mathematics:** In 2012, there was a 10-point gap between charter schools and the state average in grades 3-8. In 2016, that gap had closed to less than 5 percentage points.

★ Student Growth:

In 2016, charter elementary and middle schools, in the aggregate, made larger learning gains in ELA and Math than the rest of the state. In 2016, charter schools achieved a median SGP of 54 in ELA and 51 in Math compared to the statewide median of 50 in both subjects.

★ Graduation Rate:

In 2016, 85% of charter high school students graduated within 4 years.

Top 5 Charter Cities

★ Newark:

- **Elementary and Middle Schools:** In 2016, Newark charter school students outperformed their district peers by 23 points in English language arts and 20 points in Math.
- **High School:** In 2016, Newark charter school students outperformed their district peers by 10 points in ELA and 11 points in Math.

★ Camden:

- **Elementary and Middle Schools:** In 2016, 6 out of 7 charter elementary and middle schools in Camden outperformed the district average in English language arts.
- **High School:** In 2016, 91% of Camden charter high school students graduated within 4 years.

★ Trenton:

- **Elementary and Middle Schools:** In 2016, Trenton charter school students outperformed their district peers by 22 points in ELA and 21 points in Math.
- **High School:** In 2016, 94% of Trenton charter high school students graduated within 4 years.



★ Jersey City:

- **Elementary and Middle Schools:** In 2016, Jersey City charter school students outperformed their district peers by 8 points in ELA and 7 points in Math.
- **High School:** In 2016, 91% of Jersey City charter high school students graduated within 4 years.

★ Paterson

- **Elementary and Middle Schools:** In 2016, Paterson charter school students outperformed their district peers by 18 points in ELA and 7 points in Math.
- **High School:** In 2016, 96% of Paterson charter high school students graduated within 4 years.

FAMILY DEMAND

- ★ 89 charter schools are serving 50,000 students in 40 cities in 17 different counties throughout New Jersey. There are over 35,000 students on waitlists to attend a charter school.

DISTRICT	STUDENTS ON CHARTER WAITLISTS
Newark	12,852
Jersey City	5,325
Paterson	3,179
Camden	2,693
Trenton	1,784

INNOVATION

New Jersey’s Charter School Law encourages the use of new and innovative learning methods that can be shared with other public schools to improve the state’s public education system as a whole. Today, charter schools continue to innovate with unique school models that focus on a variety of different disciplines including, STEAM, dual-language acquisition, and career and technical education. The autonomy and flexibility to innovate in diverse ways not only provides a hub for innovation but has also served the diverse needs of students for the past two decades.

COLLABORATION

In Newark, charter schools have partnered with Newark Public Schools to share best practices to ensure that all students benefit from innovations and best practices in the charter sector. North Star Academy’s (Uncommon Schools) school profile (page 18) highlights a unique charter-district partnership as the district transitions back to local control. The school has an ongoing partnership that has involved hundreds of Newark Public School (NPS) teachers, principals and vice principals. To date, NPS and Uncommon educators have collaborated on professional development for teachers, focusing in particular on early literacy skills.

However, examples of charter-district collaboration have not been replicated throughout the rest of the state. Both traditional district schools and the charter sector must create opportunities to establish working groups and develop relationships to break down the “us versus them mentality” that distracts everyone from what’s most important –ensuring that ALL students in the state have access to a high-quality public education.

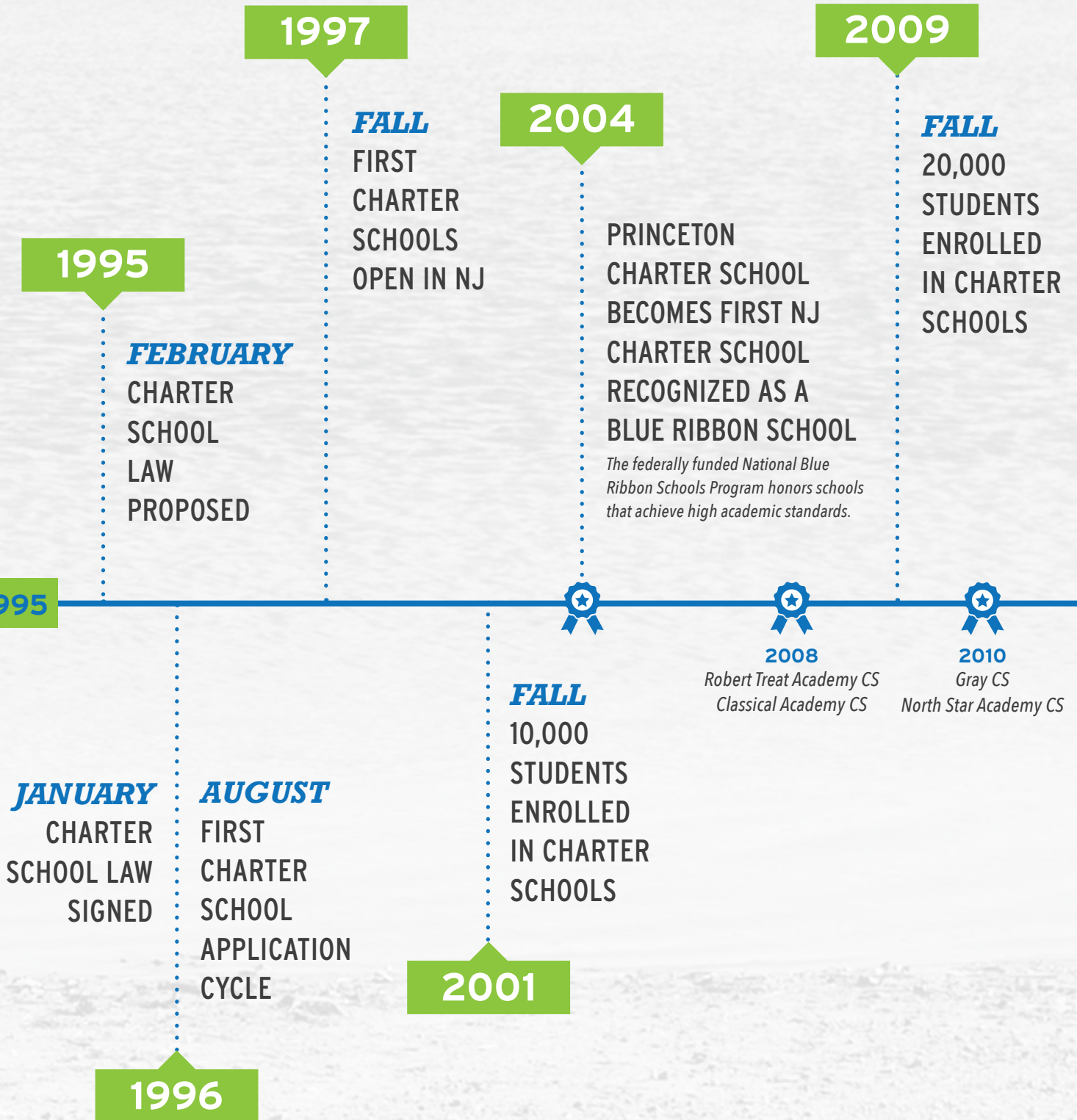
CHARTING THE PATH FORWARD

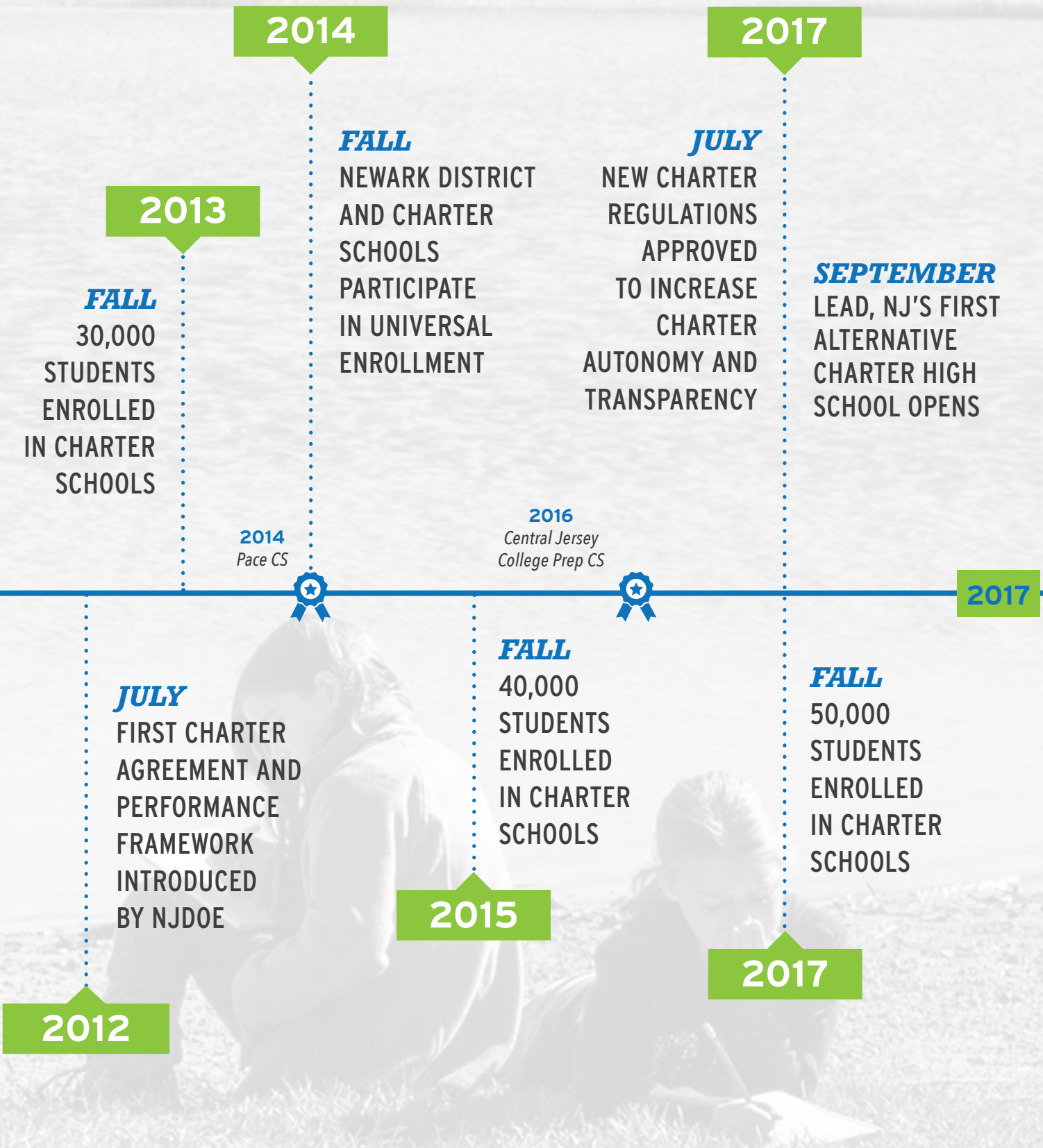
Charter schools have demonstrated that, overall, they are producing strong academic outcomes for the students that they serve. It is paramount that charter schools continue to grow to meet family demand. Legislation or executive orders calling for a “Charter Moratorium” will be vigorously opposed by NJCSA and its partners.

Charter schools throughout the state have demonstrated a commitment to serving at-risk students. More than 15 charter schools throughout the state are enrolling students through a weighted lottery, which provides increased opportunities to students who are educationally disadvantaged to enroll in a charter school via lottery. However, additional work remains.

NJCSA continues to work with charter schools to ensure that they are recruiting and serving our most vulnerable students, including students with disabilities and English language learners. In Part II of this report, we will explore more about the students that charter schools and district schools serve and the impact that this has on school performance data.

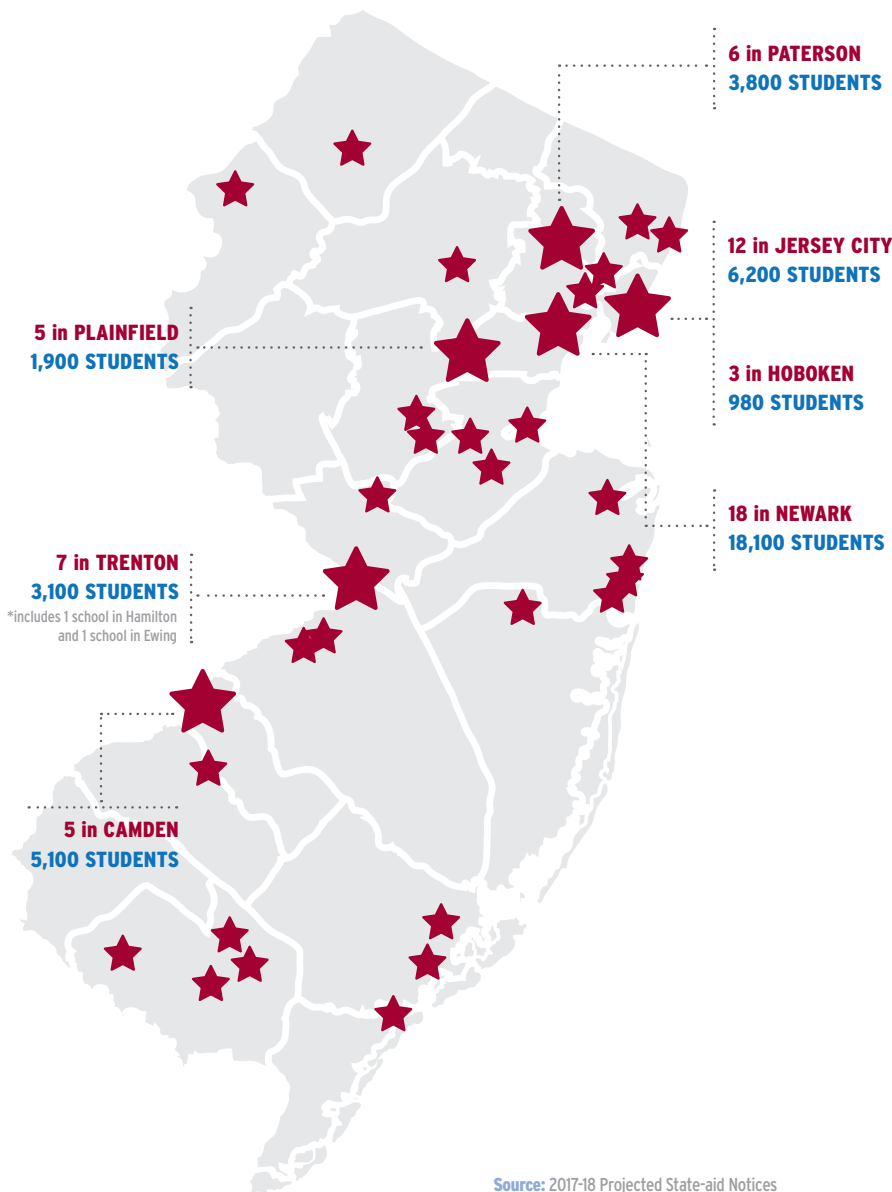
NJ CHARTER MILESTONES





CHARTER SCHOOLS BY THE NUMBERS

There are **89 CHARTER SCHOOLS** operating in New Jersey.



Charter Name

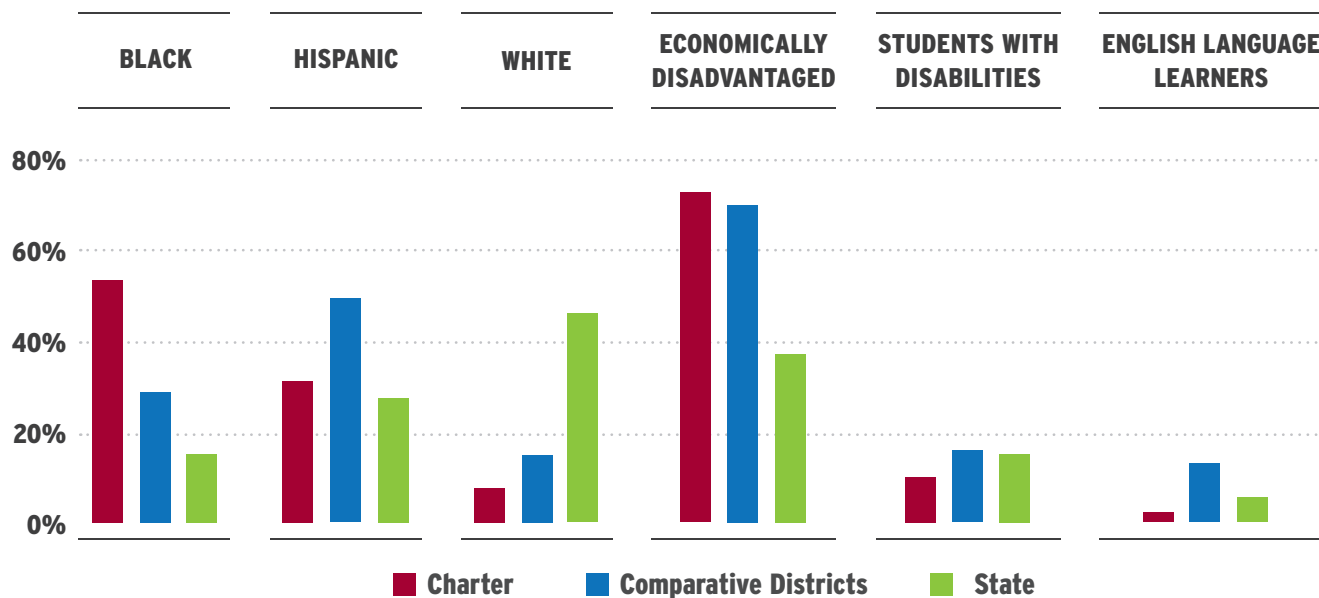
City

Cohort

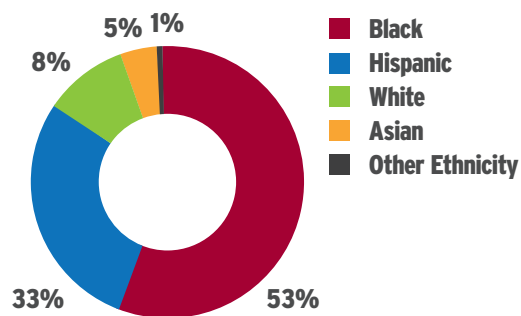
Charter Name	City	Cohort
Academy Charter High School	Lake Como	1998
Academy for Urban Leadership Charter High School	Perth Amboy	2010
Achieve Community Charter School	Newark	2017
Atlantic Community Charter School	Galloway	2014
BelovED Community Charter School	Jersey City	2012
Benjamin Banneker Preparatory Charter School	Willingboro	2012
Bergen Arts & Science Charter School	Garfield	2007
Bridgeton Public Charter School	Bridgeton	2015
Burch Charter School of Excellence	Irvington	2008
Camden's Charter School Network	Camden	1998
Central Jersey College Prep Charter School	Somerset	2006
Chartertech High School for the Performing Arts	Somers Point	1999
Classical Academy Charter School of Clifton	Clifton	1998
College Achieve Central Charter School	Plainfield	2015
College Achieve Greater Asbury Park Charter School	Asbury Park	2017
College Achieve Paterson Charter School	Paterson	2017
Community Charter School of Paterson	Paterson	2008
Compass Academy Charter School	Vineland	2013
Cresthaven Academy Charter School	Plainfield	2016
Discovery Charter School	Newark	1999
Dr. Lena Edwards Academic Charter School	Jersey City	2011
East Orange Community Charter School	East Orange	1998
ECO Charter School	Camden	2005
Elysian Charter School	Hoboken	1997
Empowerment Academy Charter School	Jersey City	2015
Englewood on the Palisades Charter School	Englewood	1998
Foundation Academies Charter School	Trenton	2007
Freedom Prep Charter School	Camden	2004
Gray Charter School	Newark	2000
Great Futures Charter High School for the Health Sciences	Jersey City	2014
Great Oaks Legacy Charter School	Newark	2011
Greater Brunswick Charter School	New Brunswick	1998
Hatikvah International Academy Charter School	East Brunswick	2010
Hoboken Charter School	Hoboken	1998
Hoboken Dual Language Charter School	Hoboken	2010
Hope Academy Charter School	Asbury Park	2001
Hope Community Charter School	Camden	2013
Hudson Arts and Science Charter School	Kearny	2016
International Academy of Atlantic City Charter School	Pleasantville	2015
International Academy of Trenton Charter School	Trenton	2014
International Charter School of Trenton	Trenton	1998
Jersey City Community Charter School	Jersey City	1997
Jersey City Global Charter School	Jersey City	2013
Jersey City Golden Door Charter School	Jersey City	1998
John P. Holland Charter School	Paterson	2011
Lady Liberty Academy Charter School	Newark	2001
LEAD Academy Charter School	Newark	2017
LEAP Academy University Charter School	Camden	1997
Learning Community Charter School	Jersey City	1997
Link Community Charter School	Newark	2014
Maria L. Varisco-Rogers Charter School	Newark	1999
Marion P. Thomas Charter School	Newark	1999
METS Charter School	Jersey City	2011
Millville Public Charter School	Millville	2011
New Horizons Community Charter School	Newark	1999
Newark Educators' Community Charter School	Newark	2009
North Star Academy Charter School	Newark	1997
Ocean Academy Charter School	Lakewood	2017
Pace Charter School of Hamilton	Hamilton	1999
Passaic Arts and Science Charter School	Passaic	2011
Paterson Arts and Science Charter School	Paterson	2013
Paterson Charter School for Science & Tech.	Paterson	2003
Paul Robeson Charter School for the Humanities	Trenton	2008
People's Preparatory Charter School	Newark	2011
Philip's Academy Charter School	Newark	2013
Philip's Academy Charter School of Paterson	Paterson	2016
Pride Academy Charter School	East Orange	2008
Princeton Charter School	Princeton	1997
Red Bank Charter School	Red Bank	1998
Ridge and Valley Charter School	Blairstown	2004
Riverbank Charter School of Excellence	Roebling	2009
Robert Treat Academy Charter School	Newark	1997
Roseville Community Charter School	Newark	2011
Soaring Heights Charter School	Jersey City	1997
STEMCivics Charter School	Ewing	2014
Sussex County Charter School for Technology	Sparta	1997
TEAM Academy Charter School	Newark	2002
Teaneck Community Charter School	Teaneck	1998
The Barack Obama Green Charter High School	Plainfield	2010
The Ethical Community Charter School	Jersey City	2009
The Kingdom Charter School of Leadership	Blackwood	2011
The Queen City Academy Charter School	Plainfield	2000
The Village Charter School	Trenton	1999
Thomas Edison EnergySmart Charter School	Somerset	2012
Union County TEAMS Charter School	Plainfield	2005
Unity Charter School	Morris Township	1998
University Academy Charter High School	Jersey City	2002
University Heights Charter School	Newark	2006
Vineland Public Charter School	Vineland	2009

