



## NJDOE News

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### **Charter Schools Week—2004** **DOE Recognizes Exemplary People and Programs in New Jersey's Charter Schools**

New Jersey will be joining 35 states and the District of Columbia in observing National Charter Schools Week, which runs from May 3-7. The New Jersey Department of Education will celebrate the work of exemplary charter schools and the people who sustain them with a special program and ceremony on Thursday, May 6.

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 offer thousands of families a choice in public education for their children" and that "Charter schools encourage community and parental involvement in the education of our young people."

The theme for this year's National Charter Schools Week is Accountability, Choice and Innovation. More than 2,700 charter schools enroll nearly 700,000 students nationally. In New Jersey, 48 charter schools currently serve approximately 14,000 students. Five additional charter schools are scheduled to open in September 2004, and one school is scheduled to open in September 2005.

"We believe that charter schools perform a vital role in creating new pathways for success for students and their families," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera. "It is hard work to run a charter school, and we applaud our exemplary charter schools for their whole-hearted commitment and skill in providing a choice for a public school education."

**New Jersey's celebration of National Charter Schools Week culminates on May 6 at the Radisson Hotel, Princeton, where the Department of Education will recognize outstanding programs and people in the charter schools. The program begins at noon. News media are invited and encouraged to attend.**

Assistant Commissioner Richard C. Ten Eyck and State Board of Education President Arnold G. Hyndman will lead a contingent of state-level educators who will honor exemplary charter schools with awards reflecting the week's theme of accountability, choice and innovation. Individual charter schools will be honored in the areas of Community Connection and Innovation. In addition, the Department of Education will present the "Unsung Hero" award to individuals who have displayed extraordinary dedication or service to a New Jersey charter school.

This year's winners of the Community Connection awards are the Sussex County Charter School for Technology, Sparta, for community service; and the Red Bank Charter School, Red Bank, for community partnership.

Innovation awards for exemplary and innovative programs and practices go to the Learning Community Charter School, Jersey City; the Queen City Academy Charter School, Plainfield; and the Red Bank Charter School, Red Bank.

Five Unsung Hero awards will be presented to David Apy of the Red Bank Charter School; Doris Holmes of the New Horizons Community Charter School, Newark; Caryn Rogoff of the Learning Community Charter School; Ed Two Bears, of the Marion P. Thomas Charter School, Newark; and Mary Zaks, of the Teaneck Community Charter School, Teaneck.

The Princeton Charter School of Princeton will receive the 2004 Charter School of Distinction Award, which recognizes the charter school that has a consistently outstanding record of performance as measured by high student achievement and school accomplishments, exemplary teaching practices, effective and efficient administrative leadership, and solid governance.

The 2004 graduating class of Newark-based North Star Academy Charter School will receive the Pioneer Award. This award recognizes the vision, dedication, and effort of those who helped to ensure an effective beginning for the charter school movement in New Jersey. North Star Academy's first graduating class, "The North Star 19,"

embodies the mission of the school by “seeing the star” and “shining brightly for others.” The 19 graduating seniors have been accepted at 40 different colleges and universities, including institutions such as Mount Holyoke College, Howard University, and Syracuse University.

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 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 approved charter schools can be accessed by clicking this link:

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/chartsch/allcharters.shtml>