

A hearty "WELCOME BACK" to all of our charter schools
and our wishes for a smooth beginning of the year!

Sept. 3, 2009

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Charter School Enrollment Swells to More Than 22,000 Students

Six New Charter Schools Opening Their Doors

Congratulations to these [new charter schools](#) that are opening their doors to students for the first time this fall.

- **Dr. Ellen G. Pressman Charter School**
(Plainfield, Union County)
- **The Ethical Community Charter School**
(Jersey City, Hudson County)
- **Institute for Excellence Charter School**
(Winslow Township, Camden County)
- **Newark Educators Community Charter School**
(Newark, Essex County)
- **Riverbank Charter School of Excellence**
(Florence, Burlington County)
- **Vineland Public Charter School**
(Vineland, Cumberland County)

The Dr. Ellen G. Pressman Charter School is opening as a middle school while the others are elementary schools.

Two Existing Schools Expand and Open New Campuses

Congratulations are also extended to **Robert Treat Academy Charter School** and **TEAM Academy Charter School**, both of which are celebrating the opening of new schools under their existing charters. Robert Treat Academy has opened a new K-8 campus on Wilson Street in Newark's central ward and is leasing space from St. Mary's Elementary School. They are beginning the new school year with kindergarten and first grades and will gradually scale up to eighth grade. Governor Corzine participated in a ribbon cutting ceremony at Robert Treat Academy's new campus in Newark's central ward. Appearing with the governor in photo, above, are Vice Principal Theresa Aduabato, Frances Aduabato, and Debra Wachspres of NJCPA.



TEAM Academy (a KIPP school) has opened Spark Academy Charter School, a new K through fourth grade school on Orange Street in Newark's west ward, starting with just kindergarten for the first year.

The addition of these schools brings total charter school enrollment in New Jersey to more than 22,000 children. See the [NJCPA Charter School Directory](#) to find a charter school near you.

 [Send to a Colleague](#)

Read Past Issues

For past issues of *Today in Trenton*, please visit our [online archive](#).



The mission of the [New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association](#) is to advance educational choice for New Jersey's children through quality public charter schools.

NJCPA Welcomes More School Members

The Association welcomes the following schools that have joined or renewed their membership in the past month:

- Academy Charter High School

Carlos Lejniaks
Board Chair

Jessani Gordon
Executive Director
jgordon@njcharters.org

Debra Wachspress
Director of Public Affairs
dwachspress@njcharters.org

Carrie Wetherby
Program Manager
cwetherby@njcharters.org

Gayle Horvath
Senior Program Manager
ghorvath@njcharters.org

 Send to a Colleague

- Camden Academy Charter High School
- Camden's Pride Charter School
- chARTer~TECHnical High School for the Performing Arts
- Community Charter School of Paterson
- D.U.E. Season Charter School of Camden
- East Orange Community Charter School
- Ethical Community Charter School
- Galloway Community Charter School
- Greater Brunswick Charter School
- Oceanside Charter School
- Princeton Charter School
- Red Bank Charter School
- Ridge and Valley Charter School
- Sussex County Charter School for Technology
- Trenton Community Charter School
- Union County TEAMS Charter School
- Unity Charter School
- Village Charter School

Annual school membership dues support the Association's advocacy efforts and member programs. Reminders have been mailed to schools regarding membership status for the 2009-2010 year, which began July 1.

The Association also offers an [Associate Membership Program](#) to local and national suppliers that offer goods and services to the growing market of New Jersey's charter schools. The annual Associate Membership term begins September 1.

For information about our membership programs and benefits, contact [Carrie Wetherby](#) at 609-989-9700, ext. 4410.

NJCPSA Awards Over \$130,000 in SMARTer Charter Grants to Schools



NJCPSA's SMARTer Charters program supports member schools by awarding grants for training and professional development to increase quality and sustainability. Targeted audiences include board members, administrators and teachers. These grants are underwritten through the generous support of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and are awarded for amounts up to \$15,000 with the recipient school paying 25 to 50 percent. During the current grant cycle, the association awarded 25 grants to the following schools, totaling over \$130,000:

Data-driven Instruction:

- Academy Charter High School
- Elysian Charter School
- Emily Fisher Charter School
- Foundation Academy Charter School
- Hope Academy Charter School
- Queen City Charter School
- Soaring Heights Charter School
- TEAM Academy Charter School
- Unity Charter School

Data Systems:

- Discovery Charter School
- Ethical Community Charter School (2 grants)
- Greater Brunswick Charter School
- Learning Community Charter School
- Pride Academy Charter School

Financial Procedures:

- Discovery Charter School

Fundraising:

- Oceanside Charter School

Governance:

- Elysian Charter School
- Ethical Community Charter School

Policies & Procedures:

- Newark Educators' Community Charter School

Positive Discipline:

- Unity Charter School

Special Education:

- Discovery Charter School

Strategic Planning:

- Burch Charter School
- Greater Newark Charter School
- LEAP Academy Charter School

Congratulations to all grant recipients!