Charter Schools Operate in **40 CITIES** and **17 DIFFERENT COUNTIES** Throughout New Jersey

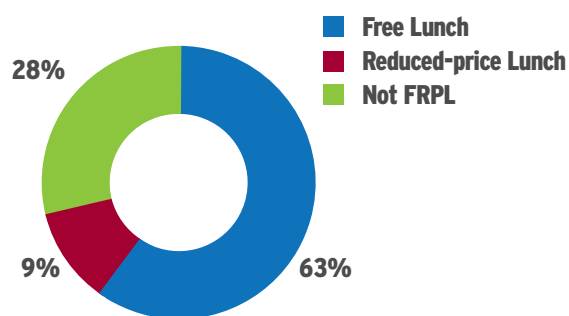
New Jersey Public School Demographics



CHARTER SCHOOLS ETHNICITY



CHARTER SCHOOLS ECONOMIC STATUS



86%

OF STUDENTS IN CHARTERS ARE EITHER BLACK OR HISPANIC

72%

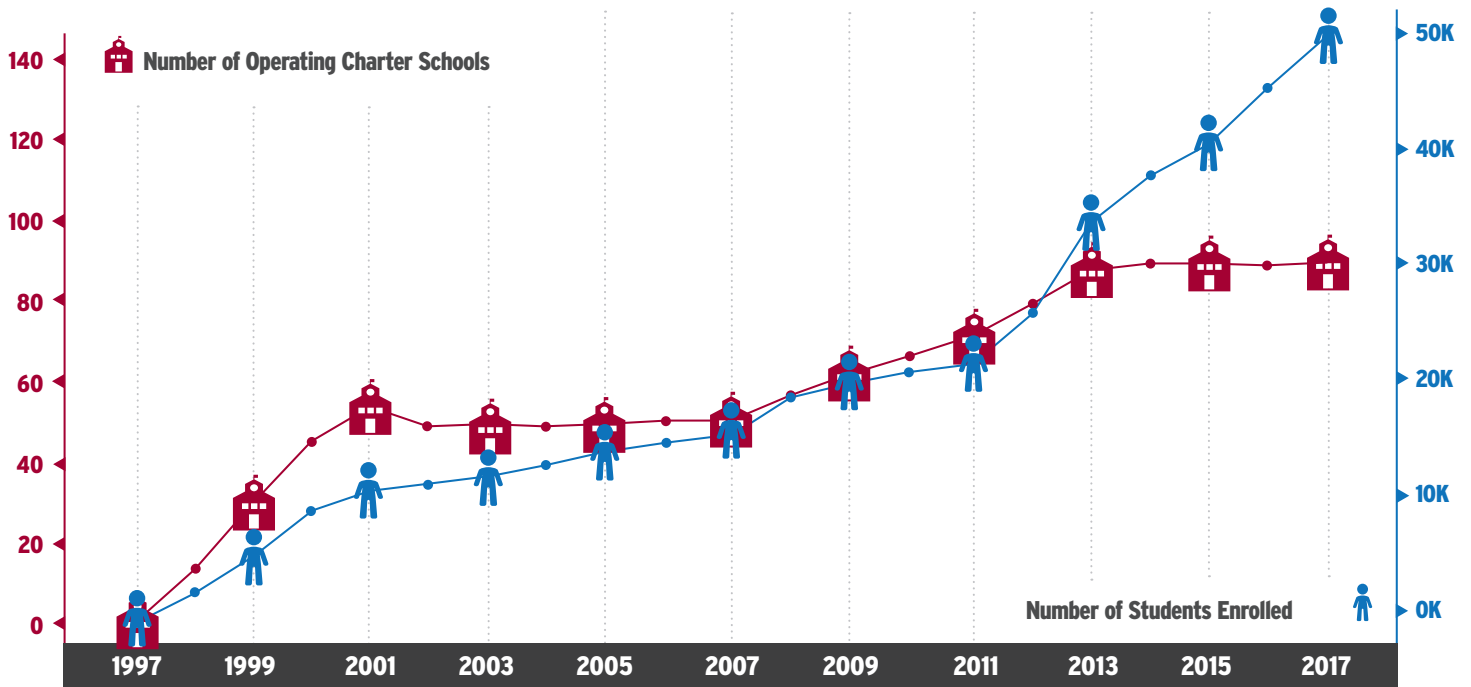
OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

Source: Ethnicity, Economic and Language Demographics: 2016-17 ENR file publicly available on NJ DOE website
 Students with Disabilities: 2015-16 Performance Report Database publicly available on NJ DOE website

The Growth of Charter Schools Over the Last 20 Years

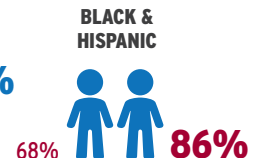
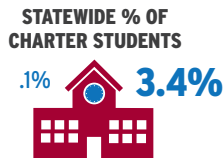
EXPANSION OF HIGH-QUALITY SCHOOLS: Since 2012, the number of students attending New Jersey charter schools has nearly doubled.

ENSURING HIGH STANDARDS: Since 2010, 21 charter schools have closed for academic, fiscal or organizational reasons.



NEARLY **50,000 Students** STATEWIDE and MORE THAN **35,000 Students** ON WAITLISTS

THEN vs. NOW
1997-98 2017-18



THEN 1997-98	7	4	0	1	0	1
	ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	MIDDLE SCHOOLS	HIGH SCHOOLS	ELEMENTARY-MIDDLE SCHOOLS	MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOLS	ELEMENTARY-MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOLS
NOW 2017-18	17	6	8	38	2	18

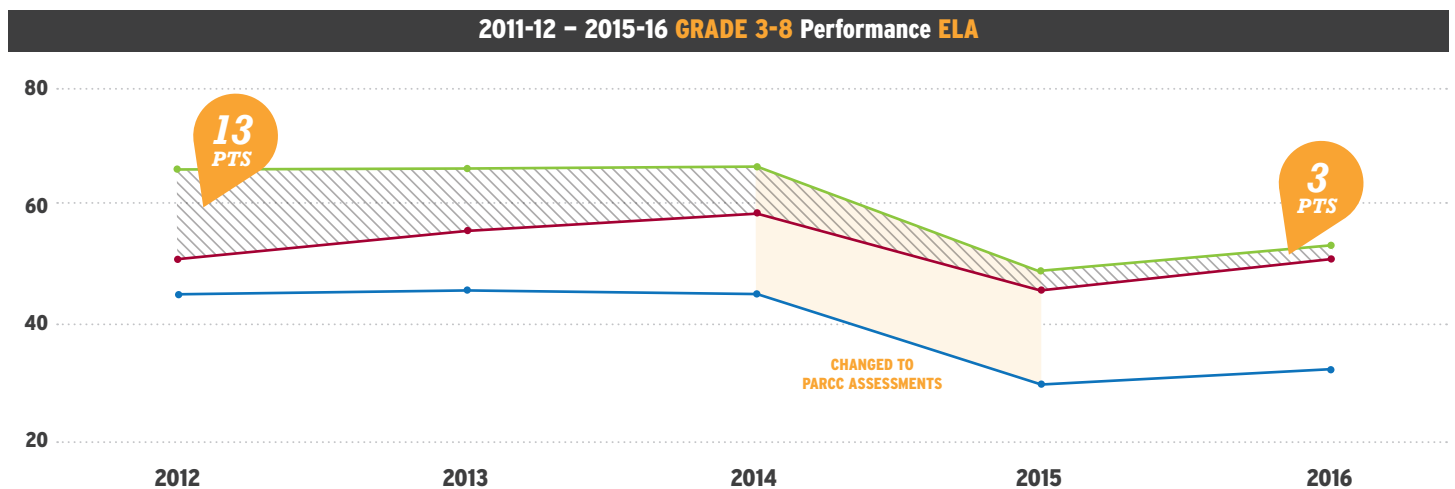
Source: Historical ENR files, NJCSA Member Survey, Charter School State Aid Notices.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE AS A SECTOR

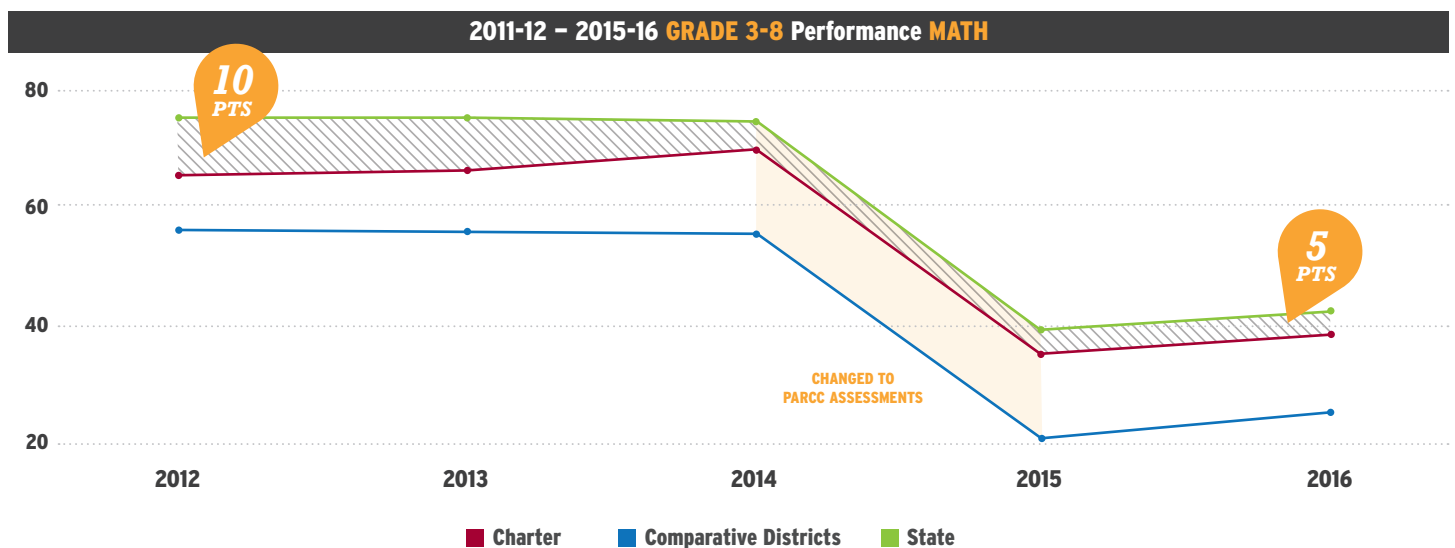
Charter **ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL** Performance

NARROWING THE GAP; MAKING PERFORMANCE GAINS: Although charter schools serve a much greater proportion of economically disadvantaged students (72% in charters vs. 38% in the state), charter schools are closing in on state averages on PARCC in grades 3-8.

English Language Arts: In 2012, there was a 13-point gap between charter schools and the state average in grades 3-8. In 2016, that gap had closed to less than 3 percentage points. In 2016, charter schools outperformed their comparative districts by 17 percentage points based on students meeting PARCC proficiency standards.



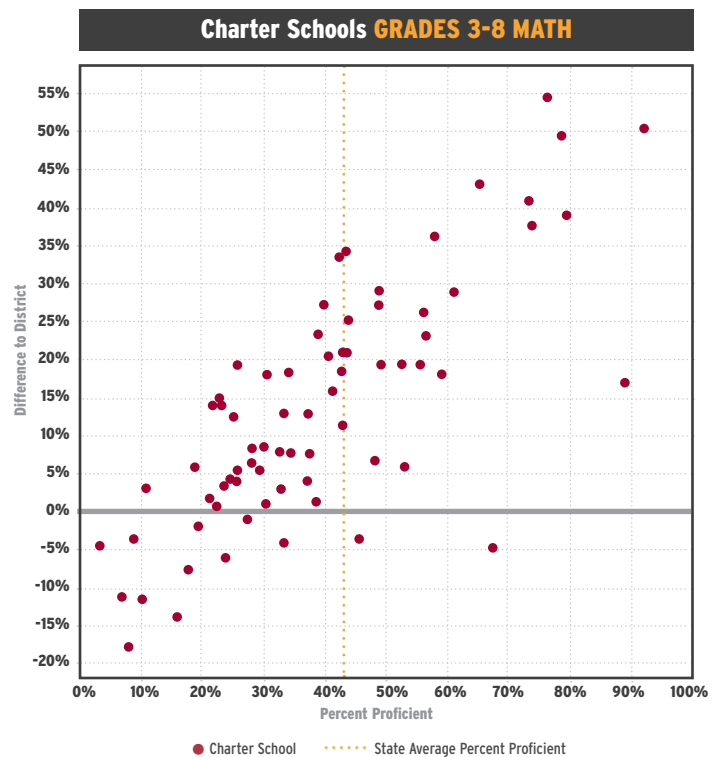
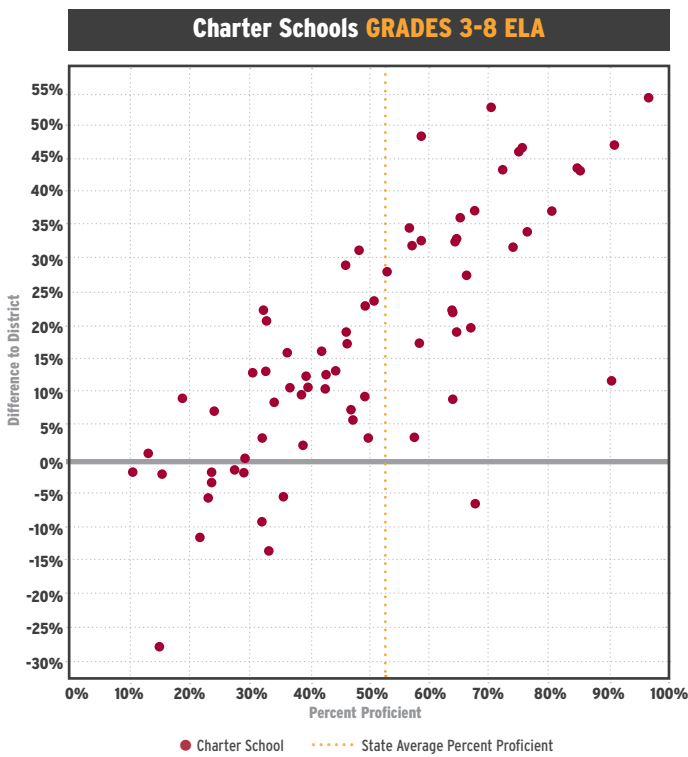
Mathematics: In 2012, there was a 10-point gap between charter schools and the state average in grades 3-8. In 2016, that gap had closed to less than 5 percentage points. In 2016, charter schools outperformed their traditional district peers by 13 percentage points based on students meeting PARCC proficiency standards.



OUTPACING COMPARATIVE DISTRICTS: In 2016, 77% of charter schools outperformed their comparative districts in *both* ELA and Math.

English Language Arts: In 2016, 59 out of 72 charter schools (83%) outperformed their comparative districts based on the percentage of students meeting or exceeding PARCC proficiency standards.

Mathematics: In 2016, 59 out of 72 charter schools (83%) outperformed their comparative districts based on the percentage of students meeting or exceeding PARCC proficiency standards.



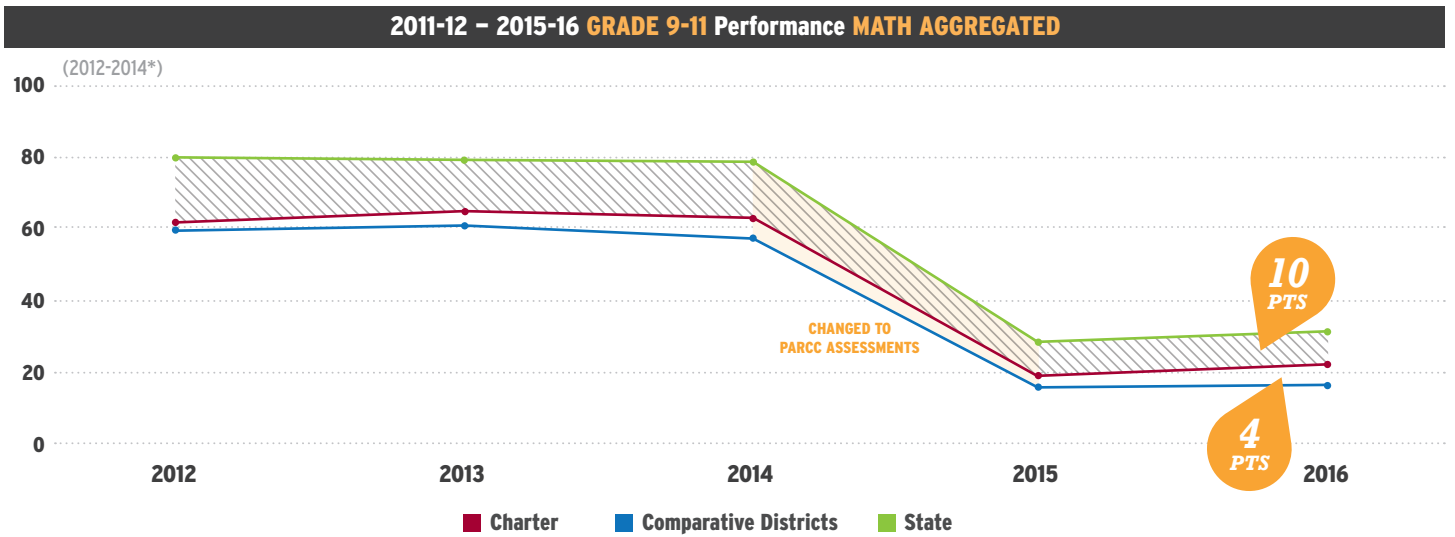
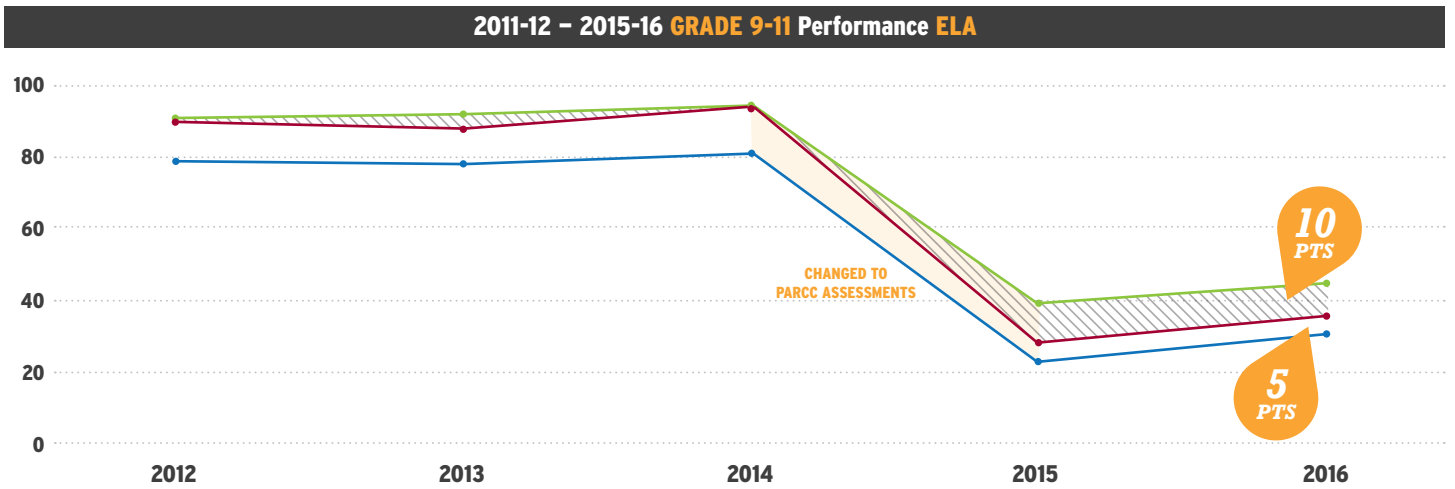
The graphs display individual charter schools' performance against their comparative districts in 2016. The "difference to district" is determined by taking each charter school's proficiency rate and subtracting the comparative district's proficiency rate for each subject and grades served.

