



[NJDOE News](#)

For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:

**Tom Rosenthal
Richard Vespucci
Jon Zlock
609-292-1126**

For Release: October 2, 2002

Commissioner Librera Presents Two Newest Charter Schools to State Board of Education

Commissioner of Education William L. Librera today presented New Jersey's two newest charter schools to the State Board of Education. Commissioner Librera and State Board of Education President Maud Dahme welcomed representatives from Newark's TEAM Academy Charter School and Jersey City's University Academy Charter School. The schools, which raise the total number of New Jersey's operating charter schools to 50, have been granted charters through June 2006.

"Our charter schools continue to provide quality choices for New Jersey families in selecting schools for their children," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera. "We welcome our newest charter schools and wish them success as they open their doors for the first time."

"We congratulate the new charter schools for passing the standards of a rigorous review," said Board President Dahme. "We look forward to seeing them realize their mission of providing students with an innovative and challenging educational program."

The **TEAM Academy Charter School** has been approved this year to serve a maximum of 80 fifth grade students. The school intends to serve a maximum of 320 students in grades 5 through 8 within the next four years. The school, whose acronym stands for *Together Everyone Achieves More*, states its mission as preparing students with the academic skills, intellectual habits, and character traits necessary to succeed in high school, college and the competitive world beyond. Features of the school include an extended school day and year (7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, four hours on Saturdays, and a one-month summer session). The school intends to provide a choice for students to participate in an accelerated instructional curriculum.

The **University Academy Charter School** has been approved this year to serve a maximum of 125 ninth grade students. The school intends to serve a maximum of 500 students in grades 9 through 12 within the next four years. The school's mission is to engage young people in an academic experience designed to encourage a need to explore their world, a deep desire for knowledge and a passionate commitment to justice and service to others. The school intends to use a holistic approach to educating students by interacting with the city, New Jersey City University and the community through service projects.

Charter schools are public schools operated under a charter granted by the Commissioner of Education. Each charter school is independent of the district board of education and is managed by a board of trustees. The State Legislature authorized the creation of charter schools in 1995, and the first charter schools opened in 1997.

A full listing and description of New Jersey's charter schools appears on the following link:

<http://www.nj.gov/njded/chartsch/allcharters.htm>

Both of the new charter schools were subjected to a rigorous and comprehensive application and approval process that included panel evaluations, structured interviews, and site visits. In addition, the schools had to submit a variety of documents in accordance with state law and regulation to demonstrate their readiness to operate a school in an approved building staffed by properly trained professionals.

The projected enrollment for the 50 operating charter schools for September 2002 is approximately 15,500 students. Fifteen counties have approved charter schools. The average enrollment in a charter school is 193 students and the average class size of charter schools is 17 students.

Commissioner Librera expressed his support of charter schools as well as his desire to improve upon their function and stature in their communities.

"Charter schools afford us with tremendous opportunities to introduce innovative classes and teaching techniques

that can in the long run benefit all students and educators throughout the state," Dr. Librera said. "To help make this happen, we are exploring possible ways to make charter schools stronger and to foster a more positive and collegial climate between the charter schools and the schools operated by district boards of education."

In July, the Department of Education received eight new applications for charter schools that would open in September 2003 or September 2004. The Commissioner is now reviewing those applications and will announce the results of his review in mid-January 2003.

[Attached is a fact sheet containing general information about charter schools in New Jersey.](#) For more information about the newest charter school applicants, visit the Department of Education's Web site:

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/news/0814charter.htm>