Charter Schools: Sign Up for Energy Institute By Sept. 10

NJCPSA and Real Estate Advisory and Development Services (READS) are partnering to create an Energy Institute, which will obtain an energy audit of school facilities at little or no cost to the school. The energy audit describes the measures that are needed to run the school facility more efficiently, resulting in reduced utility expenses. READS will submit an application on behalf of a group of schools to a government program that pays 75 percent of the cost of the energy audits and NJCPSA will cover the remaining 25 percent. If you own or rent your building and are interested in participating in this program, contact [Gayle Horvath](#) at NJCPSA by September 10 or 609-989-9700, ext. 4413. Pre-operational schools are welcome to participate.

Other Grant Opportunities

Online Grant Service Available for Schools and Teachers

[Grant Wrangler](#) is a free online listing service of grants and awards for teachers. Sign up for their bi-weekly bulletin online.

Invitation to Apply for Schools of Character Award

Schools are invited to apply for the annual [Schools of Character Awards](#) sponsored by the Charter Education Partnership. The award includes national recognition and a monetary grant. Applications are due December 1.

Schools Gain Buying Power through NJCPSA's Partnership with STAPLES



NJCPSA is pleased to announce a [new partnership with STAPLES](#) -- the world's leading B2B supplier of office products -- through which member schools can receive an average of 15% off their current office supply purchasing program. If your school already orders from Staples, you could receive even deeper discounts through this exclusive program! For more information, visit the [NJCPSA website](#) or contact Sam Siniavsky, Staples Business Development Manager, at 609-517-1481.

NJCPSA Now Accepting Workshop Proposals

Have a great idea for a workshop or conference session? NJCPSA has recently launched a revised Workshop Proposal Form that can be submitted at any time during the year. We are actively seeking proposals for day-long workshops as well as 90-minute breakout sessions at the 2010 New Jersey Charter Schools Conference. Proposals will be kept on file for 12 months. For more information and to download the new Workshop Proposal Form, visit the "[Events](#)" [section of our website](#). School leaders are also invited to submit their training needs and available in-service dates to [Carrie Wetherby](#) who can help identify appropriate trainers or consultants.

Federal 'Race to the Top' Update

NJCPSA submitted [public comment](#) to USDOE on its proposed application for federal [Race to the Top](#) (R2T) funds. R2T is the \$4.35 billion education reform program recently enacted as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and will award grants directly to states through a competitive application process. To receive funding, states will be required to make assurances in four key areas: standards and assessments (common internationally benchmarked standards aligned with assessments), data systems to support instruction and continuous improvement, supporting strong teachers and leaders, and turning around struggling schools. USDOE will be reviewing public comments over the next two months and is expected to issue a final application to states by the beginning of November.

NJ Charters in the News

A letter to the editor by Jessani Gordon ran in the [Daily Journal](#) in response to an article about the Vineland Charter School opening, the first charter school in Cumberland County. She responds to a [comment](#) made by the Millville Superintendent of Schools suggesting that charter schools are not public schools.

The *Courier Post* ran a [positive editorial](#) about two new charter schools opening

in south Jersey -- Riverbank Charter School of Excellence in Florence and Institute for Excellence Charter School in Winslow -- stating "the more charter schools the better."

A [story](#) ran in the *Jersey Journal* about the Ethical Community Charter School (Jersey City) receiving final DOE approval to open on September 1. The school will begin the year with 120 kindergarten and first graders.

Associate Member Spotlight



[EBNY Insurance Services, Inc.](#) is an all-lines, independent insurance and benefits brokerage specializing in charter schools. CHARTER INSURE is a full service insurance platform exclusively tailored to charter schools. Working with all major insurance carriers, our family-owned firm devotes personal attention to each school. For further information, please contact [Kevin Kautzmann](#), Certified Financial Planner (CFP), at 212-269-2625.

NJCPSA's [Associate Member program](#) welcomes businesses and organizations who wish to support New Jersey's charter public schools.

