

# Charter School Program Outreach New Jersey Department of Education October 2018

This Powerpoint Presentation has been modified from its original version to be more accessible.



# Agenda

- Introductions
- Current State of Charter Schools in New Jersey
- Gathering Your Feedback



# Welcome and Thank You

- The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) **sets policies for** schools and districts to ensure New Jersey's 1.4 million students have access to a high-quality education **and an opportunity** to achieve academic excellence.



Our conversation today may help shape **future policies** for all New Jersey students.



# Meeting Norms and Expectations

- Actively listen and stay engaged
- Step up, step back: Make sure everybody's voice is heard
- Stay on topic
- Ask questions! Ask about unfamiliar terminology
- Respect each other's experiences and opinions



# Why We Are Here Today

- More than 20 years after the first charter school opened in New Jersey, we want to reevaluate what aspects of charter school implementation are most important to our communities.
- Public input will be synthesized to report community and stakeholder priorities by topic area and subgroup.



# Did You Know?

- The Charter Program Act of 1995 (Charter Act) went into effect in January 1996, with the first 13 charter schools opening in 1997. Under the Charter Act, N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-2, the Commissioner of Education approves or denies all charter applications.
- A charter school is a public school that operates under a charter granted by the Commissioner of Education and is independent of the local school district's board of education. Each charter school is managed by a Board of Trustees. Upon receiving a charter from the Commissioner, members of the Board of Trustees are considered public agents authorized by the State Board of Education to supervise and control a charter school.
- All charter schools receive an initial four-year charter. After comprehensive review, the Commissioner may grant a five-year renewal of a charter following the initial charter term.



# Did You Know? (continued)

- The Commissioner of Education makes final decisions on the following:
  - Charter school applications
  - Final charter granting
  - Charter school renewals
  - Charter school expansions
  - Charter school amendments
  - Charter school probation
  - Charter revocation



# Plus(+)/Delta( $\Delta$ )

- Quick thought exercise:
  - What do you like about New Jersey's approach to charter schools? Why?
  - What would you like to improve regarding New Jersey's approach to charter schools? Why?
- Write your responses on either side of your note card.
- Turn and talk with your table.
- Share your table's thoughts with the whole group.





# Office of Charter and Renaissance Schools

## Core Functions

- OCRS Performance Framework:
  - Manage an effective application process
  - Ensure readiness/capacity to open a new school
  - Oversee existing schools
  - Review, renew, expand and close schools
- The Performance Framework provides a consistent definition of school success that is aligned with NJDOE goals for all schools



# How are Charter Schools Held Accountable?

- In addition to **complying with** applicable laws and regulations, charter schools are held accountable to the Performance Framework, which outlines the measurable objectives charter schools must meet by asking three essential questions:
  - Academic
    - Is the academic program a success?
  - Financial
    - Is the school financially viable?
  - Organizational
    - Is the school equitable and organizationally sound?



# Sources of Evidence

In order to assess charter school performance against the measures set forth in the Performance Framework, the Department considers a wide body of evidence, including but not limited to the following:

- Admissions and enrollment materials
- Annual financial audits
- Annual reports
- Board minutes
- Budgets
- Charter agreement
- Charter amendments
- Complaints received and resolution status
- Curriculum documents
- Data derived from NJ SMART and the Charter School Enrollment System (CHE)
- Department published School Performance Reports and other Department reports
- Discipline data including EVVRS or the new Student Safety Data System (SSDS)
- Documentation of current Certificate of Occupancy, health, safety, and fire inspections
- Evaluation of board of trustees and school administration
- Evaluation of effective systems for financial oversight
- Evaluation of the implementation of ELL and special education requirements and programs
- Facility plans
- Federal and state reporting requirements
- GAAP accounting system review
- Handbooks – board, family, staff, student
- Initial charter school application
- Lesson plans
- Personnel files
- District and public comment
- Policy documents
- Professional development calendars/agendas
- Renewal application
- School calendars
- School identified and collected data from other assessments
- Site visits and accompanying documentation
- Staff lists
- Staff surveys
- State assessment results
- Structured Interviews with School Officials
- Student growth data
- Student files



