

# Charter School Newsletter

*A bulletin from the NJ Department of Education*

May 2016

Dear Charter School Leaders and Representatives,

Strong board governance is critical to the success of any charter school. With the release of the updated [Organizational Performance Framework](#) in August 2015, the Office of Charter Schools has set clear criteria and expectations for boards of trustees. Evaluation of these criteria allows the Department to determine whether the board of trustees of a charter school has the capacity to govern the school effectively, and whether the board complies with relevant laws and regulations.

In April, the New Jersey School Boards Association hosted a charter school “boot camp” to educate board members on their roles and responsibilities. Members of the Office of Charter Schools led presentations about board governance and the specific indicators, criteria, metrics and ratings that the Department uses to evaluate a school’s governing board through the monitoring process. I wanted to share [the presentation](#) with you and hope you will review it and discuss the important role that boards have in ensuring that charter schools are providing a high-quality education to all students.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the NJ Charter Schools Conference on May 25-26.

Regards,



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Harry Lee  
Director, Office of Charter Schools

## Annual Report Template Released

Per N.J.A.C. 6A:11-2.2, the board of trustees of a charter school must submit an annual report to the New Jersey Department of Education by August 1<sup>st</sup> each year. The [template](#) is now available for download on our website.

## School Performance Reports

[2014-2015 School Performance Reports](#) were released for all public schools in the state. These reports are designed to inform parents, educators and communities with statistics about how well a school is performing and preparing its students for college and careers.

### Updated Amendment Guidelines Available

Per N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-3, a charter school is a public school operated under a charter granted by the Commissioner. Charter schools are public schools governed by independent boards and held accountable to a legally binding written contractual agreement with their chartering entity. When a charter school governing board requires a **material** change to its charter, an amendment is required. Amendments may be requested pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:11-2.6 et seq.

The Office of Charter Schools has updated its [Guidelines for Amendment Requests](#) to provide information regarding this process.

### Testing for Lead in Drinking Water - DEP Information

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection has developed a [website](#) that includes guidance for schools served by public water systems. Please use this resource to learn about best management practices for schools, including testing for and remediating lead and other contaminants in drinking water.

### Important Upcoming Dates

- [New Jersey Charter Schools Conference](#) – May 25-26
- Quarterly financial reports are due to the county by May 30.
- Find the dates for the 2016-17 [Charter School enrollment](#) submissions via the web-based enrollment system

### School Preparedness and Emergency Planning Training Sessions – May - June

The Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning (OSPEP), in partnership with the New Jersey State Police Arson/Bomb Unit, is hosting training sessions for school and district administrators, “Understanding and Planning for School Bomb Incidents.” This training will provide participants with the tools required to effectively assess school bomb incident response plans and guide recommendations to various situations. Space is limited and registration is required. Visit the following links to register for a session of your choice:

- South region: [May 26, 2016](#)
- North region: [May 31, 2016](#)
- Central region: [June 1, 2016](#)

### Charter School Grants

Since 2012, the Office of Charter Schools has run multiple grant competitions for planning grants, first and second year implementation grants, expansion grants and dissemination grants. The last remaining grant competition is available only to *new* charter schools. Applications have already been submitted and are being reviewed.

This month, the Office of Charter Schools will submit an application to the U.S. Department of Education for a new Charter School Program (CSP) grant. If successful, competitive subgrants to NJ charter school would be available in the Fall. Stay tuned to learn whether subgrants will be available.

### **Charter School Best Practices**

The Office of Charter Schools has worked with some of our most successful charter schools to gather and share best practices in a new section on its website titled “[Best Practices Collection](#).” We encourage you to review, discuss and learn more about these practices in order to improve the quality of education for the students you serve. If you would like to submit a best practice for consideration, please email Julie Bunt at [Julie.Bunt@DOE.state.nj.us](mailto:Julie.Bunt@DOE.state.nj.us).

### **District Broadcast Memos**

The Department posts all broadcast memos to school districts and charter schools on its [Broadcasts web page](#). Visit this link to find current and past broadcasts that apply to charter schools.

### **Subscribe to the Charter Newsletter**

We have added a “subscribe” feature to [our website](#) so anyone interested can subscribe to these emails (check the left side of the page for the subscription box). If this has been forwarded to you and you wish to sign up, we encourage you to do so.