

Charter School 101

特许学校基本知识

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What will be covered today

- What is a charter school in New Jersey
- What is the history and present of charter schools in NJ
- How do charter schools operate in New Jersey
- How do charter schools differ from traditional district public schools
- How do charter schools impact the public school system
- What is the application process in New Jersey
- What information shall the application for a charter school include in New Jersey
- What documents must be submitted for the final granting of the charter
- How strong is the need for Chinese dual language charter schools
- What would be the impact on weekend Chinese schools

What is a charter school in New Jersey

- It is a public school open to all students on a space-available basis.
- It is funded by taxpayers but operates independently of the district board of education under a charter granted by the Commissioner of New Jersey Department of Education.
- Once approved by the Commissioner, it 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.
- It has no tuition and provides transportation.

What is a charter school (cont.)

The Center for Education Reform (www.edreform.com)

- Charter schools are new, innovative public schools that are accountable for student results. They are designed to deliver programs tailored to educational excellence and the needs of the communities they serve.
- Charter schools are one of the fastest and most successful growing reforms in the country. The first charter school opened its doors in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1992 and now, a decade and a half later, nearly 4,600 charter schools are serving over 1.4 million children across 40 states and the District of Columbia.
- Based on the belief that America's public schools should meet standards of excellence and be held accountable, parents are lining up to choose these innovative public schools that are able to meet the individual needs of their children.

What is the history and present of charter schools in NJ

- New Jersey Charter School Program Act of 1995.
 - **18A:36A-2. Findings, declarations relative to establishment of charter schools**

The Legislature finds and declares that the establishment of charter schools as part of this State's program of public education can assist in promoting comprehensive educational reform by providing a mechanism for the implementation of a variety of educational approaches which may not be available in the traditional public school classroom. Specifically, charter schools offer the potential to improve pupil learning; increase for students and parents the educational choices available when selecting the learning environment which they feel may be the most appropriate; encourage the use of different and innovative learning methods; establish a new form of accountability for schools; require the measurement of learning outcomes; make the school the unit for educational improvement; and establish new professional opportunities for teachers.

The Legislature further finds that the establishment of a charter school program is in the best interests of the students of this State and it is therefore the public policy of the State to encourage and facilitate the development of charter schools.

- By October 2009, 68 charter schools serving more than 22,000 students in New Jersey with an estimated 11,000 students on waiting lists.
 - another 26,000 wait for openings at public charters in neighboring Pennsylvania.
 - Nationally, about 350,000 families are on waiting lists for public charter enrollment -- enough to fill about 1,100 new schools.

How do charter schools operate in NJ

- Charter schools are founded by committed parents, educators and community members.
- If there are more applications to enroll in the school than there are spaces available, the charter school must select students using a random selection process or lottery. [Educational equity and equal access are the key.]
- Families are exercising their right to choose what is best for their children. In 2006-07, there were 11,000 students on waiting lists - 70% of total enrollment. The demand is far exceeding the availability of space for students.
- 80% of students enrolled in charter schools reside in SDA (School Development Authority) districts. 89% of charter school students are minority.
- Charter schools are in need in good school districts to provide choices.
 - Some charter school programs focus on the basics — reading, writing and the traditional school subjects that some children struggle with. Other schools have special languages, arts, or music programs. Some charters look just like other public schools. There also are dropout prevention programs, adult education programs, charters that serve Head Start and day care needs, and charters that work with children who want to go to college.
 - Ex.: Princeton Charter School and Riverbank Charter School of Excellence.

How do charter schools differ from traditional district public schools

- *Choice:* Charter schools give families an opportunity to pick the school most suitable for their child's educational well-being. Teachers choose to create and work at schools where they directly shape the best working and learning environment for their students and themselves. Likewise, charter sponsors choose to authorize schools that are likely to best serve the needs of the students in a particular community.
- *Accountability:* Charter schools are judged on how well they meet the student achievement goals established by their charter contract. Charter schools must also show that they can perform according to rigorous fiscal and managerial standards. If a charter school cannot perform up to the established standards, it will be closed.
- *Freedom:* While charter schools must adhere to the same major laws and regulations as all other public schools, they are freed from the red tape that often diverts a school's energy and resources away from educational excellence. Instead of constantly jumping through procedural hoops, charter school leaders can focus on setting and reaching high academic standards for their students.
- In New Jersey, charter schools receive 90% of per-pupil spending in district public schools (2008-09 Comparative Cost Per Pupil in EB: \$13,057. $\$13,057 \times 90\% = \$11,751$) and no state funding for facilities.

How do charter schools impact the public school system?

- **The "Ripple" Effect:** Conventional public school districts often view charter schools as a threat but time has shown that these new schools can serve a valuable teaching role. Increasingly, members of the traditional public school system are turning to charter schools for examples of "best-practices" regarding everything from curriculum to staffing and teacher retention. The attitudes of leading administrators in the conventional public school system are also changing. Instead of viewing charter schools as nuisances many realize the need for improvement spurred on by charter schools.
- **Do Charter Schools Work?** Yes. In addition to the positive pressure they put on the public school system as a whole, charter schools satisfy and serve their primary constituents (teachers, parents, and students) by providing exciting and viable new education in an inclusive, individual manner. Harvard University Professor and Economist Caroline Hoxby recently released a study called "A Straightforward Comparison of Charter Schools and Regular Public Schools in the United States." The study compared 4th grade students in charter schools with 4th graders in the public schools that the charter students would go to absent the charter option
- **Do Charter Schools Take Money from Public Schools?** Charter schools *are* public schools. When a child leaves for a charter school, only 90% of the money follows that child. This benefits the public school system by instilling a sense of accountability into the system regarding its services to the student and parents and its fiscal obligations. Fiscally, charter schools have demonstrated efficiency. There has been NO indication that charter schools cause property tax to increase.