STUDENT GROWTH: In 2016, charter schools, in the aggregate, made larger learning gains in ELA and Math than the rest of the state. In 2016, charter schools achieved a median SGP of 54 in ELA and 51 in Math compared to the statewide median of 50 in both subjects.



Charter *HIGH SCHOOL* Performance





High School Performance: In high school, charter schools lag behind the state average in ELA and mathematics by 10 percentage points. However, charter school students in high school outperform their traditional district peers by 5 percentage points and 4 percentage points in ELA and math respectively (based on students meeting PARCC proficiency standards in 2016).



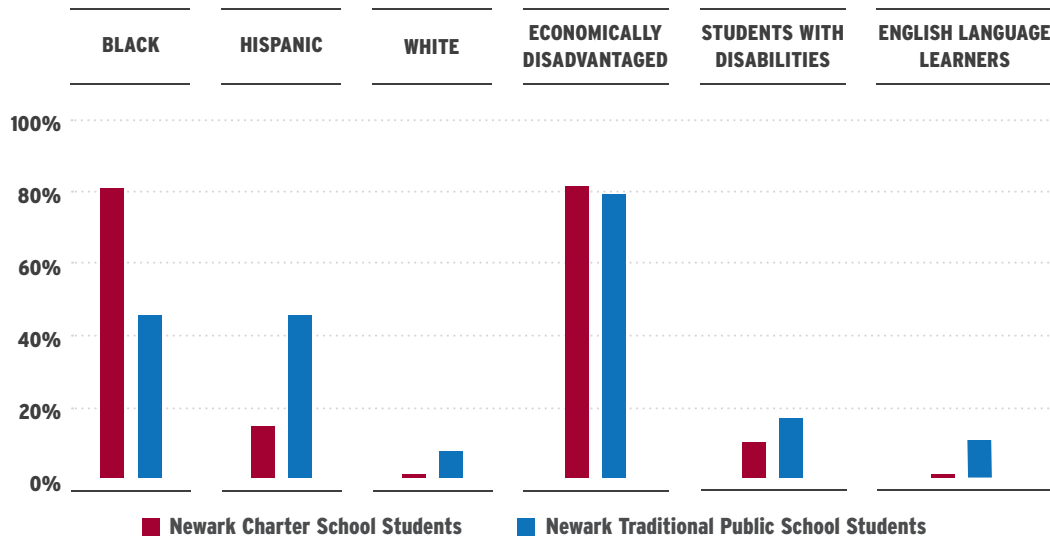
In 2016, 85% of charter high school students graduated within 4 years compared to the state average of 91% and the comparative district average of 80%.

Source: Performance: PARCC Performance: PARCC Assessment files publicly released on NJ DOE website. NJASK/HSPA Performance: NJASK/HSPA Assessment files publicly released on NJ DOE website. **Graduation Rates:** Adjusted Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rate: 2016 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rate file publicly released on NJ DOE website. **SGP:** 2015-16 Performance Report Database publicly released on NJ DOE website. *2012-2014 HSPA performance data includes only eleventh grade results. 2015 and 2016 PARCC data includes assessment results from grades 9-11.

CITY PROFILE: *Newark*

 <h2>18</h2> <p>Number of Charter Schools</p>	 <p>Charter Enrollment</p> <h2>18,073</h2>	 <h2>35%</h2> <p>% of Public School Students Attending Charters</p>	 <h2>12,852</h2> <p>Charter Waitlist Total</p>
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Newark Public School Demographics



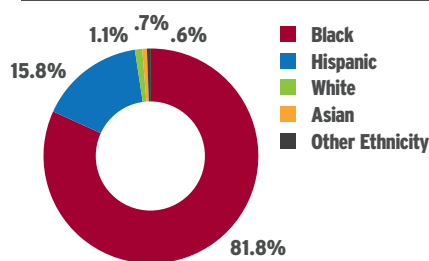
97.6%

OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NEWARK ARE EITHER BLACK OR HISPANIC

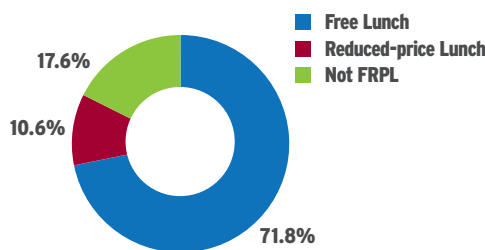
82.4%

OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NEWARK ARE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

NEWARK CHARTER SCHOOLS ETHNICITY



NEWARK CHARTER SCHOOLS ECONOMIC STATUS



In 2015, Stanford University's CREDO study found that Newark's charter sector was the second highest performing in the country.

Source: <http://urbancharters.stanford.edu/news.php>

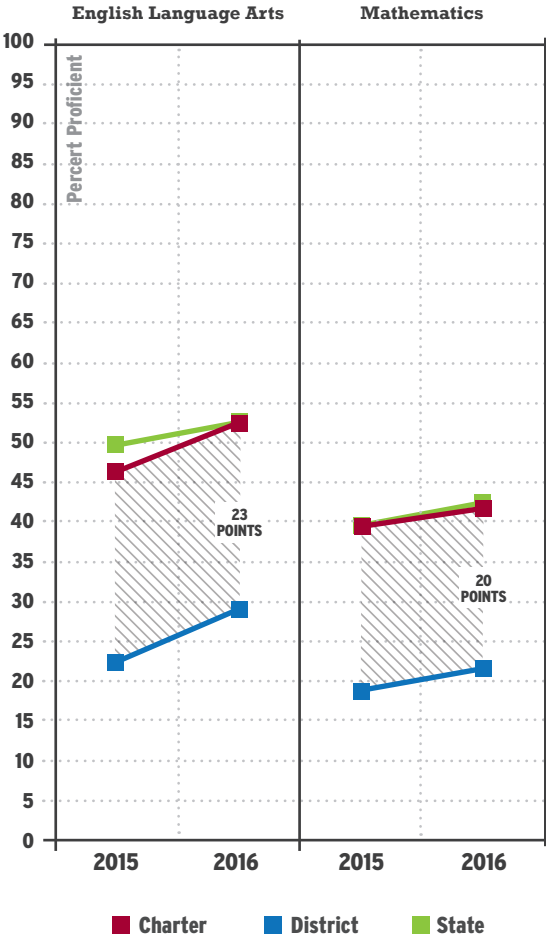
Newark Charter *ELEMENTARY* and *MIDDLE SCHOOL* Performance

Proficiency: In 2016, Newark charter school students outperformed their district peers by **23 points** in ELA and **20 points** in Math.

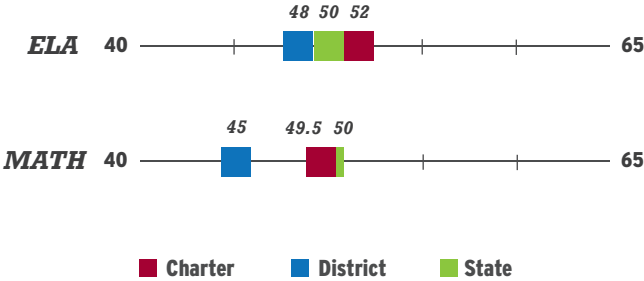
Growth: In 2016, Newark charter schools, in the aggregate, made **larger learning gains** in ELA and Math than Newark district schools. Compared to the state, Newark charter schools, in the aggregate, made **larger learning gains** in ELA and approached the state median in Math.

Newark PARCC Proficiency Rates, GRADES 3-8

ABSOLUTE PARCC PERFORMANCE
CHARTERS VS. DISTRICT NEWARK

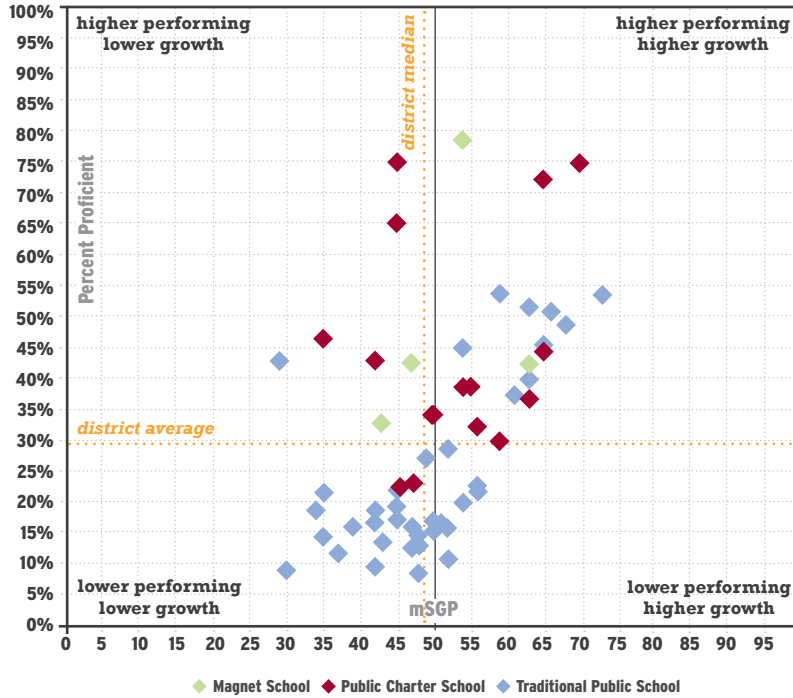


Newark Median SGP



2015-16 PARCC Performance and Student Growth **GRADES 3-8 ELA**

NEWARK CHARTER AND DISTRICT SCHOOLS

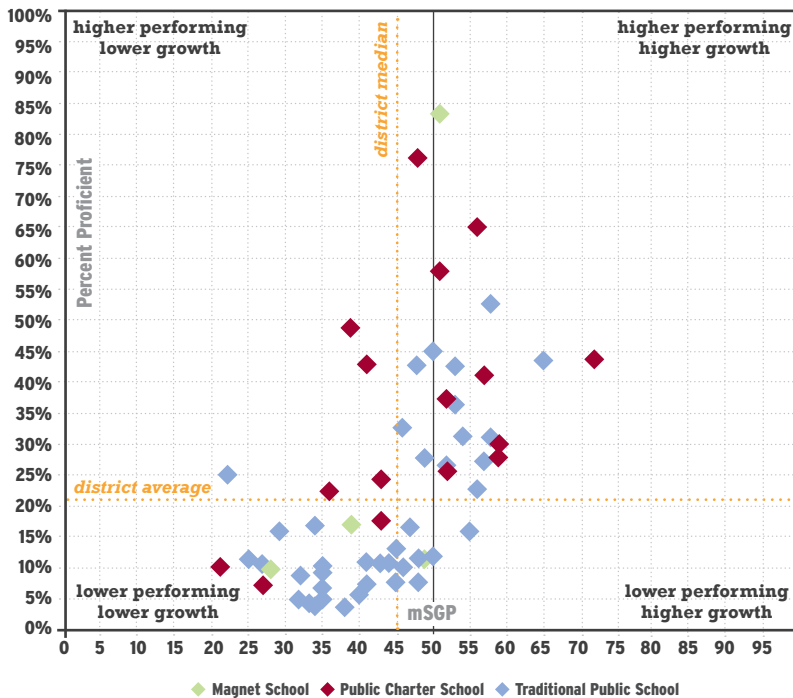


Proficiency: In 2016, 14 out of 16 charter elementary and middle schools in Newark outperformed the district average in ELA.

Growth: In 2016, 10 out of 16 charter elementary and middle schools in Newark made larger learning gains in ELA than the district median.

2015-16 PARCC Performance and Student Growth **GRADES 3-8 MATH**

NEWARK CHARTER AND DISTRICT SCHOOLS



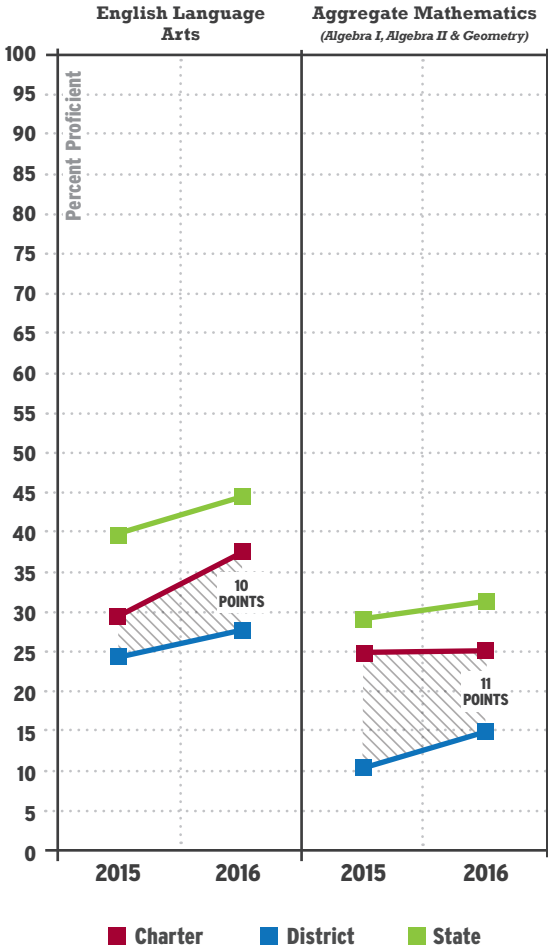
Proficiency: In 2016, 13 out of 16 charter elementary and middle schools in Newark outperformed the district average in Math.

Growth: In 2016, 9 out of 16 charter elementary and middle schools in Newark made larger learning gains in Math than the district median.


Newark Charter *HIGH SCHOOL* Performance

Newark PARCC Performance, GRADES 9-11

**ABSOLUTE PARCC PERFORMANCE
CHARTERS VS. DISTRICT**



In 2016, Newark charter school students outperformed their district peers by **10 points in ELA** and **11 points in Math**.



In 2016, 79%* of Newark charter high school students graduated within 4 years - higher than the district average of 77% but below the state average of 91%.

Newark Data Sources:

Profile Data: **Enrollment:** *Charter Schools:* 2017-18 Charter school Projected Aid Notices enhanced by NJCSA survey data; *Districts:* 2017-18 Projected State Aid Notices adjusted to account for NJCSA survey enhancements of charter school enrollment. **Waitlists:** 2016-17 Charter School Annual Reports. Waitlists reported as of 8/1/17.

Demographics: **Ethnicity:** 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17. **Free/Reduced Lunch Status:** 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17. **Students with Disability:** 2015-16 Performance Report Database "EnrollmentBySpecPop" table. **English Language Learners:** 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17.

Performance: **PARCC Performance:** 2014-15 & 2015-16 PARCC Assessment files publicly released on NJ DOE website. **Median Student Growth Percentiles (mSGP):** 2015-16 Performance Report Database "SGP" table.

Graduation Rates: **Adjusted Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rate:** 2016 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rate file publicly released on NJ DOE website.

* Charter school graduation rate excludes schools closed prior to the 2017-18 school year. If included in the graduation rate calculation, the graduation rate would have been 75%.

SCHOOL PROFILE

NORTH STAR ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL: *An Uncommon School*

- ★ **Location: NEWARK**
- ★ **Year Opened: 1997**
- ★ **Grade Levels: K-12**
- ★ **Number of Students: 5,000**

Twenty years ago, 72 students entered an old bank building in downtown Newark, becoming the pioneering class of North Star Academy Charter School, a school that has gone on to prove that low income students from Newark can achieve at the highest levels.

Along the way, North Star also showed that a single, successful school can replicate and provide a high-quality education for thousands of students.

Shining in Newark

Today, North Star Academy is the largest charter school in New Jersey, serving over 5,000 students in Newark in 13 campuses across the city. About 84% of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and 98% are black or Latino. North Star Academy is part of Uncommon Schools, whose mission is to ensure students enter into, succeed in, and graduate from college.

The students consistently outscore the state's most affluent communities.

Eight in ten Uncommon Schools alumni are on track to graduate from college within six years of high school graduation – one of the highest rates in the country. Nationally, just 9% of low-income students graduate from college after earning their high school diploma. By contrast, the college graduation rate of the highest income quartile in the U.S. is about 75%.

Collaboration in Action: A True Charter-District Partnership

Illustrating the inherent public good that high-achieving charter schools can provide in cities like Newark, in the 2014-15 school year, Uncommon Schools entered into a groundbreaking partnership with Newark Public Schools (NPS). In that year, North Star took over the management of Alexander Street School, which was among the lowest performing elementary schools in the state. It was Uncommon's first turnaround attempt.

At the end of the first year, students who previously couldn't read or write or do math on grade level were now outscoring students in the wealthiest suburbs. By

NORTH STAR ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

the second year, 80% of students were proficient in English and 77% were proficient in math, vastly outperforming the state average as well as the average among non-economically disadvantaged students.

A recent study by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University singled out Uncommon Schools, finding that students who chose an Uncommon School over a similar district school in their city gained the equivalent of nearly 7 extra months of learning time in math and 4 extra months in reading.

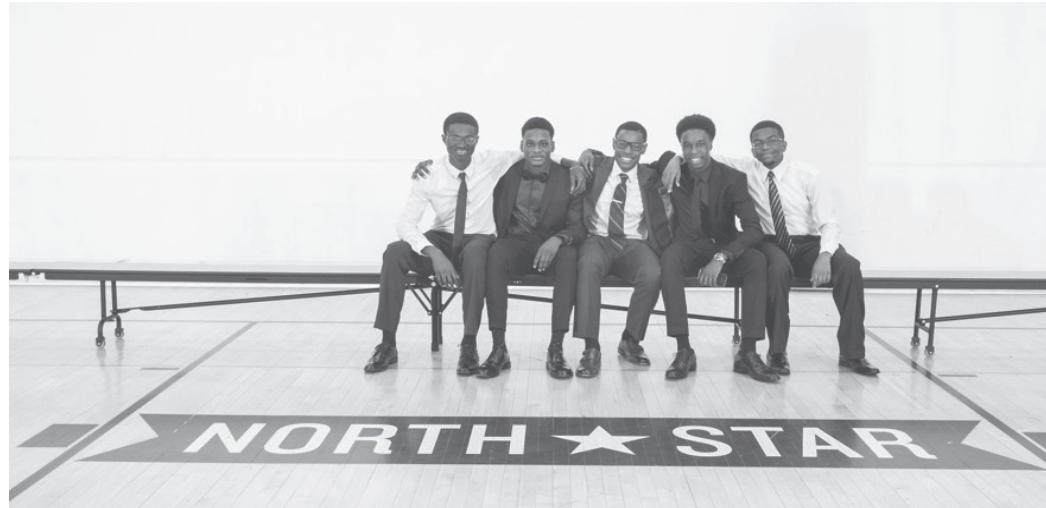
Those numbers, of course, are tied to real children, whose course in history is changed dramatically because they attend a North Star school.

