

Get the Facts

New Jersey's Public Charter Schools

March 2025

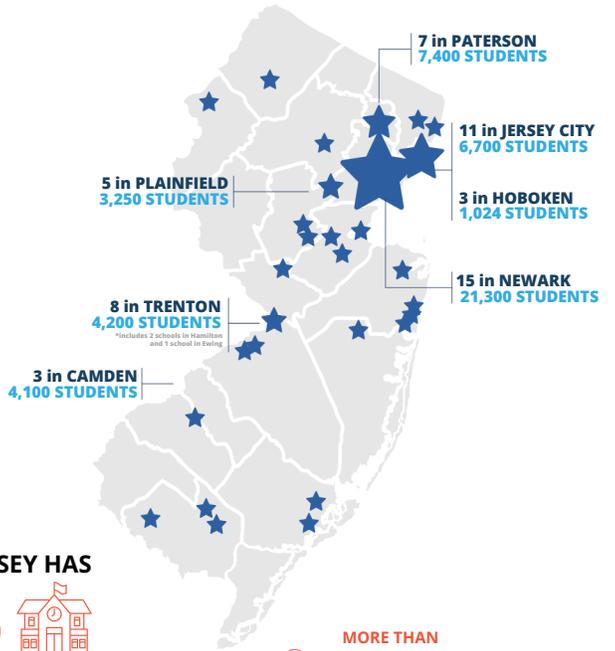
What is a Public Charter School?

Charter schools are **free, nonprofit public schools** that are open to all students. They operate with more flexibility than traditional public schools in exchange for increased accountability including rigorous financial, academic and operational standards.



1 in 5
STUDENTS

Public charter and renaissance schools serve 1 in 5 public school students in NJ's 31 most underserved communities (former Abbott/SDA districts).



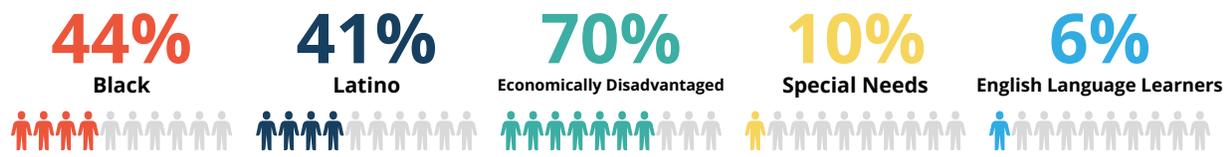
NEW JERSEY HAS
86 CHARTER SCHOOLS
IN **44** CITIES
AND **18** COUNTIES

MORE THAN
63,000 STUDENTS
29,000 CHARTER WAITLIST TOTAL

SOURCES: School count & cities/counties (NJDOE Public School Directory, pulled July 2024); Enrollment (2023-24 NJDOE Fall Enrollment File); Waitlists (Annual Reports and school records)

KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

SOURCE: 2023-24 NJDOE Fall Enrollment File

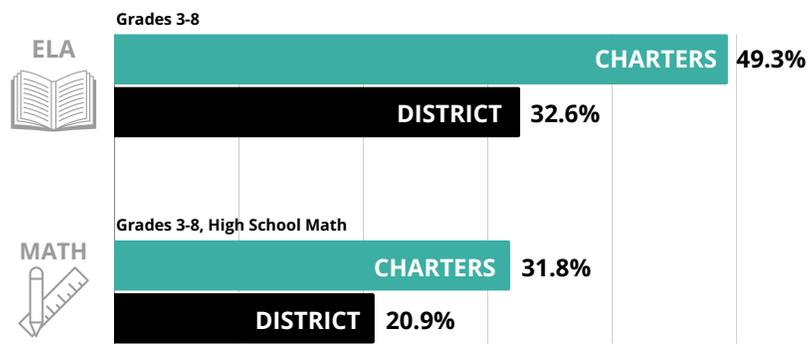


➡ Charter schools serve **14%** of all **Black students** in NJ's public school system.
➡ Charter schools serve **6%** of all **Latino students** in NJ's public school system.

PERFORMANCE

SOURCE: 2023-24 State Assessment Files

2023-24 Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations



Charter students are **52%** more likely to read and do math at grade level.

Black, Latino and economically disadvantaged students are thriving in New Jersey's public charter schools and outperforming their statewide counterparts.

Economically Disadvantaged Charter Students
+13 points in ELA
+7 points in math

Black & Latino Charter Students
+10 points in ELA
+5 points in math



PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITIES

Public charter schools, on average, spend \$2,000 per student for school buildings — money that would otherwise be spent on teachers or students in the classroom — but they have been excluded from most state facilities funding.



FUNDING

Public Charter Schools Are Deeply Underfunded

More than 63,000 public school students in charter schools are not funded equitably in New Jersey. On average, public charter schools receive approximately \$4,000 less per student per year when compared to traditional district schools. Public charter schools also spend, on average, \$2,000 per student on facilities, and while the State has provided \$19 billion since 2001 to traditional district schools for school construction, public charter schools have received only \$44 million for minor building improvements.



ACCOUNTABILITY TO FAMILIES

Public charter schools have **greater flexibility** to bring in new and creative approaches, and with that flexibility comes **greater accountability**. Public charter schools:

NEWARK'S CHARTER SCHOOLS

Providing a World Class Education

75% of Newark's charter school students are enrolled in a school beating the odds.
Source: 2020 study from MarGrady Research

Newark charter schools post best student learning gains in the nation



Students learn more in Newark public charter schools with gains of 48 additional days per year in reading and 73 additional days per year in math when compared to the state average accounting for student characteristics. This outpaces the national finding that public charter school students nationally gained 16 days in reading and 6 days in math.

Source: 2022 Newark City Study; 2023 Stanford CREDO Report

- Provide **financial reports** to the state and conduct an annual audit
- Must meet all state and federal **education standards**
- Must be **renewed every five years**—and face closure if not delivering results

AUTONOMY EMPOWERS CREATIVITY

Public charter schools have more autonomy over their budgets, curriculum, and personnel than traditional districts. Teachers at public charter schools are empowered to use **creative approaches** to meet the individual needs of students in their classroom. Public charter schools include incredibly **diverse learning models**, including:



Hoboken Dual Language Charter School provides an exceptional education in Spanish and English to develop engaged, well-rounded bilingual citizens with a global and multicultural perspective.



North Star Academy, part of the Uncommon Schools network, is creating a pipeline of college students to full-time staff teachers at the school. The program focuses on recruiting teachers of color by partnering with HBCUs across the country.



Unity Charter School in Morristown infuses Education for Sustainability throughout the school culture. Student agency drives critical thinking and inspires advocacy through a constructivist learning approach so that students graduate ready to change the world for the better.