What is the application process in NJ

- Virtually anyone can submit an application to open and operate a charter school. Parents, educators, museums, civic groups, business leaders, service organizations and teachers have started schools in United States. Charter schools are started when community members see an educational need and decide to actively address it.
- Application submission.
 - Regular: March 31 (lead time - 17 months).
 - Early-action (new): October 15 (lead time – 10.5 months).
 - The recommendations of the district boards of education shall be forwarded to the Commissioner within 60 days of receipt of the applications.
- Approval of application by the Commissioner of NJ DOE.
 - Regular: September 30 (lead time – 11 months).
 - Early-action (new): January 15 (lead time – 7.5 months).
- State DOE preparedness visit by June 30.
- Final granting of the charter by the Commissioner by July 15.

What information shall the application for a charter school include in NJ

- The identification of the charter applicant.
- The name of the proposed charter school.
- The proposed governance structure of the charter school including a list of the proposed members of the board of trustees of the charter school or a description of the qualifications and method for the appointment or election of members of the board of trustees.
- The educational goals of the charter school, the curriculum to be offered, and the methods of assessing whether students are meeting educational goals. Charter school students shall be required to meet the same testing and academic performance standards as established by law and regulation for public school students. Charter school students shall also meet any additional assessment indicators which are included within the charter approved by the commissioner.
- The admission policy and criteria for evaluating the admission of students which shall comply with the requirements of the charter school act.
- The age or grade range of students to be enrolled.
- The school calendar and school day schedule.
- A description of the charter school staff responsibilities and the proposed qualifications of teaching staff.
- A description of the procedures to be implemented to ensure significant parental involvement in the operation of the school.
- A description of, and address for, the physical facility in which the charter school will be located.
- Information on the manner in which community groups will be involved in the charter school planning process.
- The financial plan for the charter school and the provisions which will be made for auditing the school pursuant to the provisions of the State's regulations.

What information shall the application for a charter school include in NJ (cont.)

- Summary (enrollment, grade, and executive)
- Implementation plan
 - Mission Statement
 - Goals & Objectives
 - Educational Program
 - Special Populations
 - Student Assessment
 - Student Discipline Policy
 - Parental and Community Involvement
 - Facility
 - Founders & Founder Statement of Assurances
 - Governance Structure
 - Admissions Policy and Criteria
 - Staff/Personnel
 - Self-Evaluation and Accountability Plan
 - Timetable
- Financial plan
 - Financial Overview
 - Budget Summary
 - Detailed Budget Narrative
 - Cash Flow Schedule

What documents must be submitted for the final granting of the charter

- A directory of the current members of the board of trustees.
- The bylaws of the board of trustees.
- The Certificate of Incorporation.
- The Federal Employer Identification Number.
- The Credit Authorization Agreement for Automatic Deposits;
- The lease, mortgage or title to its facility.
- The certificate of occupancy for "E" (education) use issued by the local municipal.
- The sanitary inspection report with satisfactory rating.
- The fire inspection certificate with "Ae" (education) code.
- A list of the lead person, teachers and professional support staff.
- The Authorization for Emergent Hiring Pending Completion of Criminal History Check form or Criminal History Approval letter for each employee of the charter school.
- Evidence of a uniform system of double-entry bookkeeping that is consistent with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).
- The resolution of the board of trustees naming the Affirmative Action Officer, the Section 504 Officer and the Title IX Coordinator.
- Evidence of enrollment of at least 90% of approved maximum enrollment, as verified by student registrations signed by parent/guardian(s).
- Documentation that ensures compliance with all applicable Federal and State regulations and statutes.

How strong is the need for Chinese dual language charter schools

- Cross-section of the population.
- Economic reasons.
- Global citizens. World peace.
- One of the hardest languages for native English speakers requiring 2,400 hr.
- Bilingualism benefits the brain.
- The best of the eastern and western worlds.
- Proven model for success nationwide.
 - four Chinese dual language charter schools.
 - 40 Chinese dual language schools and programs.

What would be the impact on weekend Chinese schools

- The role of weekend Chinese schools.
- The number of students in a charter school will be limited.
- Meeting the needs of the community.

Summary

- The nature of charter schools, history, present, operation, relationship with and the impact on traditional district public schools.
- The application process, information needed to include in the application, and documents needed to submit for the final granting of the charter.
- The need for Chinese dual language charter schools and the impact on weekend Chinese schools.
- Questions???

Formula

- $M \times 2.19\% \times 60\% = \160 million
- $M \times (2.19\% + \text{tax rate increase}) \times 60\% = 160 \times (1 + \text{budget increase } \%)$
- $2.19\% + \text{tax increase} = 2.19\% \times (1 + \text{budget increase})$
- $\text{Tax increase} = 2.19\% \times \text{budget increase } \%$
- Assuming property value M unchanged, if the school district budget is increased by 3.4%, tax rate increase = $2.19\% \times 3.4\% = 0.07446\%$