

## **Compact For Newark Charter Schools**

The vision for Newark charter schools is to expand the portfolio of high quality public school options for Newark students and families.

The Newark charter schools agree to this compact to ensure that collectively and individually Newark charter schools are upholding the highest principles of transparency and public accountability, serving an unmet need in Newark, striving for educational excellence, and fulfilling their missions to educate all students in the most equitable manner possible.

This compact will serve as an agreement among the charter schools, philanthropic community, and key stakeholders to fulfill this vision. Charters will report data needed to monitor this compact in their annual report to the State. Any charter that is unable or unwilling to fulfill the terms and spirit of the compact will face the loss of support from the other signatories.

This charter compact is a first step. We anticipate developing a charter-district compact in the future, which will specify the ways in which both charter and the district schools can work together to improve educational opportunities for all Newark students.

Our primary objective is to ensure that every child in Newark is enrolled in a great school, regardless of whether it is operated by the district or under a charter. Today, Newark charter schools provide meaningful educational options for thousands of high-need students and families. Although there is a range of performance within Newark's charter sector, some of the city's highest performing schools are charter schools. To ensure that all students and families have great schools to choose from, we are committed to increasing the number of high-quality charter schools in Newark, through the continuous improvement of all charter schools, the expansion of successful schools, and the development of promising new schools. We also affirm the underlying premise of the charter school law that chronically low-performing charter schools should be closed.

Under this compact, we the undersigned charter schools, funders and stakeholders commit to the following:

1. Serving all students in the city, especially the highest need 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, by:

- a) Recruiting and advertising for our schools in the widest and most inclusive manner possible.
  - b) Eliminating any process steps or requirements of parents before the charter application and lotteries are completed, and actively correcting misinformation about any application or lottery requirements for parents. For example, charters will not require families or students to attend information sessions to apply to their schools or enter the lottery; charters will offer *optional* informational sessions.
  - c) Providing multiple ways for charter parents and students to access and complete an application, including posting an application online, providing a mail-in application, and allowing in-person drop off of applications at our schools.
  - d) Communicating clear messages that students with special education needs, students who are English Language Learners, and other at-risk students are served by charter schools and correcting any misinformation about charter schools.
  - e) Ensuring that all staff members are abiding by the legal requirements for the application and lottery processes.
  - f) Agreeing to carefully monitor and minimize attrition rates.
2. Posting transparent data in full compliance with NJDOE policies on our websites in one place regarding the following:
- a) The number and percentage of students served who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, students with special education needs, and students who are English Language Learners.
  - b) Mobility rates currently reported to the State and reporting year-over-year attrition rates using Oct 15<sup>th</sup> enrollment counts for the year-to-year comparison.
  - c) Suspension and expulsion rates, using a consistent calculation across the charter sector for both.
  - d) In addition, charter high schools will report high school persistence and college matriculation rates as a function of 9<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment.
3. Collaborating as a charter sector and with Newark Public Schools to improve educational options and outcomes for all students, in both charter and district schools, by:
- a) Working with the district to locate new schools in highest-need areas.

- b) Sharing demonstrated best practices in order to scale up what works.
- c) Collaborating on information resources for parents to apprise them of all charter school options across Newark and NPS options as well.
- d) Sharing parent advocacy tools and other resources for parents.
- e) Focusing public comments on high quality schools and parental choice, rather than charter-district competition.
- f) Agreeing to avoid using common charter sector-wide events and trainings as opportunities to recruit one another's staff. Healthy competition across charters is of course welcome, but commonly planned professional development or other charter-sector meetings will not be used to recruit staff from one charter to another.