

Charter School Newsletter

A bulletin from the NJ Department of Education

July 2016

Dear Charter School Leaders and Representatives,

It is with great enthusiasm that I greet you for the first time as acting director of the Office of Charter and Renaissance Schools. Outgoing director Harold Lee worked tirelessly to make student outcomes the principal focus of the office, and I am eager to continue this work. I am also grateful for the guidance and support of Colleen Schulz-Eskow, who returns to the charter school team as the Deputy Chief of Government Affairs. Because we have so many talented and passionate people in our charter schools who strive to provide the very best educational opportunities to New Jersey students, the future is bright.

Katherine Czehut
Acting Director, Office of Charter and Renaissance Schools

Charter Renewal Visits and Protocols

The Office of Charter and Renaissance Schools (OCS) has released the site visit dates and protocols for all schools scheduled for charter renewal in the 2016-17 school year, and schools have been individually notified. Please be reminded that the renewal applications are due back to [OCS](#) by September 15. If there are questions or concerns, please contact [Julie Bunt](#).

Charter School Performance Reports

The NJDOE anticipates sending the 2014-15 Academic Performance Framework Reports to schools in August. The reports will be embargoed for two weeks to allow schools time to comment.

Amendment Guidelines

The process section of the [Charter Amendment Guidance](#) has been clarified and updated. Note that, per *N.J.A.C. 6A:11-2.6(c)*, districts have 60 days to submit comments on an amendment request. The Commissioner will be unable to render a decision on the amendment request before the 60-day comment period expires, unless districts submit comments earlier.

Fiscal Reminders and Important Due Dates

The OCS fiscal team reminds schools of the following summer actions and deadlines:

- If applicable, renew lease;
- Appoint a year-end auditor for FY16 due July 29;
- Prepare [Annual Report](#) due August 1;
- Prepare for FY16 independent audit;
- Submit monthly board minutes to Epicenter;

- Print out all enrollment count documents and school aid schedules from the final FY16 enrollment count;
- Obtain transfer cards for new incoming students; and
- Refund resident/nonresident districts for any FY16 overpayments due September 30.

New Information Management System to Replace Epicenter

For the past several years, NJ charters have been using the Epicenter system for managing their document submissions to the OCS. We are beginning an effort to implement a replacement for Epicenter using Microsoft Sharepoint. The new system will have very similar functionality, but at a significantly lower cost to the Department. The new system is expected to be ready for use in September. A series of webinar training sessions will be scheduled just prior to the rollout.

Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Sessions – August 1

The Office of Bilingual/ESL Education will host two technical assistance sessions for charter schools serving English language learners (ELLs). Charter school leaders and ESL/bilingual coordinators will have the opportunity to connect with other schools and educational specialists to ask questions about the specific responsibilities for this growing student population. This session will provide technical assistance to schools in organizing language assistance programs, implementing best practices for ELLs and promoting equitable educational opportunities. Registration is required. Visit the following links to register:

- Technical Assistance English Language Learners [morning session](#)
- Technical Assistance English Language Learners [afternoon session](#)

School Security Symposium – August 3

The Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning invites school administrators, directors of buildings and grounds, school security personnel and school resource officers to a one-day symposium on school security to be held in Woodstown. Participants will learn best practices pertaining to school safety and security in times of crisis. Space is limited and registration is required. Visit the following link to register: [August 3, 2016](#)

District Broadcast Memos

The Department posts all broadcast memos to school districts and charter schools on its [Broadcasts web page](#). Visit this link to find current and past broadcasts that apply to charter schools.

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