"I felt that North Star entering Alexander was a blessing," said Brandy Farewell, whose son attended the school when it became North Star. "It was like our family received a second chance."

Initially Farewell was apprehensive because she didn't know how her son would fare given he was so far behind.

"But thank God, North Star was patient and worked with him every step of the way," Farewell said. "I immediately noticed my son being happy about what he learned at school."

In fact, the Alexander turnaround led to more than just student achievement for those students. When Superintendent Chris Cerf visited, he declared he wanted to "bottle" what he saw as some of North Star's most effective techniques so that they could be implemented in the district.



“I immediately noticed my son being happy about what he learned at school.”


That launched an ongoing partnership that has involved hundreds of Newark Public School (NPS) teachers, principals and vice principals. To date, NPS and

Uncommon educators have collaborated on professional development for teachers, focusing in particular on early literacy skills.




CITY PROFILE: *Camden*

5




Number of Charter Schools

5,122




Charter Enrollment

31%



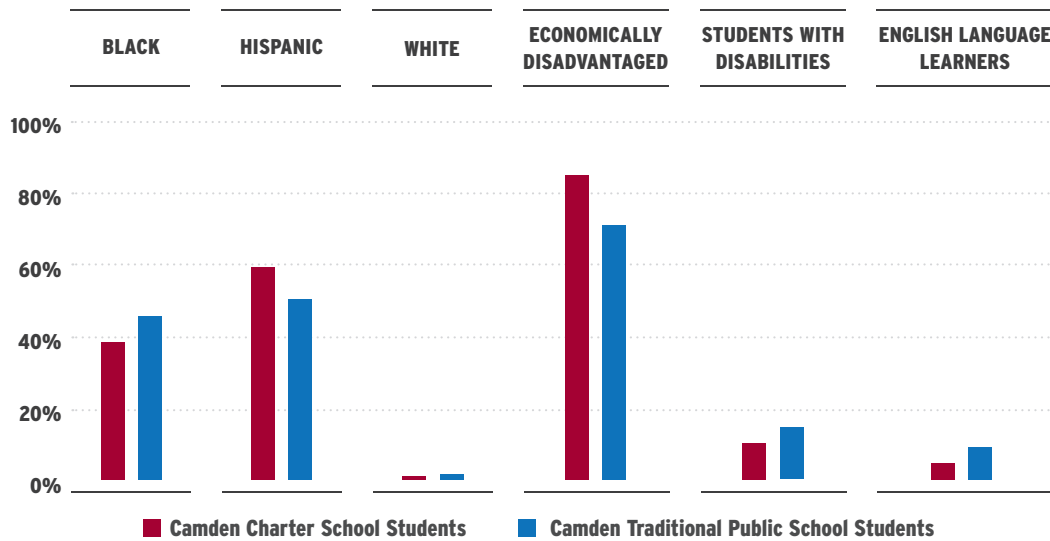
% of Public School Students Attending Charters



Charter Waitlist Total

2,693

Camden Public School Demographics



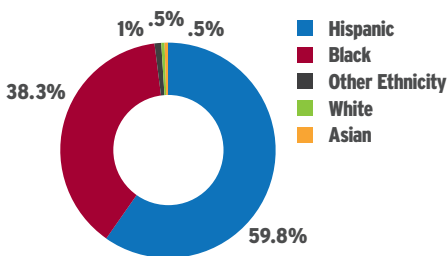
98.1%

OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CAMDEN ARE EITHER BLACK OR HISPANIC

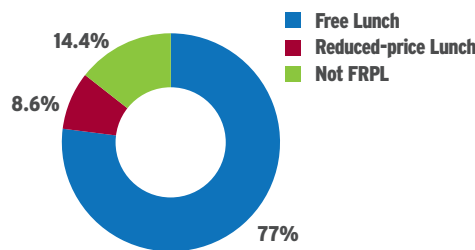
85.6%

OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CAMDEN ARE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

CAMDEN CHARTER SCHOOLS ETHNICITY



CAMDEN CHARTER SCHOOLS ECONOMIC STATUS



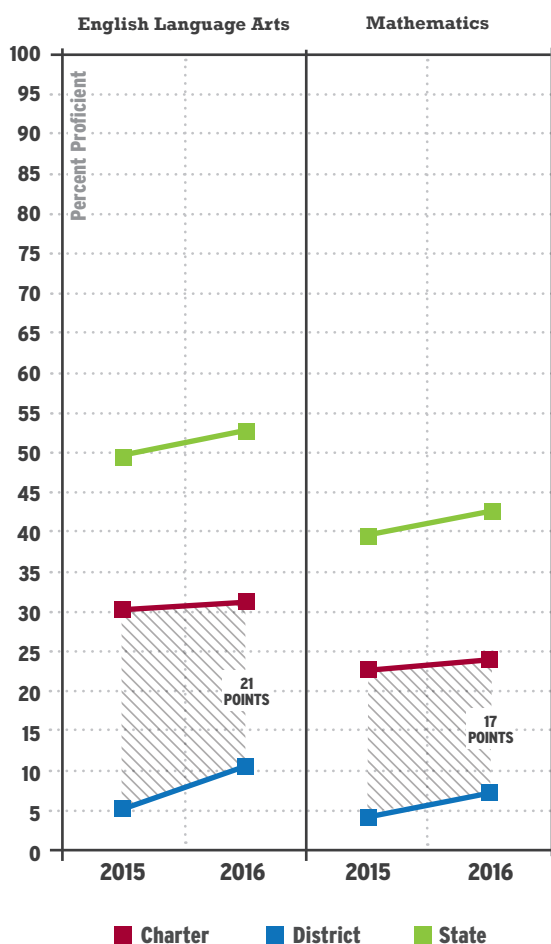
Camden Charter *ELEMENTARY* and *MIDDLE SCHOOL* Performance

Proficiency: In 2016, Camden charter school students outperformed their district peers by **21 points** in ELA and **17 points** in Math.

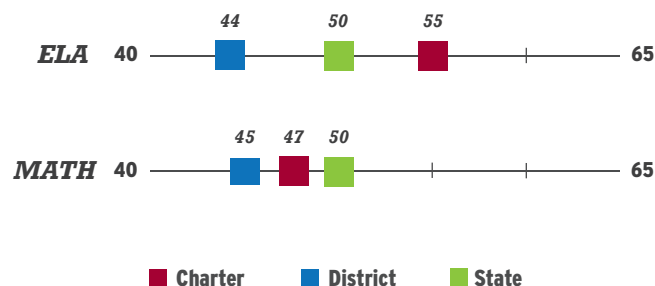
Growth: In 2016, Camden charter schools, in the aggregate, made **larger learning gains** in ELA and Math than Camden district schools. Compared to the state, Camden charter schools, in the aggregate, made **larger learning gains** in ELA but lagged behind the state median in Math.

Camden PARCC Proficiency Rates, GRADES 3-8

ABSOLUTE PARCC PERFORMANCE
CHARTERS VS. DISTRICT CAMDEN

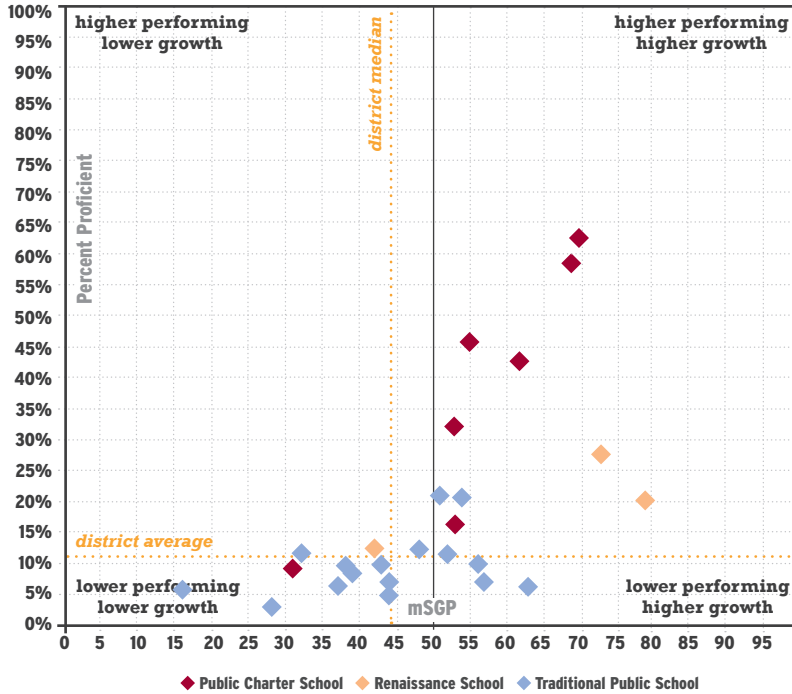


Camden Median SGP



2015-16 PARCC Performance and Student Growth **GRADES 3-8 ELA**

CAMDEN CHARTER AND DISTRICT SCHOOLS

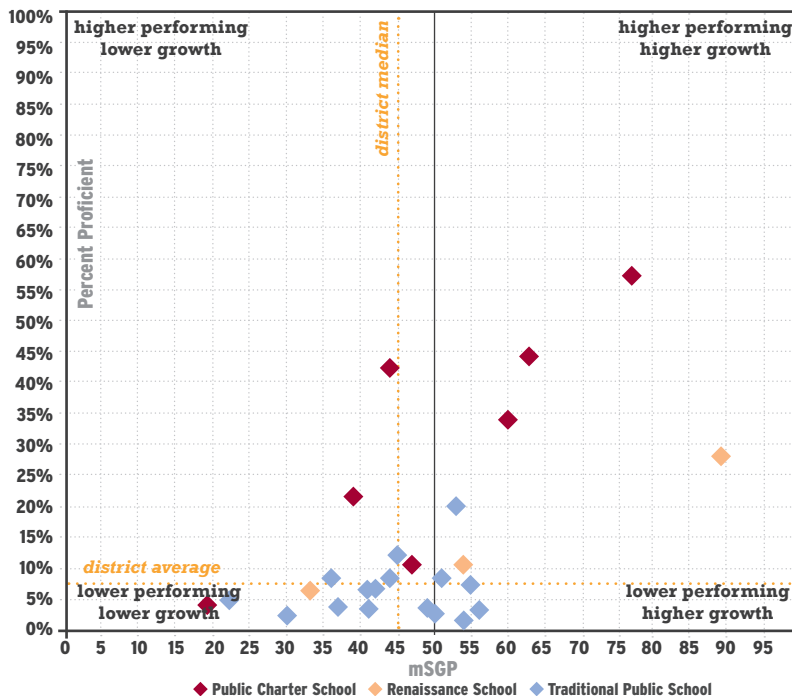


Proficiency: In 2016, 6 out of 7* charter elementary and middle schools in Camden outperformed the district average in ELA.

Growth: In 2016, 6 out of 7* charter elementary and middle schools in Camden made larger learning gains in ELA than the district median.

2015-16 PARCC Performance and Student Growth **GRADES 3-8 MATH**

CAMDEN CHARTER AND DISTRICT SCHOOLS



Proficiency: In 2016, 6 out of 7* charter elementary and middle schools in Camden outperformed the district average in Math.

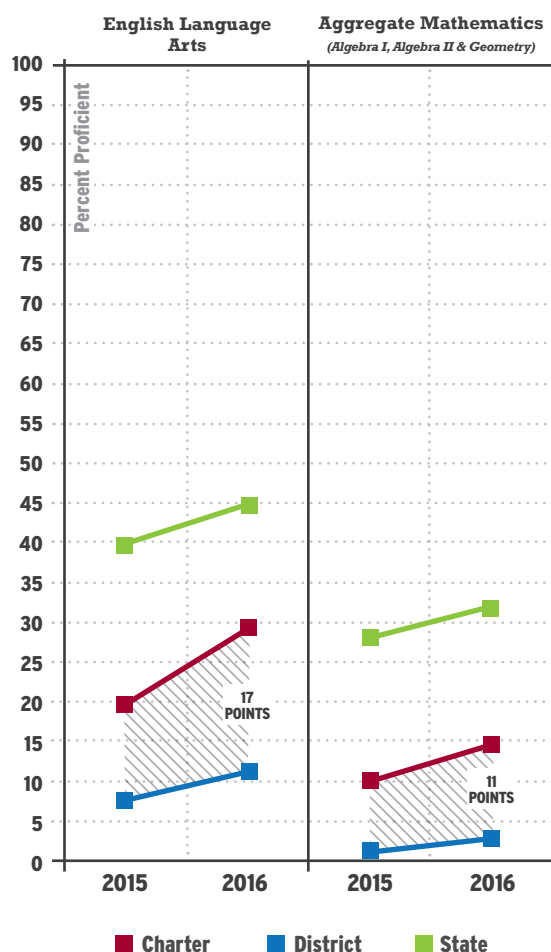
Growth: In 2016, 4 out of 7* charter elementary and middle schools in Camden made larger learning gains in Math than the district median.

* Due to consolidation and one charter school closure, there are currently only 5 charter schools in Camden.

Camden Charter *HIGH SCHOOL* Performance

Camden PARCC Performance, GRADES 9-11

ABSOLUTE PARCC PERFORMANCE CHARTERS VS. DISTRICT



In 2016, Camden charter school students outperformed their district peers by **17 points** in ELA and **11 points** in Math.



In 2016, 91% of Camden charter high school students graduated within 4 years - higher than the district average of 69% and on par with the state average of 91%.

Camden Data Sources:

Profile Data: Enrollment: Charter Schools: 2017-18 Charter school Projected Aid Notices enhanced by NJCSA survey data; Districts: 2017-18 Projected State Aid Notices adjusted to account for NJCSA survey enhancements of charter school enrollment. Waitlists: 2016-17 Charter School Annual Reports. Waitlists reported as of 8/1/17.

Demographics: Ethnicity: 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17. Free/Reduced Lunch Status: 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17. Students with Disability: 2015-16 Performance Report Database "EnrollmentBySpecPop" table. English Language Learners: 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17.

Performance: PARCC Performance: 2014-15 & 2015-16 PARCC Assessment files publicly released on NJ DOE website. Median Student Growth Percentiles (mSGP): 2015-16 Performance Report Database "SGP" table.

Graduation Rates: Adjusted Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rate: 2016 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rate file publicly released on NJ DOE website.

SCHOOL PROFILE

LEAP ACADEMY UNIVERSITY CHARTER SCHOOL: *A Camden Success Story*

- ★ **Location: CAMDEN**
- ★ **Year Opened: 1997**
- ★ **Grade Levels: K-12**
- ★ **Number of Students: 1,560**

LEAP Academy University Charter School, one of the thirteen original charter schools in New Jersey, is proof that demographics do not determine destiny. In 2016, in Camden, one of the state's most challenged communities, LEAP Academy University Charter School had the highest graduation rate of all non-selective public schools in the city. The incredible success at LEAP can be attributed to a comprehensive school model that meets the needs of all family members and empowers students to succeed in college, career, and life.

Holistic Community School Model

As a holistic community school, LEAP provides services to its families from birth through adulthood. "The idea that a public school can transform a community is so empowering. Together with Rutgers, we're solving massive, systemic problems, and that's a pretty incredible story," said Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, LEAP Founder and Board Chair. Through the Rutgers Early Learning Research Academy located at LEAP, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers follow a curriculum that strengthens socio-emotional, cognitive, academic, and motor skills that prepare them for Kindergarten and beyond. LEAP also runs an on-site Health and Wellness Center that provides physical therapy, mental health counseling, medical support, and health and wellness classes. LEAP also empowers parents through various parent engagement initiatives including Rutgers' School of Excellence Parents Academy.

Rigorous STEM Curriculum and Maker's Space

LEAP Academy University Charter School utilizes a rigorous college-preparatory STEM curriculum to ensure students are ready to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. Responding to the critical need for diversity in STEM fields, LEAP Academy, in partnership with Rutgers-Camden, opened The Fabrication Laboratory at its high school in 2012. The "FabLab" focuses on the creation and implementation of innovation by utilizing a problem-based/hands-on approach and enables students to apply STEM-

LEAP ACADEMY UNIVERSITY CHARTER SCHOOL

based research to applicable projects to help solve Camden's environmental and physical challenges.

Early College and College Preparation

Located along Camden's education corridor, LEAP has partnered with the city's higher education institutions -- Rutgers University, Rowan University, and Camden County College -- to create opportunities for students to participate in Dual Enrollment and Early College courses. All students in 2017 will graduate from LEAP with up



“ This school gave me the ability to have a dream, and the hope to make it happen.”

to 30 college credits on their transcripts. LEAP's Center for College Access also assists students by providing enrichment programs and initiatives to master non-cognitive “soft skills” for students to be successful in college. LEAP Class of 2009 student Robert Ransom, Law Clerk for the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, remarked, “This school gave me the ability to have a dream and hope to make it happen. Growing up in Camden, so many people tell you ‘no, college isn't possible.’ LEAP changes that. You graduate knowing whatever college you go to, you can go on to do anything.”



CITY PROFILE: *Trenton*

7

Number of Charter Schools

*includes 1 charter school in Hamilton and 1 charter school in Ewing that predominantly serve Trenton students

3,122

Charter Enrollment

*includes 1 school in Hamilton and 1 school in Ewing

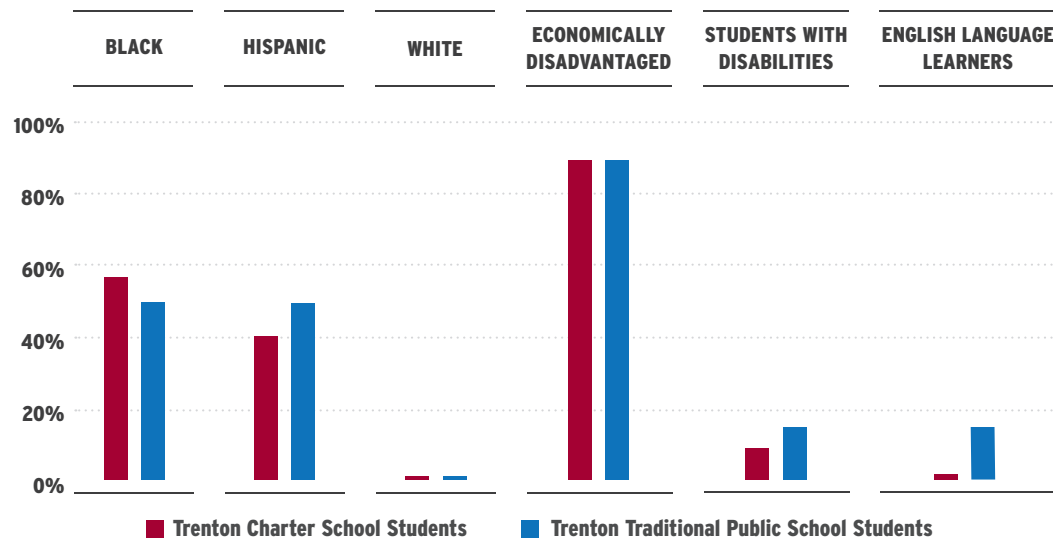
21.5%

% of Public School Students Attending Charters

Charter Waitlist Total

1,784

Trenton Public School Demographics



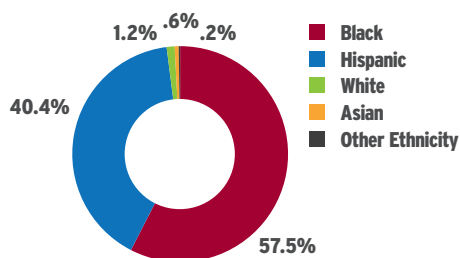
97.9%

OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TRENTON ARE EITHER BLACK OR HISPANIC

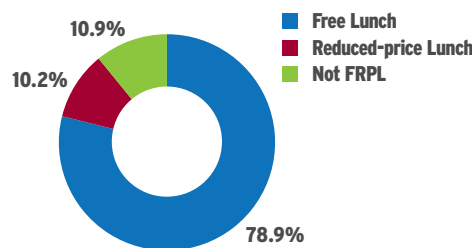
89.1%

OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TRENTON ARE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

TRENTON CHARTER SCHOOLS ETHNICITY



TRENTON CHARTER SCHOOLS ECONOMIC STATUS



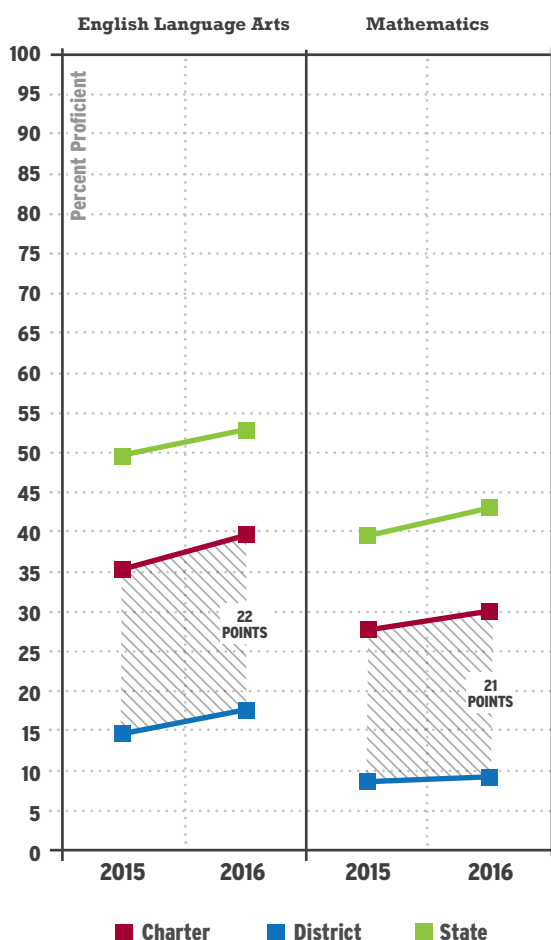
Trenton Charter *ELEMENTARY* and *MIDDLE SCHOOL* Performance

Proficiency: In 2016, Trenton charter school students outperformed their district peers by **22 points** in ELA and **21 points** in Math.

