



NJDOE News

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Commissioner of Education Approves Two New Charter Schools

Commissioner of Education Vito A. Gagliardi, Sr. today announced his approval of two new charter schools that will begin operation for the 2002-03 school year, increasing the number of New Jersey charter schools to 59 in 16 counties. The newest charter schools will be the TEAM Academy Charter School in Newark and the Ridge and Valley Charter School, a regional charter school in Warren County serving students from Blairstown Township, Frelinghuysen Township, Hardwick Township, Knowlton Township and North Warren Regional.

In the current school year there are there are 50 charter schools in operation serving nearly 12,000 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. In addition, there are 7 schools taking a planning year in the current school year that will open for the 2002-03 school year.

"I am very pleased to approve these new charter schools," said Commissioner Gagliardi. "I expect these schools will provide parents with the choice they are seeking for their children's education. Our charter school program has proven to be very successful as evidenced by the thousands of children on waiting lists around the state."

The Ridge and Valley Charter School will serve students in kindergarten to grade 8. Using the environment as a context for learning, the Ridge and Valley Charter School will foster ecological literacy and an appreciation for sustainable living in its students, encouraging them to explore the effects of human interaction on our ecosystem.

The TEAM Academy Charter School will be an academically intensive middle school in Newark. The school will open its doors to 80 fifth graders for a mandatory summer school session this July. The mission of the charter school is "to prepare students with the academic skills, intellectual habits, and character traits necessary to succeed in high school, college and the competitive world." The school will operate an extended school day from 7:30 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. during the week with four hours on Saturday and a one-month summer session.

Charter schools are permitted under a state law enacted in 1996. A charter school is a type of public school that is given greater flexibility in curriculum and instruction. The law establishes charter schools as laboratories of educational innovation where new practices can be developed and implemented in schools throughout New Jersey.