Advocacy Update

NJCPSA has an ambitious legislative and grassroots advocacy agenda in place for the upcoming year to support charter school growth, quality and sustainability. These efforts are buoyed by strong national support from the Obama administration and a growing support base here in New Jersey. We will continue to pursue legislative and regulatory changes in these key areas:

- School Funding Reform Act-need to rectify large disparity in per pupil funding for certain districts
 - State facilities funding that qualifies as a match for federal funds
 - Enabling private/parochial school conversions to charter public schools
 - Establishing minimum performance standards based on student growth
- We have several key actions planned to advance this agenda. Among them are:
- Launching an extensive grassroots advocacy campaign, involving school leaders, parents, teachers, corporate, faith-based and community leadership. Creating "boots on the ground" visibility in support of key charter school legislation via rallies and press conferences.
 - Continuing to build a base of support of pro-charter legislation via legislative champions and important stakeholder groups. Involving charter school leaders in meetings and inviting legislators to tour schools.
 - Organizing a legislators' fact finding bus tour of charter schools so they may witness first-hand charters' successes and innovative practices.
 - Pursuing statewide public relations campaign, earning steady media coverage in print, radio and television news.
 - Creating an NJCPSA Members Council whose mission includes advancing the advocacy agenda.
 - Providing any requested support and input to the governor and DOE in crafting a Race to the Top (R2T) grant proposal for innovative education reform in which charters play an important role.
 - Participating in a multi-state collaborative to get stimulus funding via the Investing in Innovation Fund. This collaborative will provide professional development, coaching and evaluation tools to help charters quickly

identify areas of weakness and build capacity to fix them.

NJDOE News

Revised Core Curriculum Content Standards and High School Graduation Requirements Adopted

On June 17, 2009, the New Jersey State Board of Education [adopted](#) revised Core Curriculum Content Standards in six content areas and revised high school graduation requirements. Newly adopted standards include the Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards of Quality, and standards for visual and performing arts, comprehensive health and physical education, science, technology, 21st century life and careers, and world languages. The adoption of the [standards](#) and graduation requirements is a critical step in the ongoing process of ensuring each graduate from New Jersey public schools is college, career and citizenship ready in the 21st century. Review the [revised code for Standards and Assessment for Student Achievement](#) (N.J.A.C. 6A:8) at the NJ DOE website.

Events

***The Cartel* Continues Its Run at Rutgers and in Cape May**

The award-winning film [The Cartel](#), by filmmaker Bob Bowden, will show at the New Jersey Film Festival in Cape May on August 24 and at Rutgers University in New Brunswick on September 20 and 25. Balancing local storylines against interviews with education experts, *The Cartel* explores what dedicated parents, committed teachers, clear-eyed officials, and tireless reformers are doing to make our schools better for our kids.

Charter Chatter

Greater Brunswick Charter School (New Brunswick) received a \$1,500 grant from the Office Depot Foundation to provide equipment for a new computer lab. The grant will assist the school's efforts to assemble a new computer lab in the midst of its ongoing expansion project. This fall, the school plans to begin retrofitting the unused portion of its facility on Joyce Kilmer Avenue to house new classrooms, a gym, and a media center. "Our expansion project is one of the most important and most exciting developments at the school in its history," said Tia Kolbaba, chairwoman of the school's board of trustees.

Construction is underway at **Marion P. Thomas Charter School** (Newark) that will add 12 classrooms and an all-purpose room at its elementary school. With this \$3.42 million space expansion, the school expects to ultimately double its enrollment.

Sussex County Charter School for Technology (Sparta) recently received local planning board approval to erect a new school facility in Sparta's historic district. They expect to occupy the building in the summer 2010. With this expansion in space, the school will double its student body to 200 sixth, seventh and eighth graders.

TEAM Academy Charter Schools (Newark) reports hiring 44 teachers from among over 1,000 applicants for the 2009-10 school year, representing a 4 percent acceptance rate. Nearly all of the new teachers were hired to fill positions that became available due to school growth, since teacher attrition has dipped below 10 percent for the year. TEAM also reports an impressive statistic: 20 percent of Newark kindergartners (more than 600 students) applied for their lottery, representing almost 50 percent of the students in the neighborhoods in which they actively recruit.

"Today in Trenton" is produced and delivered by the New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association, the statewide membership and advocacy association for all New Jersey charter public schools. The newsletter is delivered to NJCPSA members, charter schools and interested friends. We do not share, rent or sell our e-mail list.