

Charter School Newsletter

A bulletin from the NJ Department of Education

November 2015

Dear Charter School Leaders and Representatives,

As your school gears up to recruit new students for next school year, I want to take this opportunity to remind you about charter school admissions and enrollment best practices. As you are aware, charter schools are free, open-enrollment schools that, just like traditional public schools, are required by law to serve all students. Per *N.J.S.A. 18A:36-7*, charter schools must be open to all students on a space- available basis and must not discriminate in their admission policies or practices.

With this in mind, the charter school admission process must be open to students requiring special education services, students who are English Language Learners, students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, and other underserved or at-risk populations. It is imperative that charter schools clearly communicate that high-need students are welcome at their schools.

The revised [Organizational Performance Framework](#) places a strong emphasis on access and equity for New Jersey charter schools. Upon receipt of the school's annual report, the Department examines whether a school's recruitment, admissions and enrollment processes are fair and equitable. Furthermore, the Department collects data and information to determine whether the school is minimizing attrition rates and maintaining enrollment stability.

The Department also released "[Guidelines for Access and Equity in New Jersey Charter Schools](#)" to remind schools of the legal requirements and national best practices with regard to recruitment, admissions, lottery and enrollment in charter schools. We ask that all charter schools thoroughly review these guidelines and reach out to the Office of Charter Schools with any questions.

The Office of Charter Schools is currently reviewing information on each charter school's recruitment, application, admissions, lottery and enrollment policies and practices to ensure that charter schools in New Jersey are open to all students. Schools should expect additional communication regarding this review in December.

Thank you and we look forward to continuing our partnership to improve outcomes for all New Jersey students.

Regards,



Harry Lee
Director, Office of Charter Schools

The Charter School Office Welcomes New Staff

Allie Cobb began her career in education as a Teach for America corps member in Houston, Texas, where she became aware of the burgeoning charter school movement. Since then, she has spent many years teaching language arts and providing ESL services in a high-performing charter school based in Philadelphia. Allie will focus on school evaluations and improving the site visit process.

Julie Bunt joins the Office of Charter Schools after acting as an educator, administrator and Interim CEO of a high-performing charter school in Philadelphia. Julie will manage special projects, utilizing her educational expertise to ensure high-quality instruction in the classroom, strong school board governance and achievement of consistent educational expectation.

Allie and Julie are excited to support the charter movement in New Jersey to ensure a high-quality education for all children.

PARCC Results

On October 20, 2015, the Department presented [statewide results](#) from the 2015 administration of the PARCC assessments. Districts and charters can expect to have access to their student-, school- and district-level data beginning in mid-November. Student score reports will also begin to be mailed in mid-November to districts and charters for dissemination directly to families. Visit the [NJDOE website](#) for details about standards and assessments, including the new Guide to Parent/Teacher Conversations about PARCC and sample score reports on the [PARCC Assessment](#) page. There is also a [video](#) to share with parents to help them learn more about score reports and how to read them.

Important Dates and Deadlines

December 7: Annual financial audit deadline – please submit your audit report to Epicenter.

To find the electronic data collection schedule for FY2016, see the Department's [Data Collection Schedule](#) online (does not include Epicenter deadlines).

District Broadcast Memos

Please note the October 27 memo with the schedule for the [PARCC spring administration](#) and the November 10 memo with draft cover letters that schools can use when mailing out PARCC individual student reports. 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.

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