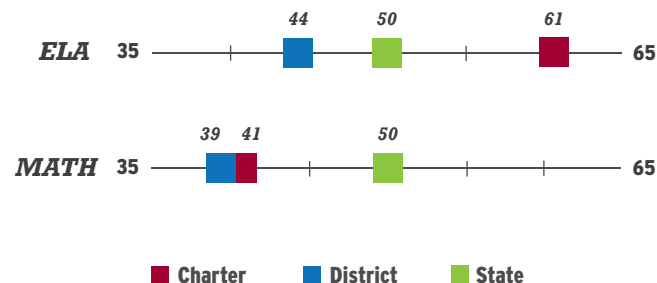
Growth: In 2016, Trenton charter schools, in the aggregate, made **larger learning gains** in ELA and Math than Trenton district schools. Compared to the state, Trenton charter schools, in the aggregate, made **larger learning gains** in ELA but lagged behind the state median in Math.

Trenton PARCC Proficiency Rates, GRADES 3-8

ABSOLUTE PARCC PERFORMANCE
CHARTERS VS. DISTRICT TRENTON

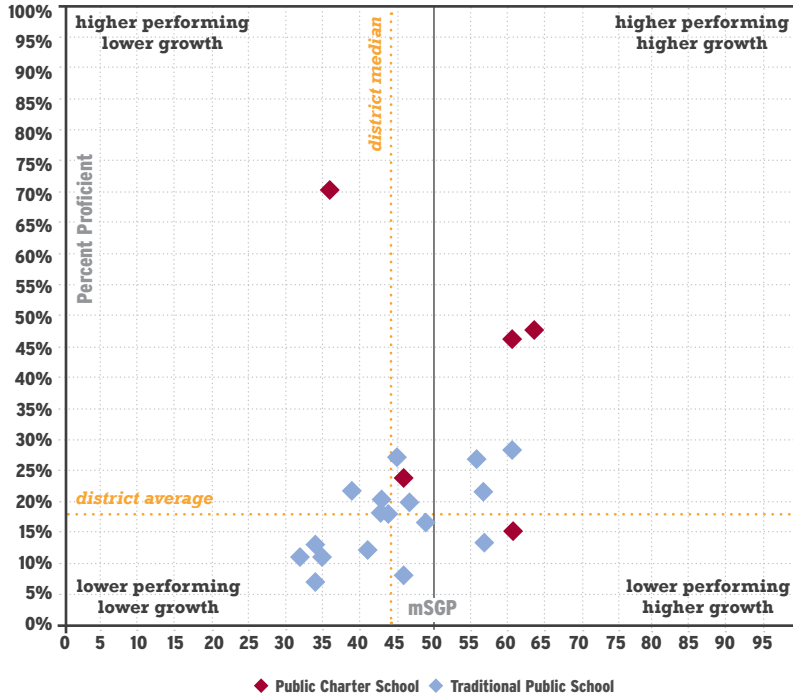


Trenton Median SGP



2015-16 PARCC Performance and Student Growth **GRADES 3-8 ELA**

TRENTON CHARTER AND DISTRICT SCHOOLS

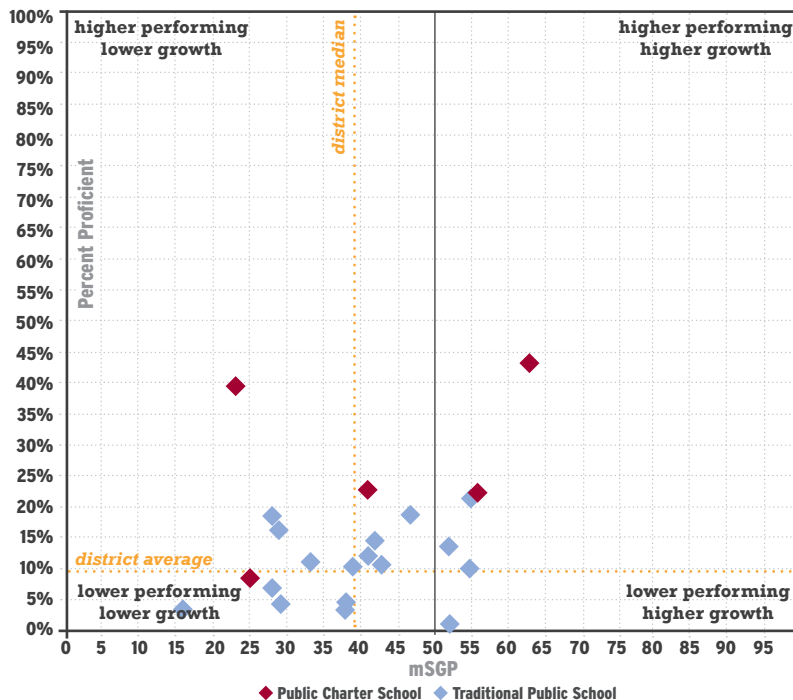


Proficiency: In 2016, 4 out of 5* charter elementary and middle schools in Trenton outperformed the district average in ELA.

Growth: In 2016, 4 out of 5* charter elementary and middle schools in Trenton made larger learning gains in ELA than the district median.

2015-16 PARCC Performance and Student Growth **GRADES 3-8 MATH**

TRENTON CHARTER AND DISTRICT SCHOOLS



Proficiency: In 2016, 4 out of 5* charter elementary and middle schools in Trenton outperformed the district average in Math.

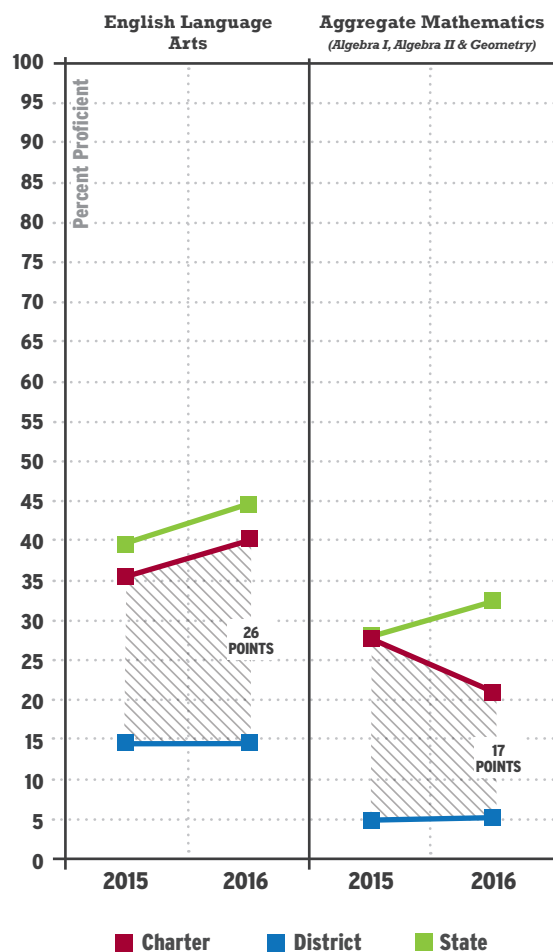
Growth: In 2016, 3 out of 5* charter elementary and middle schools in Trenton made larger learning gains in Math than the district median.

*Due to cohort size, a median SGP was not calculated for some charter schools in Trenton. These charter schools are not represented on the graphs on this page.

Trenton Charter *HIGH SCHOOL* Performance

Trenton PARCC Performance, GRADES 9-11

ABSOLUTE PARCC PERFORMANCE CHARTERS VS. DISTRICT



In 2016, Trenton charter school students outperformed their district peers by **26 points** in ELA and **17 points** in Math.



In 2016, 94% of Trenton charter high school students graduated within 4 years - outpacing both district (67%) and state averages (91%).

Trenton Data Sources:

Profile Data: Enrollment: Charter Schools: 2017-18 Charter school Projected Aid Notices enhanced by NJCSA survey data; Districts: 2017-18 Projected State Aid Notices adjusted to account for NJCSA survey enhancements of charter school enrollment. Waitlists: 2016-17 Charter School Annual Reports. Waitlists reported as of 8/1/17.

Demographics: Ethnicity: 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17. Free/Reduced Lunch Status: 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17. Students with Disability: 2015-16 Performance Report Database "EnrollmentBySpecPop" table. English Language Learners: 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17.

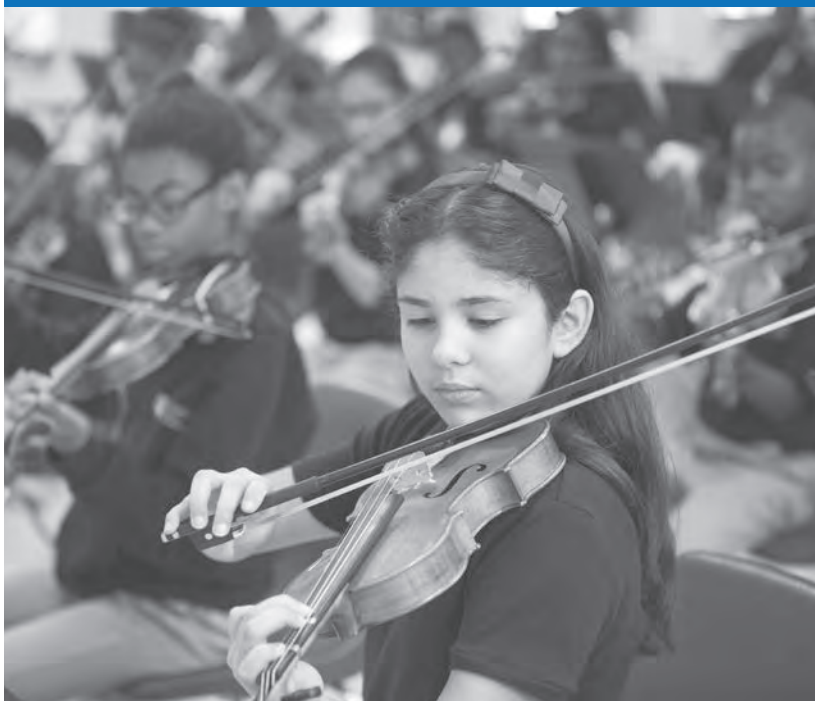
Performance: PARCC Performance: 2014-15 & 2015-16 PARCC Assessment files publicly released on NJ DOE website. Median Student Growth Percentiles (mSGP): 2015-16 Performance Report Database "SGP" table.

Graduation Rates: Adjusted Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rate: 2016 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rate file publicly released on NJ DOE website.

SCHOOL PROFILE

Opportunities for Enrichment: Strings Program at **FOUNDATION ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL**

- ★ **Location: TRENTON**
- ★ **Year Opened: 2007**
- ★ **Grade Levels: K-12**
- ★ **Number of Students: 1,034**



A Track Record of Success in Trenton

The mission of Foundation Academy Charter School is to ensure all of their students secure the academic knowledge and skills to prepare them for the nation's finest colleges and to instill in them the core values of caring, respect, responsibility and honesty. Founded in 2007, Foundation opened as a fifth and sixth grade with just 80 students. Today, the school serves more than 1,000 students in grades K-12 in Trenton with more than 750 students on the waiting list. To date, all four of Foundation's graduating classes have achieved 100% college acceptance.

Foundation's String Program

Since the day Foundation opened its doors, every student has been given a string instrument to play. "Foundation believes that a student who plays an instrument – particularly a string instrument – performs better and achieves more academically," said Graig Weiss, Executive Director at Foundation. Foundation mandates that all students receive two to three hours per week of music instruction. Nearly 86% of Foundation's students receive free- or reduced-price school lunch – however, music does not discriminate against background, zip-code, or income. Students who are exposed to music and given the opportunity to learn how to play a string instrument are better prepared to compete and communicate with their peers as they grow. Additionally, music class helps to build camaraderie among classmates and enhances teamwork.

FOUNDATION ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL


Playing a string instrument has been proven to amplify academic cognition while providing a safe and healthy outlet for emotional expression.

Foundation's music and orchestra program includes group instruction, private training, formal school and community performances, and acclaimed partnerships with professional musicians via the *Stand Partners Project*. Foundation's orchestra program continues to be popular among students and their families who respect and value the importance of the arts in their overall development. Foundation's students have held notable jam sessions with Grammy Award Winner, Wyclef Jean, and have received more than \$100,000 in grants and donations to sustain their beloved program.




**“ To date,
all four of
Foundation’s
graduating
classes have
achieved
100% college
acceptance.**

CITY PROFILE: *Jersey City*



12


Number of Charter Schools



Charter Enrollment

6,240


% of Public School Students Attending Charters



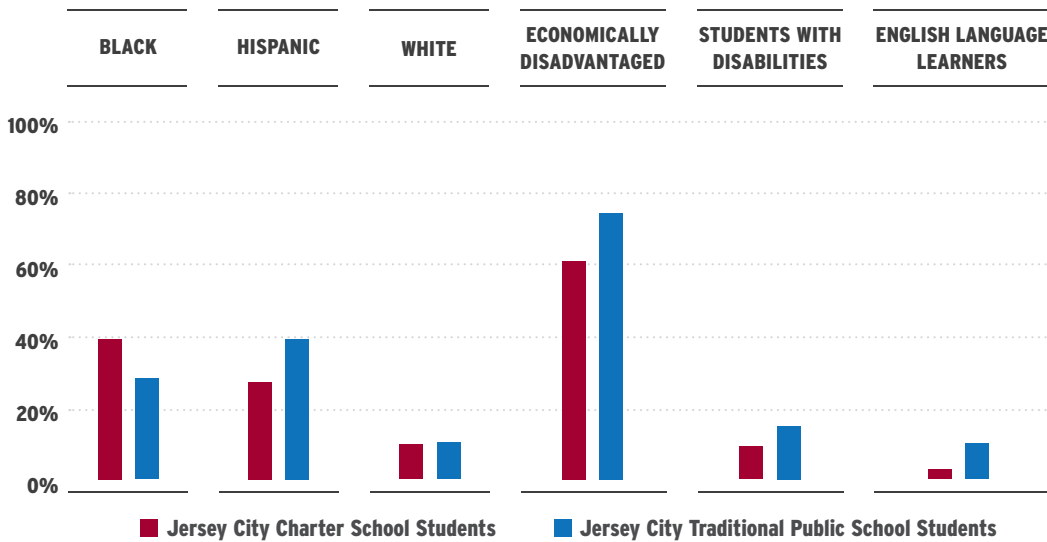
19.2%

5,325

Charter Waitlist Total



Jersey City Public School Demographics



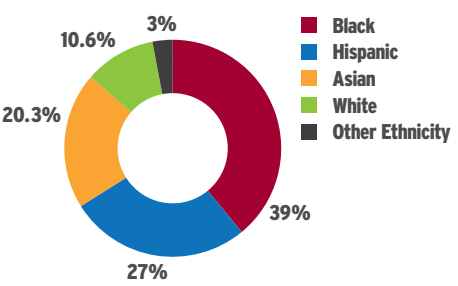
66%

OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS IN JERSEY CITY ARE EITHER BLACK OR HISPANIC

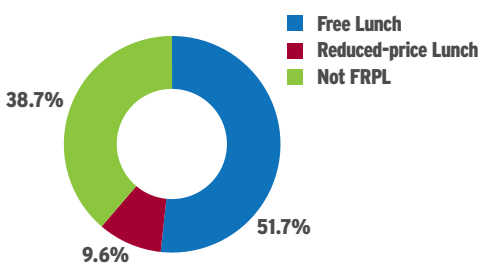
61.3%

OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS IN JERSEY CITY ARE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

JERSEY CITY CHARTER SCHOOLS ETHNICITY



JERSEY CITY CHARTER SCHOOLS ECONOMIC STATUS



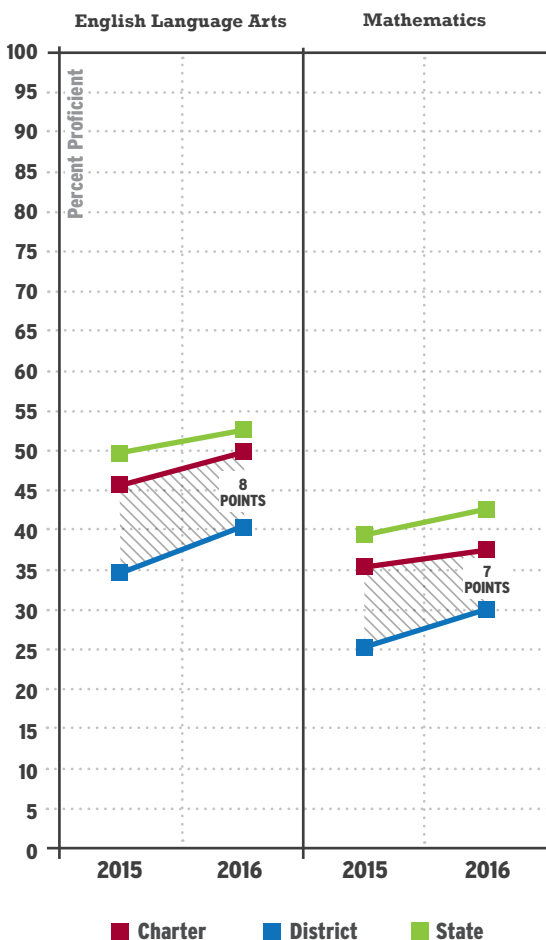
Jersey City Charter *ELEMENTARY* and *MIDDLE SCHOOL* Performance

Proficiency: In 2016, Jersey City charter school students outperformed their district peers by **8 points** in ELA and **7 points** in Math.

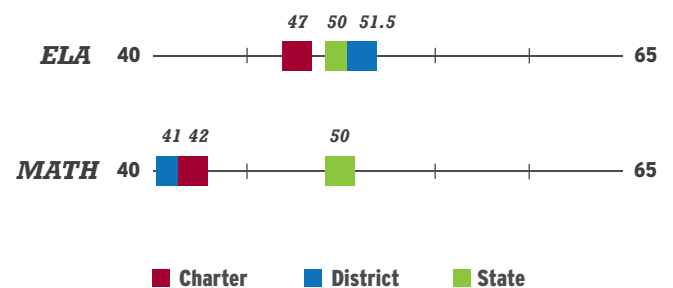
Growth: In 2016, Jersey City charter schools, in the aggregate, made **larger learning gains** in Math than Jersey City district schools but lagged behind Jersey City district schools in ELA.

