



## NJDOE News

**For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:**

**Tom Rosenthal**

**Richard Vespucci**

**Jon Zlock**

**609-292-1126**

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### **New Jersey Plans Recognition Ceremony to Mark National Charter Schools Week**

New Jersey will be one of 36 states participating in a variety of activities recognizing April 28 through May 2 as National Charter Schools Week. The New Jersey Department of Education has scheduled a recognition program and ceremony on May 1 to highlight the work of exemplary charter schools and programs, corporate and community leaders, and sponsors.

Governor James E. McGreevey has issued a proclamation declaring next week as Charter Schools Week in New Jersey. In his proclamation, Governor McGreevey noted that "Charter schools provide thousands of families with an important choice in education for their children" and that "Charter schools encourage community and parental involvement in the education of young people."

The theme for this year's National Charter Schools Week is choice, quality and innovation. More than 2,700 charter schools now operate in 36 states and the District of Columbia-serving nearly 700,000 students. Currently in New Jersey, 50 charter schools have enrolled nearly 13,000 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12.

"Charter schools are providing students throughout New Jersey with a quality education," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera. "Since the first charter schools opened in 1997, students from diverse communities have benefited from innovative programs, teaching practices and scheduling.

"We are finding these schools to be ideal places where exciting approaches to teaching and learning can be tried out and expanded to schools everywhere."

New Jersey's observance of National Charter Schools Week will culminate on May 1 with a recognition ceremony at Greystone Manor, Freehold. There, Commissioner Librera, State Board of Education President Maud Dahme, and state-level educators will honor exemplary charter school programs. The rewards program begins at 1:30 p.m. News media are invited and encouraged to attend.

A charter school is a public school, operated under a charter granted by the Commissioner of Education, that is independent of the district board of education and that is managed by a board of trustees.

Charter school legislation was passed to give choice to all parents for their children's education. The intent of the legislation is to:

- Improve student learning and achievement;
- Increase the availability of choice to parents and students when selecting a learning environment;
- Encourage the use of different and innovative learning methods;
- Establish a new system of accountability for schools;
- Make the school the unit for educational improvement; and
- Establish new professional opportunities for teachers.

[A list of New Jersey's 54 approved charter schools by clicking this link.](#) (148kb PDF ) In addition to the 50 charter schools currently operating, three are scheduled to open in September 2003, and one is scheduled to open in September 2004.