# Academic Performance

- The Office of Charter and Renaissance Schools Academic Performance Framework measures:
  - English Language Arts (ELA) and Math statewise assessments growth scores for all charter students in grades 4-12
  - A charter school's four-year graduation rate
  - Percentage of students that met or exceeded expectations in the state ELA and Math assessments
  - Additional factors that indicate whether the charter school is preparing students for future success



# Fiscal Performance

- The Office of Charter and Renaissance Schools Fiscal Performance Framework measures:
  - A charter school's working capital ratio, unrestricted days cash on hand, enrollment variance and loan status
  - A charter school's cash flow and debt service to coverage ratio
  - The charter school's financial audit and overall financial management and compliance



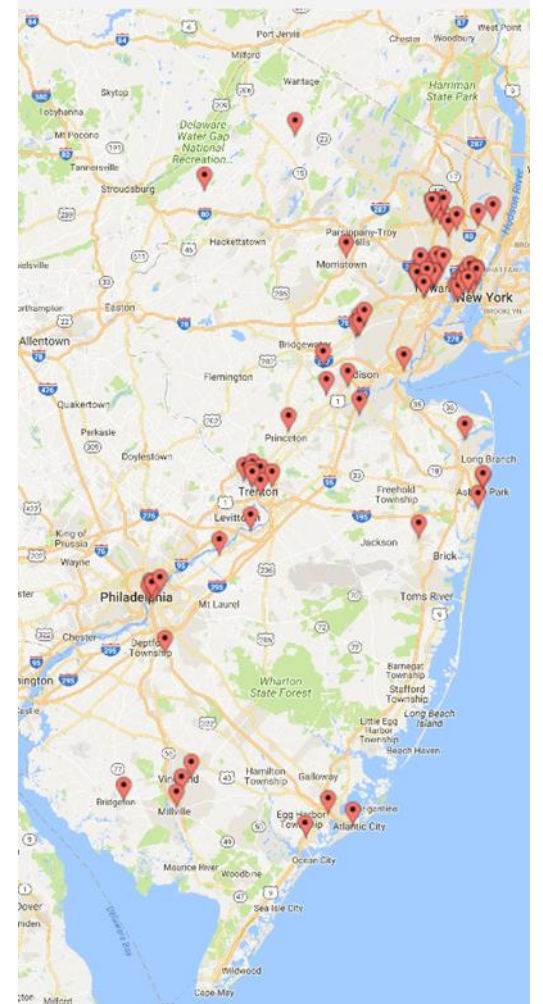
# Organizational Performance

- The Office of Charter & Renaissance Schools Organizational Performance Framework measures:
  - The charter school's mission, key design elements, curriculum, instruction, assessment programs and overall organizational capacity.
  - The charter school's culture and climate, and family and community engagement.
  - The charter school board's capacity to govern the school effectively and its compliance to relevant laws and regulations.
  - The charter school's commitment to serving and meeting the needs of each student.
  - The charter school's submission of critical data to the NJDOE; financial management and state/federal law compliance.



# Charter School Statistics

- In the 2017-2018 school year, there were 89 operating charter schools in New Jersey – accounting for about 3% of all public schools – and serving **49,500** students out of **54,957** approved charter seats.
- As of today, the total approved charter school seats will reach **69,531**, excluding Pre-Kindergarten enrollment, by 2023. This total changes as new school applications are approved or failing charter schools are closed.



# What is your feedback?

- Are there adjustments the State can make to its approach to charter schools in order to better serve students and communities?
- In what ways can district schools and charter schools work together to improve educational, operational, and social outcomes?





# Thank you!

- [New Jersey Department of Education Website](#)
- Feedback, questions, comments or concerns? Please email:
  - [charters@doe.nj.gov](mailto:charters@doe.nj.gov)
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