Jersey City PARCC Proficiency Rates, GRADES 3-8

ABSOLUTE PARCC PERFORMANCE
CHARTERS VS. DISTRICT JERSEY CITY

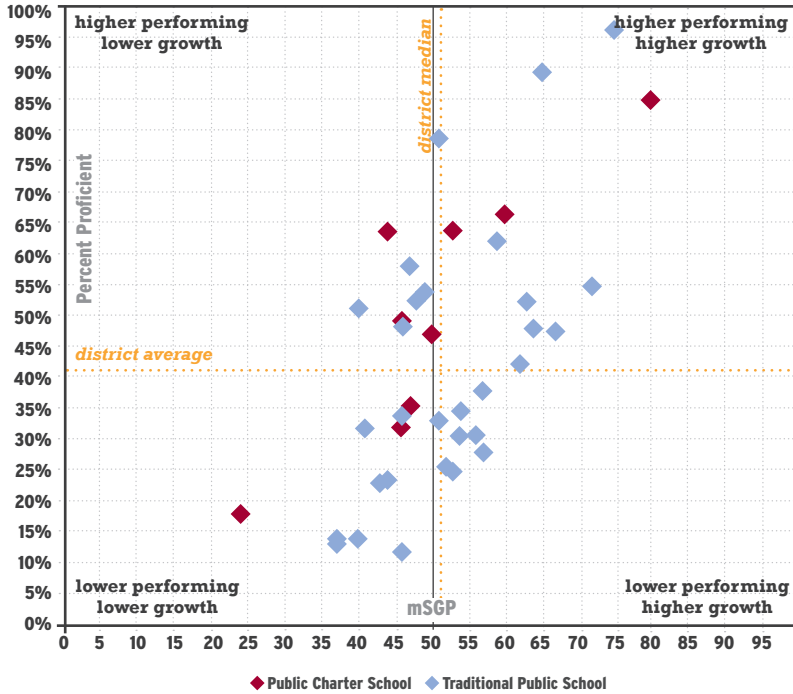


Jersey City Median SGP



2015-16 PARCC Performance and Student Growth **GRADES 3-8 ELA**

JERSEY CITY CHARTER AND DISTRICT SCHOOLS

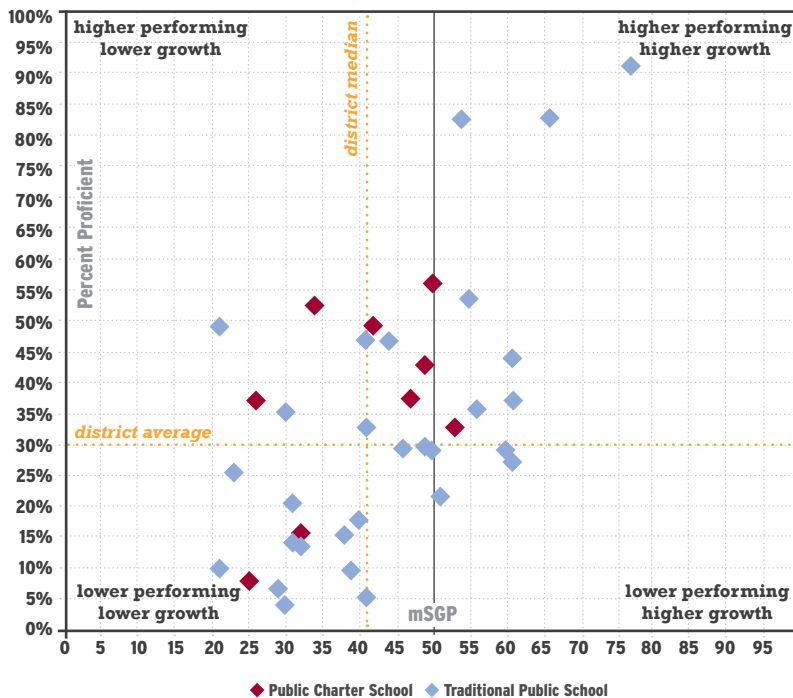


Proficiency: In 2016, 6 out of 9 charter elementary and middle schools in Jersey City outperformed the district average in ELA.

Growth: In 2016, 3 out of 9 charter elementary and middle schools in Jersey City made larger learning gains in ELA than the district median.

2015-16 PARCC Performance and Student Growth **GRADES 3-8 MATH**

JERSEY CITY CHARTER AND DISTRICT SCHOOLS



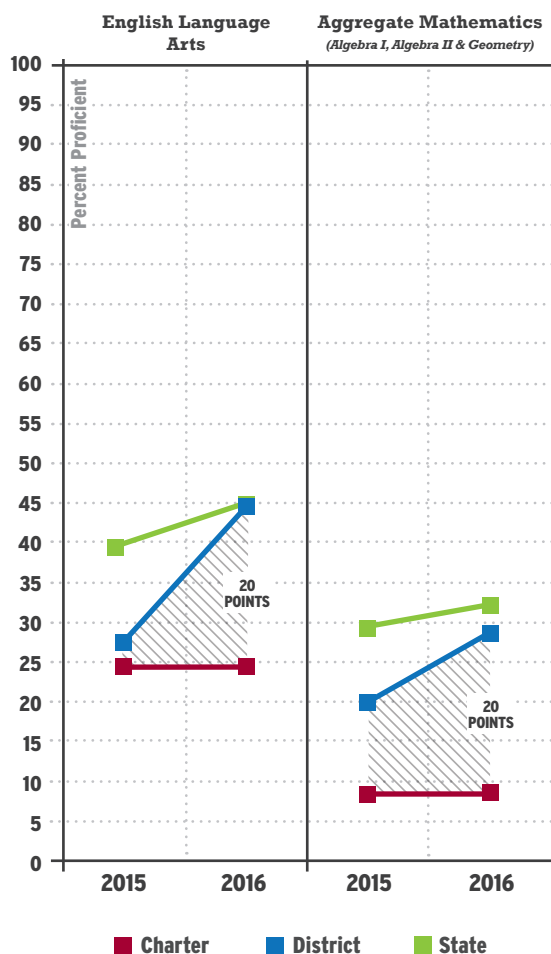
Proficiency: In 2016, 7 out of 9 charter elementary and middle schools in Jersey City outperformed the district average in Math.

Growth: In 2016, 5 out of 9 charter elementary and middle schools in Jersey City made larger learning gains in Math than the district median.

Jersey City Charter *HIGH SCHOOL* Performance

Jersey City PARCC Performance, GRADES 9-11

ABSOLUTE PARCC PERFORMANCE
CHARTERS VS. DISTRICT



In 2016, Jersey City charter school students lagged behind their district peers in both Math and ELA by 20 points.



In 2016, 91% of Jersey City charter high school students graduated within 4 years - higher than the district average of 75% and on par with the state average of 91%.

Jersey City Data Sources:

Profile Data: Enrollment: Charter Schools: 2017-18 Charter school Projected Aid Notices enhanced by NJCSA survey data; Districts: 2017-18 Projected State Aid Notices adjusted to account for NJCSA survey enhancements of charter school enrollment. Waitlists: 2016-17 Charter School Annual Reports. Waitlists reported as of 8/1/17.

Demographics: Ethnicity: 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17. Free/Reduced Lunch Status: 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17. Students with Disability: 2015-16 Performance Report Database "EnrollmentBySpecPop" table. English Language Learners: 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17.

Performance: PARCC Performance: 2014-15 & 2015-16 PARCC Assessment files publicly released on NJ DOE website. Median Student Growth Percentiles (mSGP): 2015-16 Performance Report Database "SGP" table.

Graduation Rates: Adjusted Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rate: 2016 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rate file publicly released on NJ DOE website.

SCHOOL PROFILE

Unconventional Shared Leadership Model at **SOARING HEIGHTS CHARTER SCHOOL**

- ★ **Location: JERSEY CITY**
- ★ **Year Opened: 1997**
- ★ **Grade Levels: K-8**
- ★ **Number of Students: 237**



Founded by Jersey City Educators

Soaring Heights is a high-performing charter school founded by a group of educators from the Jersey City Public School District. It opened its doors in September 1997 as one of the 13 original charter schools in New Jersey. The founding team at Soaring Heights set out to design a school where, among its many unique characteristics, decision-making would be placed in the hands of the staff.

"I know that a school flourishes when decision-making is kept close to the classroom door, thereby empowering the teachers," said Claudia Zuurick, who has served as school director at Soaring Heights for the last 20 years.

Teachers as Leaders

As a charter school, Soaring Heights uses its flexibility to maintain an innovative organizational structure providing unique opportunities for teachers to grow as leaders. At Soaring Heights, all full-time teachers serve in two capacities: first, as classroom teachers, and secondly, as school administrators. Soaring Heights recognizes all staff as valuable members of the organizational structure.

At Soaring Heights, the staff addresses important forms of communication, such as the pervasive role of blame that very much impacts a school's success, but is rarely studied in schools. Unaddressed, blame is the single greatest impediment to a school being successful. It lays the

SOARING HEIGHTS CHARTER SCHOOL

foundation for suspicion and depression and creates emotional barriers that separate people and prevent them from working together in meaningful and exciting ways. It squelches inspiration, motivation, and creativity, and fosters cynicism and an unwillingness to risk becoming committed and involved.

Through the study of blame, the school climate has drastically improved. Furthermore, the implementation of Direct Communication, a system developed at the school, provides a calm, peaceful environment in which children are able to relax, enjoy learning, and thrive both socially and academically.

Zuorick indicates that developing this unconventional leadership model didn't just happen. "True leaders have to be cultivated. People's dynamics are different and these differences must be identified and addressed. What one person needs to become a leader will be very different from the needs of another."

Many schools in urban districts face challenges with teacher turnover. The strong professional culture at Soaring Heights has led to incredible longevity amongst its teaching staff. In the 2016-2017 school year, the 15 full-time teachers had an average of 15 years of service at Soaring Heights. The school's unconventional shared leadership style allows staff to face problems together, share successes, grow in unity, and move forward to ensure a safe environment and quality education for all its students.



“ The school provides a calm, peaceful environment in which children are able to relax, enjoy learning, and thrive both socially and academically. ”



CITY PROFILE: *Paterson*

6

**Number of
Charter Schools**

3,753

**Charter
Enrollment**

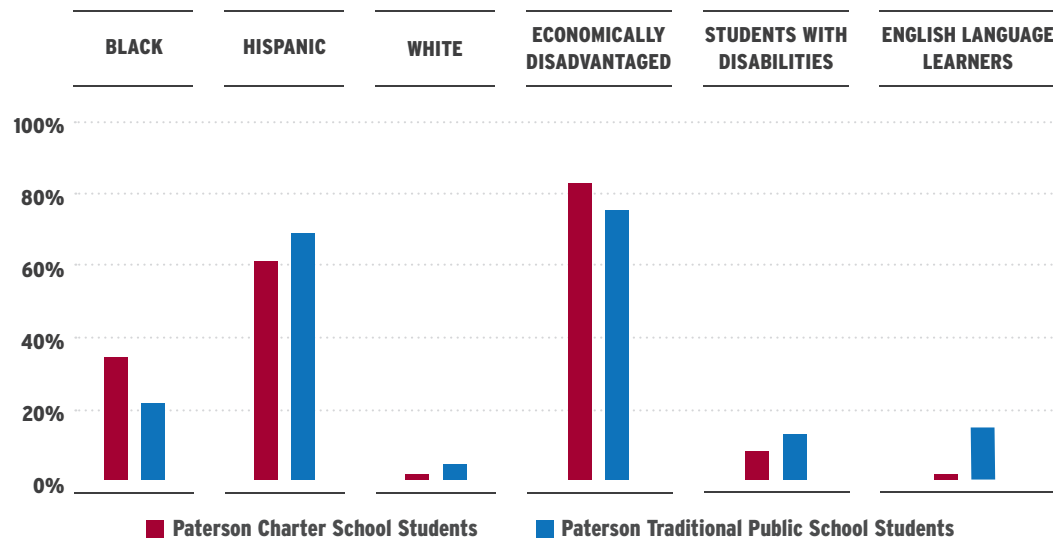
13.3%

**% of Public
School
Students
Attending Charters**

**Charter
Waitlist
Total**

3,179

Paterson Public School Demographics

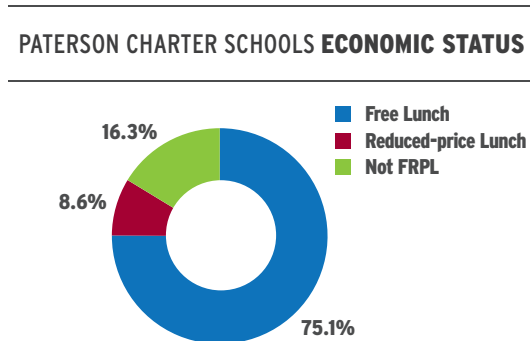
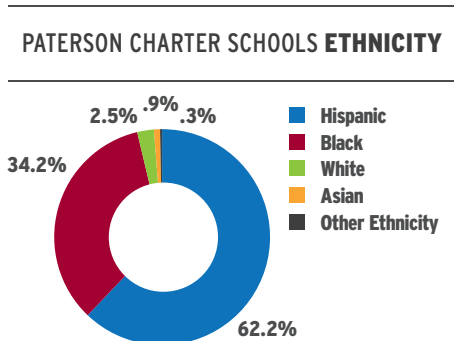


96.4%

OF CHARTER
SCHOOL
STUDENTS
IN PATERSON
ARE EITHER
BLACK OR
HISPANIC

83.8%

OF CHARTER
SCHOOL
STUDENTS IN
PATERSON ARE
ECONOMICALLY
DISADVANTAGED



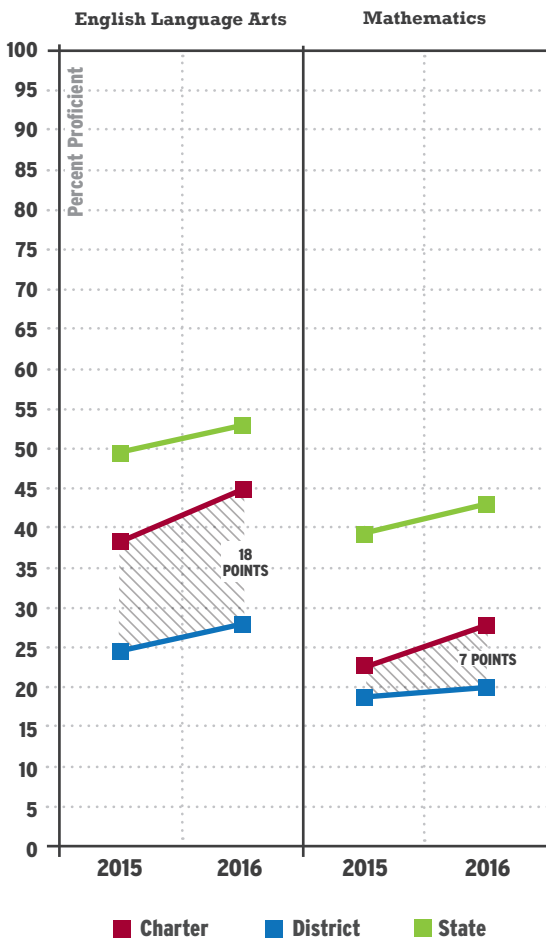
Paterson Charter *ELEMENTARY* and *MIDDLE SCHOOL* Performance

Proficiency: In 2016, Paterson charter school students outperformed their district peers by **18 points** in ELA and **7 points** in Math.

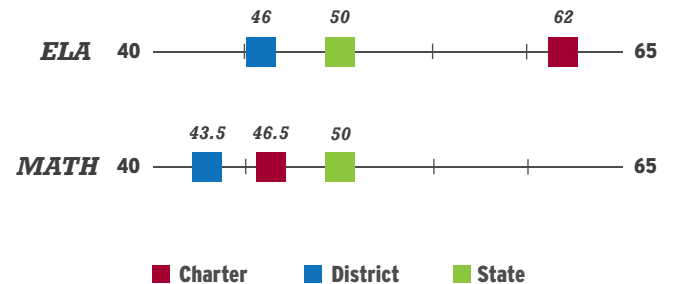
Growth: In 2016, Paterson charter schools, in the aggregate, made **larger learning gains** in ELA and Math than Paterson district schools. Compared to the state, Paterson charter schools, in the aggregate, made **larger learning gains** in ELA but lagged behind the state median in Math.

Paterson PARCC Proficiency Rates, GRADES 3-8

ABSOLUTE PARCC PERFORMANCE
CHARTERS VS. DISTRICT PATERSON

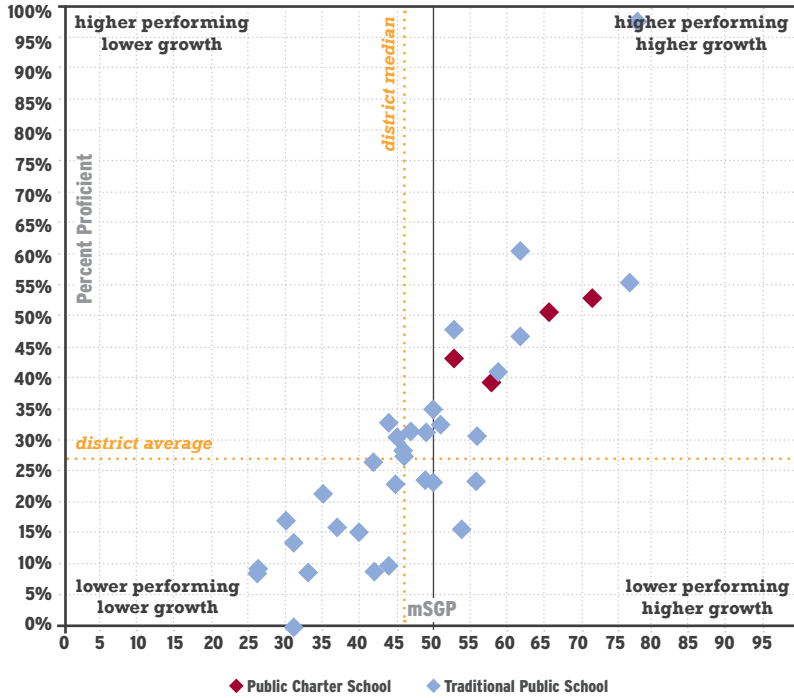


Paterson Median SGP



2015-16 PARCC Performance and Student Growth **GRADES 3-8 ELA**

PATERSON CHARTER AND DISTRICT SCHOOLS

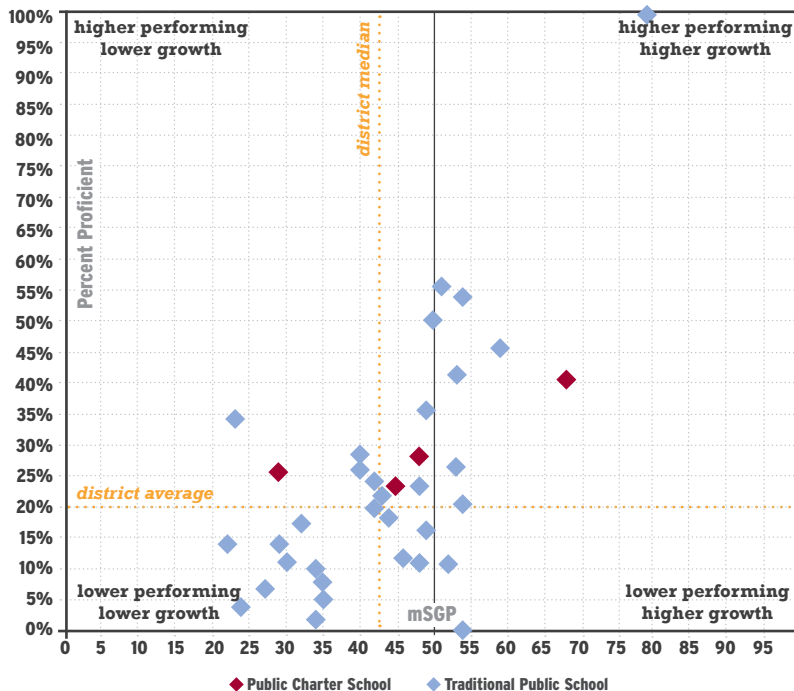


Proficiency: In 2016, all 4 charter elementary and middle schools in Paterson outperformed the district average in ELA.

