



## NJDOE News

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### **Commissioner of Education Recommends Additional Funding for School Districts Where Students Move Directly From Non-Public Schools to Charter Schools**

Commissioner of Education David Hespe today issued [a report](#) to the Joint Committee on the Public Schools that recommends additional funding for school districts where students move directly to charter schools from non-public schools. Currently, charter schools collect 90 percent of the regular education budget per pupil for these students from school districts even though those children were not counted in the public school enrollment and therefore are not funded by the state for their first year in the charter school. Also, the resident districts are not able to include these students in their budgets for that first year. The Commissioner is also recommending payment to school districts where uncounted preschool pupils are moving on to kindergarten charter school programs.

Approximately 10 percent of students attending charter schools were previously enrolled in non-public schools. The percentages of students moving from nonpublic schools are greatest in the districts of Trenton, Jersey City, Newark, Hoboken, and Morristown.

The amount of state aid that would be required in the 2000-2001 school year to fund the education of charter school students moving from nonpublic schools to charter schools or uncounted preschool pupils moving to kindergarten programs in charter schools is estimated to be approximately \$3.8 million.

"One of the issues that I promised the Joint Committee we would take a look at is the issue of non-public school students entering charter schools," said Commissioner Hespe. "Clearly, school districts are paying money to charter schools for students who are not attending their schools. This is unfair to school districts and I am recommending it be changed."

"I believe that our charter school program has been extremely successful," said Governor Whitman. "I believe that parents should always have the choice of selecting the most appropriate education programs for their children. Charter schools give parents that important choice. Clearly charter schools have become extremely popular among parents who are seeking to ensure that their children are receiving the best education possible."

The report, transmitted today to the Legislature also reaches the following conclusions:

- The large numbers of charter schools that have waiting lists and the large number of students on those waiting lists provide evidence that parents and students in ever-increasing numbers are selecting charter schools for their education.
- The students entering New Jersey charter schools are clearly representative of the districts in which they are located in terms of academic achievement, economic status and minority status. Further, the recruitment and selection procedures being implemented by charter schools is not biased toward selection of only the "best and brightest." No so-called "creaming" is occurring.

In addition to recommending that state aid to school districts for non-public school students who go straight to charter schools the Commissioner makes other recommendations as well. The Commissioner is recommending that the department make annual reports to the Legislature on these issues