



NJDOE News

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Commissioner Davy Approves Application for New Charter School

Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy has announced her approval of an application for a prospective charter school in Trenton. The proposed Paul Robeson Charter School for the Humanities is scheduled to open in Trenton in September 2008.

"Charter schools in New Jersey provide an exciting opportunity for parents, teachers and others to use their collective creativity in designing new and innovative ways of helping children reach high levels of academic achievement," Commissioner Davy said. "Our support for innovative approaches to education through the charter school application process is balanced with a rigorous review and oversight process to assure approval of only the applications that demonstrate promise for success.

"This round of applications proved to be particularly challenging for many of the applicants," the Commissioner continued. "We invite all unsuccessful applicants to schedule conferences with our charter school staff to discuss ways in which they can improve their applications for future consideration."

Applications for 22 prospective charter schools were received last summer in the latest selection round. Six applications were disqualified prior to review, and the Paul Robeson Charter School for the Humanities was the lone applicant to gain approval from the remaining 16.

The **Paul Robeson Charter School for the Humanities** will enroll a maximum of 180 students in grades 4-6, with a four-year maximum enrollment of 300 students in grades 4-8. The school will focus on the study of the humanities, reflecting on the human condition through history as seen through literature, language and the arts. The school's founders say that students will participate in the arts through a practice of inquiry and discovery and will follow a learning style based on innovation, risk taking and creative problem-solving.

A charter school is a public school open to all students on a space-available basis that is funded by taxpayers but operates independently of the district board of education under a charter granted by the Commissioner. Once the charter is approved by the Commissioner, the school is managed by a board of trustees deemed to be public agents authorized by the State Board of Education to supervise and control the school.

The Commissioner of Education has the authority to grant a charter for a four-year period and to renew initial charters for a five-year period.

New Jersey currently has 56 charter schools that enroll over 16,000 students. In addition to the Paul Robeson School for the Humanities, five prospective charter schools are scheduled to open in September 2008. The founders of the following schools submitted successful applications last year and opted for a planning year: **The Burch Charter School of Excellence**, Irvington, Essex County; **Camden's Pride Charter School**, Camden, Camden County; **Capital Preparatory Charter School**, serving students from Ewing and Trenton, Mercer County; **Community Charter School of Paterson**, Paterson, Passaic County; and **Pride Academy**, serving students from East Orange, Orange and Newark, Essex County.

NEW APPLICATION POSTED ON-LINE

The timing of the charter school selection process has changed. Applications for the next application round are now posted on the Department of Education's Web-site and can be found at the following link:

<http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/app/>

New applications for prospective charter schools are due on March 31, 2008 and the Commissioner's review will conclude in September 2008. Applications approved in the new round will be for prospective schools scheduled to open in September 2009.

As it does each year, the Department of Education will hold an information session on the charter school application process. This year's session will be held on February 4, 2008 at the Judge Robert L. Carter Building, NJ Department of Education, 100 Riverview Plaza. See link above for details.

For more information about charter schools in New Jersey, visit the Department of Education's Web-site at:

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/chartsch>