Growth: In 2016, all 4 charter elementary and middle schools in Paterson made larger learning gains in ELA than the district median.

2015-16 PARCC Performance and Student Growth **GRADES 3-8 MATH**

PATERSON CHARTER AND DISTRICT SCHOOLS



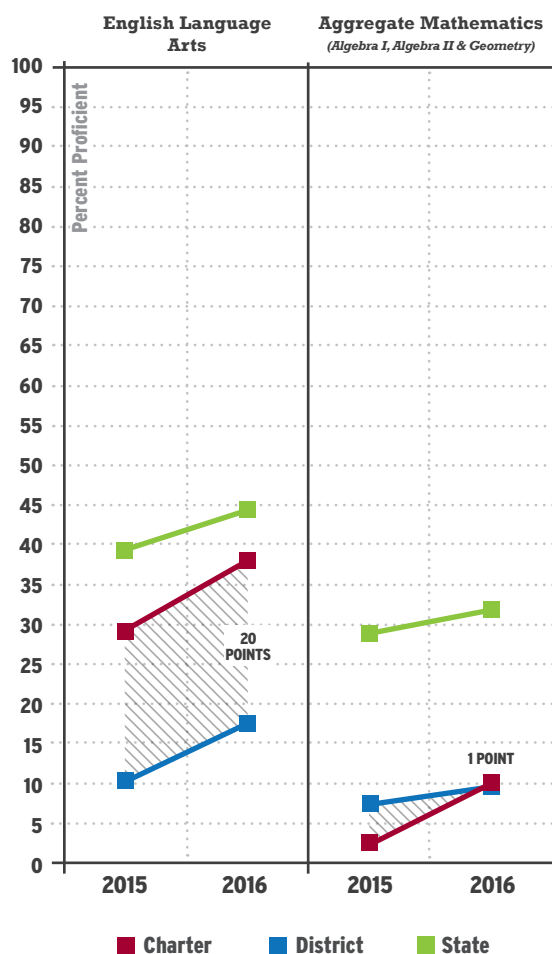
Proficiency: In 2016, all 4 charter elementary and middle schools in Paterson outperformed the district average in Math.

Growth: In 2016, 3 out of 4 charter elementary and middle schools in Paterson made larger learning gains in Math than the district median.

Paterson Charter **HIGH SCHOOL** Performance

Paterson PARCC Performance, GRADES 9-11

ABSOLUTE PARCC PERFORMANCE CHARTERS VS. DISTRICT



In 2016, Paterson charter school students outperformed their district peers by **20 points** in ELA and **1 point** in Math.



In 2016, 96% of Paterson charter high school students graduated within 4 years - higher than both district (84%) and state (91%) averages.

Paterson Data Sources:

Profile Data: Enrollment: Charter Schools: 2017-18 Charter school Projected Aid Notices enhanced by NJCSA survey data; Districts: 2017-18 Projected State Aid Notices adjusted to account for NJCSA survey enhancements of charter school enrollment. Waitlists: 2016-17 Charter School Annual Reports. Waitlists reported as of 8/1/17.

Demographics: Ethnicity: 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17. Free/Reduced Lunch Status: 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17. Students with Disability: 2015-16 Performance Report Database "EnrollmentBySpecPop" table. English Language Learners: 2016-17 ENR file publicly released on NJ DOE website, pulled 09/05/17.

Performance: PARCC Performance: 2014-15 & 2015-16 PARCC Assessment files publicly released on NJ DOE website. Median Student Growth Percentiles (mSGP): 2015-16 Performance Report Database "SGP" table.

Graduation Rates: Adjusted Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rate: 2016 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rate file publicly released on NJ DOE website.

SCHOOL PROFILE

PATERSON CHARTER SCHOOL FOR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY: *Setting the Course for Success in College and Beyond*

- ★ **Location: PATERSON**
- ★ **Year Opened: YEAR**
- ★ **Grade Levels: K-12**
- ★ **Number of Students: 1,392**

Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology (PCSST) is the longest serving and only K-12 charter school in the City of Paterson having graduated its first class in 2009. Since its inception in 2003, PCSST has enjoyed broad-based support from parents, students and the Paterson community at-large. The educational program focuses in the elementary grades on development of requisite language and math skills needed to be successful in academic work and career success.

At the Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology high school, students are presented with a diverse set of course offerings to meet their needs and interests to prepare them for college and career readiness. Twelve AP and Honors courses are offered in the Sciences, Mathematics, English, Social Studies, World Language and the Arts. Graduation requirements exceed those set by the state, with extra Science and Math courses required of PCSST students. The school embeds character education in the curriculum and has created a unique Advisory program to help build relationships between students and staff.

Preparing Students for the Rigors of College

PCSST counselors organize developmental workshops, in-class presentations and structured lessons that are designed to help students achieve the desired competencies and provide all students with the knowledge and skills required for college and career readiness. Starting in the 6th grade, school counselor meetings focus on career exploration, college planning, and helping students select high school courses. In high school, PCSST counselors meet with each student a minimum of three times during the course of the school year to assist in establishing personalized academic, college and career plans. PCSST also implements a "Career Day" to allow students to explore potential future career paths by listening to the perspectives and first hand experiences of professionals in the work force across a variety of disciplines.

Students at PCSST have received acceptances from some of the most

PATERSON CHARTER SCHOOL FOR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



“PCSST has enjoyed broad-based support from parents, students and the Paterson community at-large.”

prestigious colleges and universities in the country including Princeton University, Cornell University, University of Michigan, Boston University, Lehigh University, NJ Institute of Technology, Rutgers University, Boston College, Carnegie Mellon University, New York University, University of Norte Dame, and Howard University. “The overwhelming demand from the community is a testimony to our

school’s reputation and success. We are proud of our school and will continue to provide a high-quality public education to our Paterson students,” said Riza Gurcanli, Lead Person at Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology.

Opportunities for Enrichment and Service

PCSST also offers a full extracurricular program which includes over 50 clubs, competitions, and sports teams so that students can pursue their passions and

interests outside of the classroom. Clubs range from traditional options such as Spanish Club, Book Club, Music Clubs, Academic Clubs and Sports Clubs to activities that send students to compete across the state in Science Olympiads and Robotics competitions as well as opportunities for service learning. PCCSST is especially proud of its strong Army JROTC program that helps to build student discipline, integrity and service. During the 2016-17 school year, six of PCCSST students received full ROTC scholarships.

INNOVATION *STORIES*

UNIQUE SCHOOL MODELS

New Jersey's Charter School Law encourages the use of new and innovative learning methods that can be shared with other schools, both traditional public and public charter, to improve the public education system as a whole.

From the earliest innovations 20 years ago such as extending the day and year to increase learning time, New Jersey's public charter schools introduced changes that paved the way for changes across districts. Today, charter schools continue to innovate with unique school models that focus on a variety of different disciplines including, STEAM, dual language acquisition, and career and technical education. The autonomy and flexibility to innovate in diverse ways not only provides a hub for innovation but has also served the diverse needs of students for the past two decades.

Through the innovation stories that follow, we celebrate schools throughout the entire state - from Atlantic County all the way to Warren County. These stories demonstrate that public charter schools are doing their part of fulfilling the promise of public education to ensure that every student has access to a high-quality school that meets his or her needs.



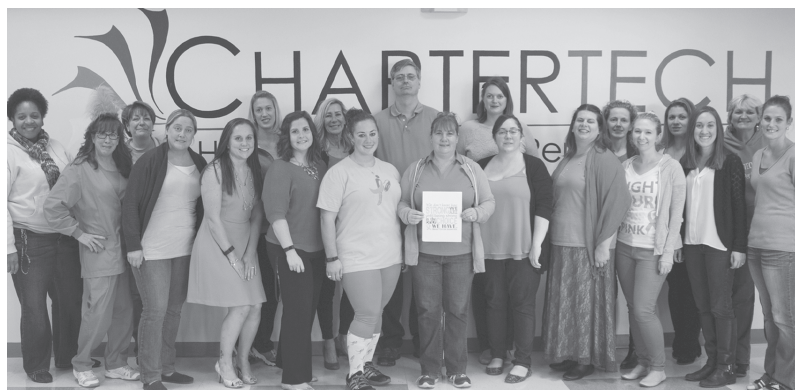
CHARTERTECH HIGH SCHOOL:

A School for the Performing Arts

- ★ **Location: SOMERS POINT**
- ★ **Year Opened: 1999**
- ★ **Grade Levels: 9-12**
- ★ **Number of Artists (students): 369**

Regional School for the Performing Arts

Chartertech High School for the Performing Arts brings to life the joy of the arts. As a regional charter school, students come from over 20 sending districts. Artists (students) from across southern New Jersey have the opportunity to earn their high school diploma through a comprehensive arts and college prep academic curriculum. Chartertech's Artists choose from one of six performing arts majors - Musical Theatre, Vocal Music, Instrumental Music, Dance, Film, and Animation. "Chartertech celebrates diversity in performance art while complementing each discipline as a whole. At Chartertech, we believe that an Artist-centered approach to education is the core to our success. We celebrate our diverse and equitable community that supports a positive learning environment for all Artists," said Principal/Lead Person Brian McGuire.



“ We celebrate our diverse and equitable community ”

Career and Technical Education

Chartertech is a fully accredited Career and Technical Education (CTE) High School certified by the State of New Jersey offering dual college credit courses in its academic, CTE, and performing arts programs. Chartertech is one of the only high schools in the country offering Pro Tools (the industry standard in music recording) certification through its AVID Learning Partnership. Technology is infused in all areas of the curriculum but is most prevalent in its performing arts majors.

Unique Opportunities For Students

For the 11th consecutive year, Chartertech's advanced ensemble choir performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City through Manhattan Concert Productions. Chartertech is one of a few high schools in the country who are invited each year to perform. The school has also partnered with *Cool, Kind Kid* to produce anti-bullying and kindness productions for middle and grade schools. Chartertech Artists make up the cast and crew of these traveling productions. The school also has two state-of-the-art recording studios for Artists to learn audio production. "Because of Chartertech, I discovered myself as a true musician and it prepared me to do well in my music college," said Heain Kim, Class of 2014, Berklee College of Music.

HOLA:

A Dual Language School Gets Great Academic Results for Students

- ★ **Location: HOBOKEN**
- ★ **Year Opened: 2010**
- ★ **Grade Levels: K-8**
- ★ **Number of Students: 392**

As the only Spanish-English full immersion dual-language school in the state, the Hoboken Dual Language Charter School (HoLa) is a model of innovation.

In 2010, a group of parents and educators set out to create a school that would immerse early childhood and elementary students in classrooms where 90% of instruction would be in Spanish. The English language is increasingly added after 2nd grade. By the 4th grade, students are learning their coursework in Spanish 50% of the time and in English the other 50% of the time. The vast majority of entering kindergartners do not have a Spanish language background.

The result is a world class school with high-achievement results on state exams—all of which are taken in English. This year, HoLa was named in the Niche 2018 Best Schools List, ranking #2 among 81 Hudson County public charter and district schools. Niche also ranks HoLa the #6 best elementary charter school in the state, and top 10% among charters across the country.

The Results Prove the Research

“All of the research shows how flexible children’s brains are in these early years, and a range of cognitive benefits from learning in two languages,” said Jennifer Sargent, lead founder of the school and its Executive Director. “We see our students performing really well on English-language state exams because literacy and academic skills are transferable across languages.”

The school’s results have led to its designation by the New Jersey Department of Education as a World Languages Model School—which means HoLa is asked frequently to host other educators eager to learn about the program’s structure as well as the techniques HoLa teachers are using in the classroom.

This year, HoLa’s graduated its inaugural class. Beginning as 2nd



graders and representing a beautiful rainbow of cultural diversity that the school has become known for, 80% of the first graduating class was Black or Hispanic. They were from Egypt, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Chile, Ecuador, Honduras, Lebanon, Cuba and Spain. Half of them were born outside of the U.S. or are first-generation Americans.

On the 2016 state assessments, 80% of this first graduating class passed math, compared with only 39% statewide, and 95% of them passed ELA compared with 56% statewide. That put them in the top 5% for English Language Arts and the top 10% for math compared with the over 600 public school districts in the state, including the wealthiest suburban districts.

More than Just a School, But a Part of the Community

Meanwhile, HoLa has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring that it serves community members with the greatest need for a high-quality school. In fact, the school was the very first in the state to argue for the right to implement a low-income preference in their lottery in 2015. Since then, several other New Jersey charters have followed.

Teachers and parents help knock on doors in low-income neighborhoods of the city to make sure every family in Hoboken knows and understands the options they have for public schools in the city. Low-income families get two chances in the lottery rather than just one. In HoLa’s last lottery, there were over 400 applicants for 22 spots.

RIDGE AND VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL:

A High-Performing School in Blirstown

★ **Location: BLAIRSTOWN**

★ **Year Opened: 2004**

★ **Grade Levels: K-8**

★ **Number of Students: 127**

Ecological Literacy and Sustainability

Ridge and Valley Charter School is based on the assumption that human beings are a thread in the miraculous web of life supported by a living universe and that humans have a profound responsibility to respect the Earth. At Ridge and Valley, students learn to make choices in their lives that promote the long-term health of the planet and, therefore, themselves. “We are so grateful to be part of a public school whose programming honors diversity of life in all of its forms, including a holistic relationship with children not narrowly defined by economics, race, language or learning style/academic performance,” said Leadership Team members Nanci Dvorsky and Traci Pannullo.

Rigorous, Expeditionary Curriculum

Students at Ridge and Valley are encouraged to develop critical thinking skills, to challenge traditional assumptions and derive new models for honoring the world around them. The innovative, progressive program is highly experiential, allowing children to learn using project-based and hands-on experiences. “Expeditions and overnights are one of the best learning experiences for students at RVCS as they put their skills to the test while stepping outside their comfort zones and challenging themselves physically, socially, and mentally. These experiences have concrete research backing them, showing improvements in academics and transferable life skills,” said Teacher Dan Egan. The expeditionary curriculum increases in complexity across the grades and provides regular opportunities for in-the-field application of skills and knowledge. Students at Ridge and Valley are succeeding – in 2016, the school was designated as a Tier 1 charter school by the NJ Department of Education, the highest designation possible for a charter school in the state.

Non-traditional Structures and Systems

The school structure is student-centered with staff referred to as “Guides” rather than teachers. Beyond all mandated state tests, learner



assessment primarily consists of projects, presentations, service learning, portfolios and rubrics, rather than traditional, one dimensional paper and pencil formats. Additionally, Ridge and Valley collects non-traditional data on mission-specific goals such as self-directed learning, social-emotional learning and expeditionary skills. The school founders and Trustees, a group of local parents embedded in the community with grassroots organizational backgrounds, are committed to a non-hierarchical governance structure. The school leaders are considered coordinators and work by consensus building and empowerment of staff talent. This perspective is mirrored in the children’s experience where relationship building is an integral part of the program, based in the school’s formal circle governance structures.

Sustainability Initiatives

The mission is further modeled and expressed at the school facility through several sustainability principles and practices. The TerraCycle program keeps packaging out of the waste stream and the school’s lunch program is zero-waste. The school also utilizes modular classrooms, “green” carpets and linoleum floors. In 2004, solar panels for electricity production and rain barrels to capture roof water runoff were installed. Through a NJ Smart Start Buildings Grant received in 2008, the school was able to install full spectrum daylight lighting. In 2011, a rain garden was built in conjunction with Rutgers University to mitigate storm water runoff into local watersheds.

Ridge and Valley is an innovative school that truly embodies its unique mission – providing students with a high-quality education for a hopeful, sustainable future.

UNITY CHARTER SCHOOL: *Teaching Students the Importance of Sustainability*

- ★ **Location: MORRIS**
- ★ **Year Opened: 1998**
- ★ **Grade Levels: K-8**
- ★ **Number of Students: 240**

Unity Charter School is located in Morris Township and provides a unique, high-quality academic program to students in grades K-8. Unity's unique educational model integrates the principles of sustainability across all content areas. "We strive to develop life-long learners: capable, confident children who are well-prepared academically and have an understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy planet for current and future generations," stated Connie Sanchez, Principal at Unity.

Education for Sustainability

Unity's goal is to graduate students who have the perspective, understanding, and urgency to actively contribute to maintaining life systems and move towards equity in a global society. Each trimester, students delve deeply into one of the nine Standards of Education for Sustainability (Efs) and learn that a sustainable future is dependent on many components of human life systems working harmoniously together with the systems of nature. The overarching approach to education at Unity is a project-based, experiential learning model to provide students with opportunities to develop critical 21st century skills. Efs benchmarks are combined with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards to form a rigorous curriculum that includes high level expectations for literacy in all core content areas, mastery of standards at or beyond grade level, and expectations that students independently demonstrate the critical thinking, collaborative problem solving, and high level questioning and investigative skills necessary for success as they move into the future.

At Unity, the principles of sustainability are incorporated into every aspect of the school – including the physical building and within the school culture. Lower school teacher Jen Carcich stated, "At Unity, we try to use the backs of every single sheet, the backs of wallpaper. Everything we use in the building is eco-friendly. When completing projects, students' grades take into account whether or not they used



reclaimed materials." It is clear that the students at Unity are passionate about the school's mission. "What I like about Unity is that it is a green school. It is important for the world that we are careful with it and we take care of the resources we have," said Nova, a 2016 graduate.

Community Service Focus

Unity's Democratic Governance philosophy offers students a voice to improve the school community as well as to become global citizens. Jillianne Steelman, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction at Unity stated, "We encourage our children from a very young age to have a voice. Through Democratic Governance, students get to bring up issues, bring ideas on how to improve the school, and impact the community". Lower and upper school students collaborate on community service projects each year. Together students have collected coats for Market Street Mission, participated in a clean up of Tucker Field and volunteered their time at Care One Senior Center playing games with residents.

