

## **Soaring Heights Charter School Named National Title I School**

*The Jersey City elementary school, independently run by its teachers, chosen as one of two schools in New Jersey and one out of 100 in the nation for its outstanding student performance.*

**Jersey City, N.J. (January 16, 2019)** – Soaring Heights Charter School, a K-8 elementary school, is pleased to announce that it has been selected as a “National Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Distinguished School” (formerly known as the National Title I Distinguished Schools program) by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) for 2018-2019.

The school was chosen on the basis of its exceptional student performance for the past two consecutive years.

“We are very thankful to the NJDOE and The National Association of ESEA Program Administrators for this great honor,” said Claudia Zuorick, Soaring Heights’ Program Director and Founder. “It is a testament to the hard work of our passionate and tireless teachers, and our students who continue to achieve a high-level of academic excellence.”

Annually, each state’s DOE selects only two schools based on outstanding performance in one of three categories and serves a large concentration of low-income students. Soaring Heights will be one of the two to represent New Jersey at the upcoming 2019 National ESEA Conference in Kansas City, Missouri later this month.

In addition, the school will receive a \$15,000 grant from this federal program, which will go toward upgrading its STEM lab – in line with the school’s plan to expand its location and resources. Soaring Heights has been educating at maximum capacity for the past 22 years. Presently, the school services 267 students. In order to fill the demands of its waitlist – that already spans to the Kindergarten class of 2021 – it would have to triple in size. Students are picked for admission based on a lottery system rather than need or potential.

Soaring Heights has achieved this national title despite not seeing a federal budget increase in more than a decade. Operating solely by its teaching staff since its founding in 1997, it is a small, independent school and as such is not eligible for many of the financial opportunities available to those charter schools run by Charter Management Organizations (CMOs).

The National ESEA Distinguished School award adds to the school’s long list of recent recognitions. The Office of Charter Schools of the NJDOE awarded the school “Best Practices for Shared Leadership”. For the past two years, Soaring Heights Charter School was ranked the #1 “Best Public Elementary School” and “Best Public Middle School” in Hudson County by the

authoritative school data analyst company Niche.com, as well as the #4 “Best Charter Elementary School” in the entire State of New Jersey.

“Jersey City continues to grow and so must we in order to keep pace with demand,” said Zuorick. “We want to educate as many children as we can, but first we need to find the space to accommodate them.”

The charter school has begun to reach out to city officials, developers, and the community to partner in finding space and funding for the school’s dream of expanding.