



January 18, 2011 - **New Data Shows That Charter Schools Consistently Outperform Their In-District Counterparts**

*Comparison underscores the need to extend the benefit of charter schools to more New Jersey children currently in failing schools*

**For Immediate Release:**

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**Trenton, NJ** – Comparative data released by the Department of Education today shows the majority of charters in urban areas last year outperformed other public schools in their host districts on required standardized testing. The data affirms the need for Governor Christie’s reform proposals to grow the number of high-quality charter schools, expand choice for children in failing schools, and reform New Jersey’s charter law to attract high-quality operators to the state.

The charters, located in former Abbott districts, scored higher on the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge and the High School Proficiency Assessment tests in 2010. For eighth-grade students, 79 percent of the charter schools in former Abbott districts scored higher than their home district in Language Arts, while 69 percent of the charter schools scored higher than their home district in Math.

“The data shows us that the innovation and creativity that drove the charter movement in the first place are getting real results for our children,” said Acting Education Commissioner Chris Cerf. “High-quality charters in New Jersey are shining examples of why we can no longer accept that zip code equals destiny. It’s critical that we act immediately to strengthen and expand charter schools in the state by implementing Governor Christie’s education reforms.”

In Newark, all but two of the nine charter schools outperformed the district average for Math and all but two outscored the district average in Language Arts. Four charter schools -- Discovery, Gray, Robert Treat Academy and North Star -- bested the state average in Language Arts. In Math tests, Discovery, Gray, Greater Newark, North Star Academy and Robert Treat Academy scored higher than the state average. In Camden, all four charters outperformed the district averages in Language Arts and Math.

“These charter schools are living proof that a firm dedication to students and a commitment to best education practices will result in high student achievement in some of New Jersey’s lowest-income areas,” said Carlos Perez, chief executive officer of the New Jersey Charter School Association. He pointed to NJASK data for third grade Language Arts, where more than half the charters outperformed the schools in their home districts, and of those, more than 75 percent were located in former Abbott districts.

“With charters – as with all schools -- accountability is critical. Charters are not permanent and must be renewed on a regular basis, helping ensure accountability,” said Newark Charter School Fund CEO Mashea Ashton. “The data shows that charter schools are working hard and successfully providing a high quality education for their students.”

Two Newark charters were recently given the prestigious national Blue Ribbon award; five total New Jersey charters have received the award, considered the highest honor an American school can achieve. The federal Blue Ribbon School Program honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools, in operation for five or more years, that are either high performing or have improved student achievement to high levels, especially among disadvantaged students.

The NJDOE data on charter school achievement can be found here:  
<http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/expectations.pdf>.

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