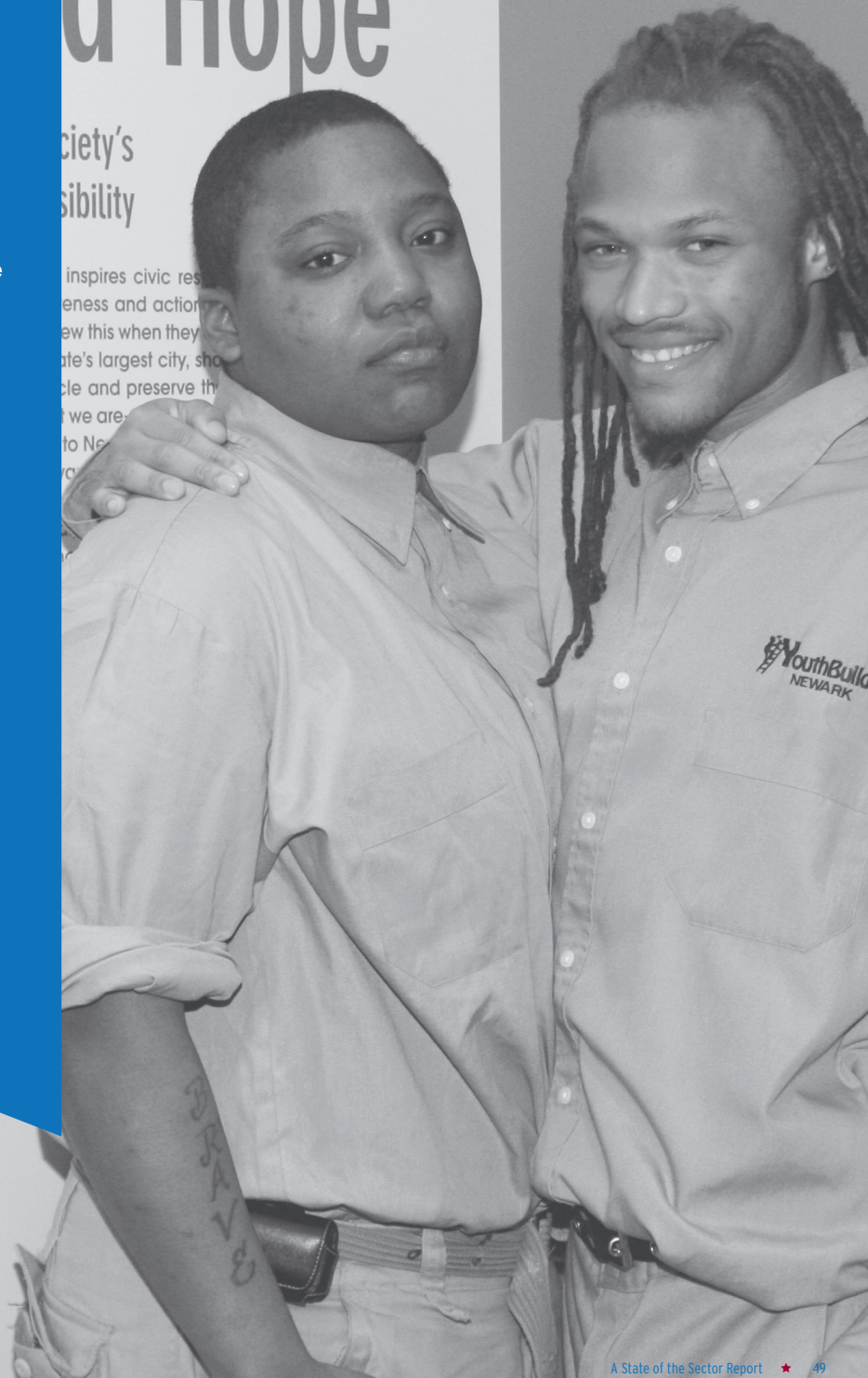
ACCESS AND EQUITY IN CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter schools are public schools and have demonstrated a commitment to serving every student, including educationally disadvantaged students such as students receiving free or reduced-price lunch, students with disabilities, English language learners, and other at-risk students. In fact, more than 15 charter schools throughout the state are enrolling students through a weighted lottery, which provides increased opportunities to students who are educationally disadvantaged to enroll in a charter school via lottery. Charter schools must demonstrate that their recruitment, application, admissions, lottery, and enrollment policies and practices are fair and equitable, as required by law. The following school profiles provide examples of how charter schools in New Jersey are demonstrating this commitment to serve every student, including the most vulnerable.

d Hope

Society's
sibility

inspires civic res
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LEAD CHARTER SCHOOL:

New Jersey's First Alternative Charter High School

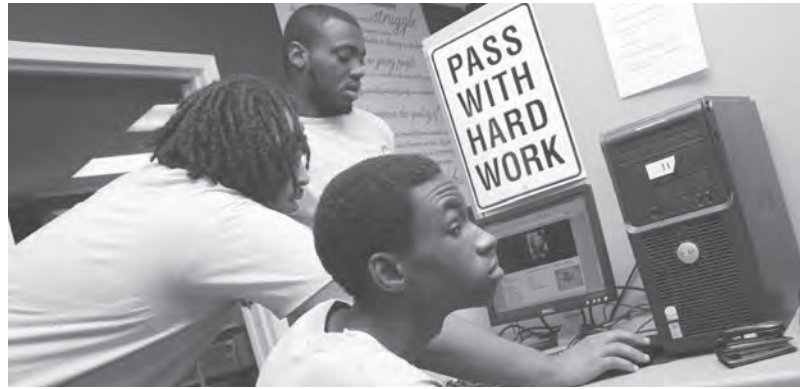
- ★ **Location: NEWARK**
- ★ **Year Opened: 2017**
- ★ **Grade Levels: 9-12**
- ★ **Number of Students: 92**
(260 by 2020-21)

LEAD, which opened on September 5, 2017, is Newark's first charter school to serve overage, under-credited students. LEAD Charter School was founded in partnership with YouthBuild Newark along with a cross-sector group of stakeholders invested in improving outcomes for Opportunity Youth. The mission of LEAD is to help students ages 16-21 in grades 9-12 to master the essential skills crucial for success in postsecondary education, career, and community leadership within a global society. LEAD is part of a city-wide strategy to establish exceptional, world-class public schools and education programs for Opportunity Youth.

"The chance to help disenfranchised young people make something of their lives is an unprecedented opportunity," said Robert Clark, Executive Director of YouthBuild Newark. "I have witnessed young people who are taught strategies to self-assess and self-correct actualize leadership," he said. "I think what makes this moment unique in Newark, is that we are recognizing the assets these young men and women can be for our city and providing a means for them to realize their potential."

A History of Supporting Disengaged Youth

LEAD's programs, content and instruction, policies, practices, and systems are designed specifically to support the academic and nonacademic needs of young people who have disengaged from school. LEAD's approach builds upon YouthBuild Newark's 14 years of experience. It is grounded in relationships and respect for and trust in student assets. LEAD's founders believe that when the strengths of Opportunity Youth are appropriately cultivated and leveraged, these young people can make positive



contributions to their communities, achieve academic success, and realize their postsecondary goals.

LEAD's Model: Personalized and Project-Based Learning

LEAD has partnered with Summit Learning to offer personalized and project-based learning content and instruction. These pedagogies facilitate staff in accelerating student learning, enabling young people to master content and acquire credits at a faster pace. In addition to typical high school coursework, LEAD's model includes an Individual Development Plan that guides students and staff in decision-making around career and technical education, postsecondary planning, case management services, leadership development and service learning programming, opportunities to develop student agency, and group and personal accountability.

"We at LEAD are looking to provide an opportunity that redefines what success looks like for each of our students," said Founding Principal, Juan Acevedo. "We recognize that young people come to us with unique circumstances," he said. "We are ready to meet them at their level, and guide them to achieve their goals whether that be postsecondary education and/or career employment."

The Future is Bright at

CRESTHAVEN ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

★ **Location: PLAINFIELD**

★ **Year Opened: 2016**

★ **Grade Levels: K-1**
(Growing to 3rd grade by 2019-20)

★ **Number of Students: 156**
(300 by 2019-20)

Cresthaven Academy Charter School opened just a year ago in the city of Plainfield and has already become one of the most diverse and sought after schools in the city. Serving students in kindergarten and first grade, Cresthaven Academy embodies the belief that all children, regardless of race or economic status, can succeed when given equal access to a high-quality education. In its first year of operation, students at Cresthaven Academy came from 23 different preschools. Through its extensive recruitment and outreach activities, and commitment to access for all families, Cresthaven, currently serving students in kindergarten and first grade, is serving a student body (88% economically disadvantaged, 10% students with disabilities, and 17% English language learners) that closely resembles that of the district.

Cresthaven Academy seeks to develop the whole child through academic excellence, physical wellness, emotional health, and character enrichment. The school's educational program includes:

- ★ **An inclusive environment** with an inclusion model starting in kindergarten - each classroom is led by two fully-certified teachers with the support of an ESL coordinator, teacher and the presence of Spanish-speaking adults.
- ★ **Rigorous curriculum** designed to be developmentally appropriate and founded on a commitment to data-driven instruction to meet the needs of each student through individualized instruction.
- ★ **Social-emotional curriculum** taught by the school psychologist to support our scholars in achieving the highest degree of academic, emotional, and behavioral success.



Strong Parent Engagement

Founding Principal Monica Villafuerte says, "We are fully committed to engaging families, and begin this effort by scheduling home visits to make meaningful connections between our families and staff." Communication with families includes 3 rounds of parent/teacher conferences, family programs and events, and Parent Academy which offers a series of ESL classes for parents and guardians during weekend hours. Through these events, parents at Cresthaven Academy have taken an energetic, active role in developing the school community, as evidenced by 100% participation in all rounds of parent-teacher conferences during the first year in operation.

Comprehensive Afterschool Program

Another hallmark of the Cresthaven Academy model is a comprehensive afterschool enrichment program which runs from 3:45-6:30 p.m. every day during the school year. The program provides on-site homework help and tutoring by the school's teachers and instruction in art, music, dance, soccer, karate, and swimming by experts in those fields. In the 2016-17 school year, Cresthaven had 82% participation in the after school program, and 94% of homework assignments were completed under the supervision and guidance of a classroom teacher.

"The future is bright here at Cresthaven Academy Charter School. We believe in developing the whole child, and operate on a longer school day and year than traditional public schools. Additionally, our on-site enrichment programming helps our scholars overcome challenges so that they can achieve success in school, college, and beyond," said Villafuerte.

INNOVATION *STORIES*

PARENT PERSPECTIVES

Research and data about the public education system is vitally important for legislators, researchers, and policymakers to ensure that public dollars are being spent responsibly and that more children have access to a high-quality public education in New Jersey. But beyond statistical analyses and politically divisive rhetoric, it is important to never lose sight of the families that are impacted by the decisions made by legislators and policymakers. There are over 35,000 students on waitlists to enroll in a charter school in New Jersey. Many of these parents are desperately seeking a better public school option to ensure that their children have the best tools to succeed in college, career and life.

The following stories come from the perspective of parents of children who have attended charter schools in New Jersey.



ELYSIAN CHARTER SCHOOL: *Successfully Serving Students with Disabilities*

- ★ **Location: HOBOKEN**
- ★ **Year Opened: 1997**
- ★ **Grade Levels: K-8**
- ★ **Number of Students: 288**

A Mother's Perspective

By Cecilia Cabrera, Mother of Aylin and Carlos Ivan Cabrera

As a mother of a child with learning difficulties and another on the autism spectrum, I was very skeptical about Elysian Charter School. I did not know if the school was going to be the right fit for my children. I am glad to say that I was proven wrong.

The motto of Elysian Charter School is a "positively different public school" and I was blessed to have both my children attend the school from kindergarten all the way through the 8th grade. The school met the needs of my children through its academic support programs, focus on social-emotional learning, and opportunities for enrichment through after school clubs. Through their experiences, my children were able to understand what they were best at and what they wanted to focus on in their careers.

The staff at Elysian always had tremendous patience with Aylin and Carlos and never gave up on them. I will be forever grateful to staff at Elysian. Elysian taught my children that perceived disabilities were actually strengths and that they could pursue and reach their dreams. Thank you Elysian Charter School for being a part of our journey to succeed.

“ I am forever grateful to Elysian Charter School for their help and support throughout the 9 years I attended the school. Having a learning disability, I had doubts about my abilities. With all the support from my principal and teachers at Elysian, I started to believe in myself more. I will never forget the time Lynne Shapiro took a few of us



who were interested in fashion to an exhibition at the Fashion Institute of Technology. It was there that I found my passion. Today, I am a proud alumna of Elysian Charter School, Country Prep High School and the Fashion Institute of Technology, and I am pursuing a career in fashion.”

– Aylin Cabrera

“ I graduated from Elysian Charter School in 2014 and I am currently enrolled at Community High School in Teaneck, a college preparatory high school that serves students with disabilities. I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for the Elysian staff who always treated me with care and respect despite my difficulties. At Elysian, I was truly embraced as a member of the school community. Two of my fondest memories were creating “Stop Motion Animation” in 6th grade and speaking publicly at my 8th grade graduation. In college, I plan on pursuing a career in technology and I would like to work as a Computer Animator once I graduate. Elysian was more than just a school - it was family to me and molded me into the person I am today. Thank you Elysian for believing in me!”

– Carlos Cabrera

KIPP NEW JERSEY:

Ensuring Our Scholars Get To and Through College

- ★ **Location: NEWARK**
- ★ **Year Opened: 2002**
- ★ **Grade Levels: K-12**
- ★ **Number of Students: 4,000**
(Newark Only)

By Jacqueline Broomfield, Mother of Two Students at KIPP TEAM and KIPP TEAM College Placement Coordinator

In 1985, I moved to New Jersey from Jamaica. Like many immigrants, I came to pursue the American Dream. However, I quickly realized that I had made one key mistake on that path: I had left Jamaica without completing my college studies in the field of Natural Science-Bio-Chemistry. And now without a Green Card, I would not be able to complete my degree in New Jersey.

I didn't give up. I worked hard, cleaned houses and built a successful cleaning business to support my two beautiful daughters: Jade and Julien. Still it still bothered me that I never got my degree.

Fast forward 22 years when my oldest daughter, Jade, was in high school at KIPP Newark Collegiate Academy. Jade's teachers and guidance counselors started talking to her about college from day one of ninth grade. They knew that she was up against steep odds - statistically only 9% of low-income students graduate from college with a 4-year degree within 6 years of finishing high school. They

“ I am proud to say I am part of the KIPP Through College team.”

were determined that Jade and her classmates would defy the odds.

Along with delivering a college preparatory K-12 education, KIPP offers college and career resources through its “KIPP Through College” (KTC) program. KTC helps students select and prepare to



attend the right college based on their interests. This was huge for me because although I was focused on getting my girls into college, I was overwhelmed by the process. KTC helped us make the right choice based on goals, finances, and likelihood of admission.

After high school, KTC counselors stay with students until their college graduation day helping them navigate the academic, social, and financial challenges they might encounter while in college or pursuing a career. Any student that is with KIPP through 8th grade is eligible to receive these services whether they attend KIPP's high school or not.

Due in part to the support she received from her KTC counselor, Jade defied the odds. She graduated from West Virginia University in 2015 and received her Master's in Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts in New York in 2017. Seeing her hard work pay off has been one of the proudest moments of my life. Her sister, Julien, is on her way, too. She is on track to earn her bachelor's degree from Howard University in 2019 and plans to become a teacher.

Seeing my daughters thrive firsthand gave me the push I needed, too. I wanted my girls to see, and not only hear, that I placed great emphasis on college. When Jade was applying to colleges, I returned to college to get my degree in Health Management and graduated in 2011. And now I am proud to say I am part of the KIPP Through College team so I can help support families whose experiences mirror my own.

There are numerous ways that researchers, policymakers, and advocates can aggregate and present public school data. This section explains the terminology and methodology used for the data presented in this report.

PARCC:

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a group of states working together to develop a set of assessments that measure whether students are on track to be successful in college and careers. New Jersey has been utilizing PARCC assessments for grades 3-8 and 9-11 since the 2014-15 school year. The PARCC assessments measure the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

NJ ASK / HSPA:

The New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) was the state test for students in grades 3 through 8 from 2004-2014. The NJ ASK measured student achievement in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science (grades 4 and 8). The High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), was the state test for students in eleventh grade from 2001-2014. Both assessments were replaced for the 2014-15 school year by PARCC assessments. Prior to the transition in 2014-15, New Jersey had been transitioning the NJ ASK to measure higher-level skills for over three years to provide local districts and schools the time necessary to shift practices and prepare students and educators for PARCC.

PROFICIENCY:

Schools in New Jersey are held accountable for bringing students up to and beyond grade level. PARCC utilizes five performance levels that delineate the knowledge, skills, and practices students are able to demonstrate:

- Level 1:** Did not yet meet expectations
- Level 2:** Partially met expectations
- Level 3:** Approached expectations
- Level 4:** Met expectations
- Level 5:** Exceeded expectations

Proficiency is calculated by measuring the percentage of students who are meeting or exceeding expectations (Levels 4 and 5) on the PARCC exam in English language arts and mathematics.

STUDENT GROWTH:

Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) add a new dimension to our understanding of student performance, allowing New Jersey parents, educators, and students to look beyond a point in time status (PARCC proficiency) to also understand the change in achievement from one year

METHODOLOGY

to the next. SGP measures how much students learn and improve year by year compared to their academic peers (students with similar test score histories). All students in grades 4-8 with at least two years of scores on NJ statewide assessments receive a growth score in both ELA and Math between 1-99 depending on his or her growth compared to his or her academic peers. A higher SGP means the student is making larger learning gains than his or her academic peers. A school's median SGP (mSGP) is simply the median of its individual students' SGPs. In this report, due to data restrictions arising from the way student growth data is released publicly by the NJ DOE, a district's mSGP is the median of the school level mSGPs within that district, not the median SGPs of the district's students.

For in-depth information on how SGPs are calculated, you may visit:

www.state.nj.us/education/njsmart/performance/

COMPARATIVE DISTRICTS:

Each charter school is evaluated against the single district that is sending the highest percentage of students to the charter school. For example, if a charter school is located in School District A, but most of the students attending this school are coming from School District B, the charter school's performance will be compared to School District B. Statewide Comparative District data are obtained by aggregating data from the comparative districts of all charter schools and excluding charter school data within those districts.

STATE:

Statewide aggregate data represents all school types, including charter schools.

GRADUATION RATE:

The graduation rates utilized in this report are Adjusted Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rates. The State of New Jersey introduced a new graduation rate calculation in 2011 to determine rates for schools and districts. Through NJ SMART, the State's longitudinal student data warehouse, the adjusted cohort 4-year graduation rate calculation is used to derive the graduation rates of students across the state.

For more information on this calculation, you may visit: www.nj.gov/education/data/grate/

DATA:

Whenever possible this report utilizes the most recent, most accurate data source available for each of the different metrics contained in this report. For this reason, data from different sources and different years may be present in the same chart or table. Please read sources carefully for more information.

It should be noted that comparative district data includes magnet schools. These schools have highly selective and complicated enrollment requirements unlike those of traditional public schools and charter schools.



Charting the Path Forward

As a parent of seven children, an educator of 25 years, and a long-time advocate for quality public school education, I support high-quality public schools – whether they are public charter schools or traditional district schools. Like most parents, I simply want to provide my children with access to receive the quality education that they deserve. Unfortunately, many families do not have this opportunity to send their children to a great school that meets their needs.

The promise of the charter sector in New Jersey is being realized each and every day. As demonstrated by this report, many charter schools are providing an academically rigorous educational program that engages students and develops our children to their highest potential. These schools should not only be protected – but be recognized and celebrated.

As the Board President of the New Jersey Charter Schools Association (NJCSA), I advocate for students and their families through the support of policies that strengthen the quality of public charter schools in New Jersey. We advocate for a policy and regulatory environment for charter schools that balances the demand for quality in the charter sector with the need to remove barriers for charter operators so that they can continue providing more and more students throughout the state with a high-quality public school choice.

Many detractors of charter schools make the false claim that charter schools are not held accountable. In fact, the opposite is true. When charter schools fail to provide a quality education to students, they are closed and no longer have the privilege to serve children and families. This does not happen in traditional public school systems where dozens of failing public school systems continue on with the status quo and do a disservice to their communities. At the same time low-performing charter schools are closed, we believe that high-quality charter schools that are truly making a profound impact in our communities should be encouraged to grow and serve more students and put them on the path to future success.

In recent years, there have been several regulatory changes that have increased transparency in the charter sector, permitted charter schools to serve more at-risk students, and removed unnecessary barriers for charter operators. These changes have allowed charter schools to continue to focus on what is most important – the students that they serve. Although progress has been made, NJCSA is focused on a series of critical issues that are paramount to ensure that New Jersey's charter sector remains one of the strongest in the country over the next 20 years:

Quality and Growth: There are over 35,000 students on waiting lists in New Jersey's charter schools in every corner of the state. New charter school founding groups and existing high-performing charter schools that demonstrate the will, commitment and capacity to open high-quality charter schools must be permitted to do so. We will fight against any attempt to discourage or impede existing charter approvals and future charter application cycles. Legislation or executive orders calling for a "Charter Moratorium" will be vigorously opposed by NJCSA and its partners.

Funding Equity: Although charter schools are public schools, students in public charter schools are not receiving the same amount of funding as traditional districts. The intent of the Charter Law was for charter schools to receive 90% of the per-pupil funding that traditional public schools receive. In reality, charter schools never receive a true 90% because they are excluded from some State aid categories, including Adjustment Aid. In some districts, such as Jersey City and Vineland, a charter school may receive less than 60% of the aid the district receives for a student, mostly because it does not receive 90% of Adjustment Aid. NJCSA calls on the Legislature to revise the School Funding Reform Act to include Adjustment Aid for charter schools. Additionally, charter schools do not have equitable access to capital funding and facilities in New Jersey, and finding viable facilities is a challenge. Providing equitable access to capital funding and facilities would remedy one of the greatest challenges to growth of the charter sector – a suitable building to provide students with a high quality public education.

Increased Autonomy: Charter schools in New Jersey have been successful in spite of the fact that the state has one of the more challenging statutory environments for charter schools across the country. The power of the charter idea is that schools receive operational autonomy in exchange for accountability for student outcomes. However, in New Jersey, charter schools are subject to most of the same laws that apply to traditional public schools, which runs counter to the vision of charter schools and an effective charter law. The intent of advocating for changes is not to decrease accountability in charter schools. It is to allow for innovation and to increase efficiency with a focus on outcomes rather than processes. As stated previously, charter schools are closed when they are low-performing. NJCSA calls for legislation and regulatory changes to increase autonomy in areas such as teacher certification, public procurement law, and residency requirements.

New Jersey's charter schools have demonstrated over the last 20 years that families' lives have been transformed through the work of charter schools in the state. I ask that you join us in continuing to advocate for public charter schools in New Jersey so that we can continue to strengthen our communities and schools over the next 20 years.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Ron C. Brady".

Ron Brady, NJCSA Board President



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