

*****For Immediate Release*****

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New Jersey Charter School Parents + Advocates Hold Press Conference at State Board of Education Meeting, Demand Fairness for Charter Students

As State Ed. Commissioner Completes Review of Charter School Law, New Jersey Charter Schools Association Releases Report Calling For Fair Funding for Public Charter Students

Parents Deliver Thousands of Postcards In Support of Public Charter Schools to Commissioner, Joining More than 1,000 Who Have Turned Out to Public Hearings

TRENTON - Dozens of public charter school families held a press conference at the State Board of Education on Wednesday, to call on Commissioner Lamont Repollet to support their schools as the state's charter review process comes to a close.

Since the charter review process kicked off, charter school families and teachers have shown overwhelming support for their schools. Highlights include:

- More than 1,000 public charter school parents, teachers, and supporters turned out to charter review events in Newark, Paterson, Trenton, Jersey City, Atlantic City, Camden, and Plainfield. Commissioner Lamont Repollet attended many of these events and also toured 11 charter schools throughout the state and saw firsthand how charter schools are changing lives.
- On October 16, during the first community meeting in Paterson, more than 200 charter parents and supporters turned out and had to line up in the hallways to provide input to the Department of Education about why they love their charter schools.
- On November 1, more than 350 Jersey City charter school parents, students, educators and supporters marched from BelovED community charter school to the Jerry Walker Center to raise their voices for fair funding for charter schools in Jersey City.
- On December 5th, parents delivered thousands of postcards in support of public charter schools to the Commissioner of Education.
- On social media, 1 million New Jersey residents were reached with stories about how charter schools are changing lives.

"Parents are standing strong, and we have a clear message for our leaders: we love our public charter schools and our children deserve to be treated fairly, just like other public school students," **said parent Ashley Campbell from Paterson.**

At the press conference, the New Jersey Charter Schools Association released [a report](#) identifying concrete steps the state should take to improve operating conditions for charter schools, including funding charter students fairly, increasing access to facilities and more operational flexibility.

"Charter schools are helping thousands of students and families succeed and we want the state to support them with fair funding and the other recommendations outlined in our report," **said Harry Lee, Interim President of the New Jersey Charter Schools Association.**

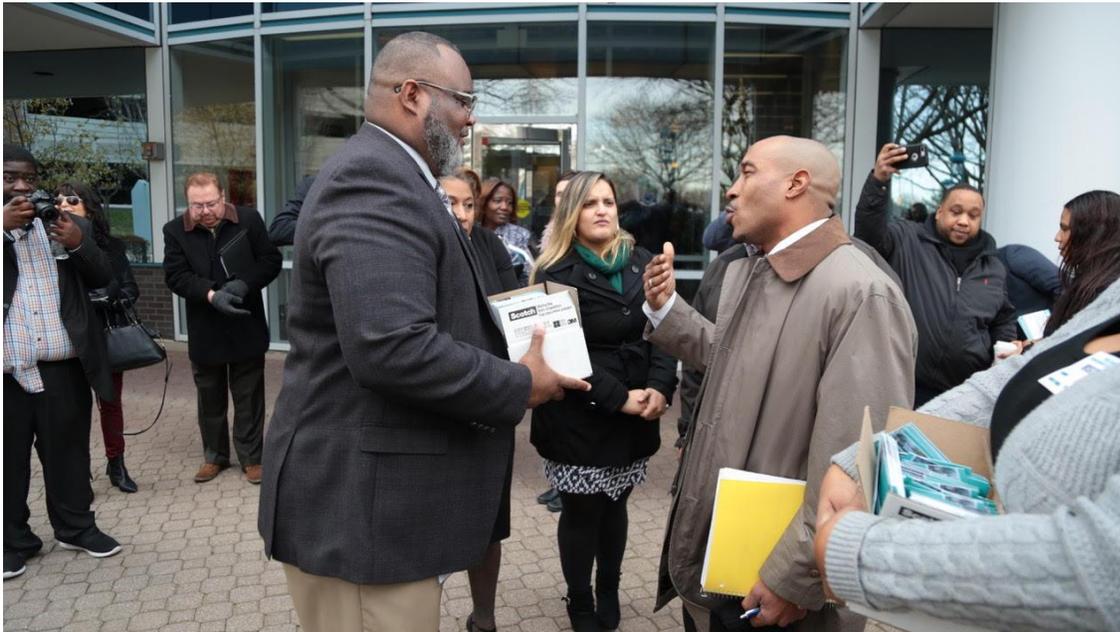
JerseyCAN, the Newark Charter School Fund and Better Education for Kids joined the NJCSA in supporting the report's findings.

Recommendations [in the report](#) include:

- **Fair Funding for Charter Schools and District Schools**

- Currently, charter schools only receive about 73 cents on the dollar in local and state aid compared to traditional public schools. Revise the School Funding Reform Act (SFRA) so that public charter school students receive the same funding as traditional public school students.
- Provide transition aid for districts with large/growing charter sectors to ensure that the district can better plan for the change in funding.
- Revise the school funding formula to include facilities funding for charter schools.
- **Increase Charter School Access to Under-Utilized School Buildings**
 - Allow for a right of first refusal for charter schools to acquire or lease at no cost an under-utilized public school facility or property.
- **Increase Charter School Autonomy**
 - At least 25 states, including Pennsylvania, New York, Washington D.C., and Massachusetts, exempt charter schools from many education statutes and regulations. New Jersey should also provide charter schools with flexibility from public school laws and regulations except those pertaining to the state accountability program, civil rights, student health, life and safety, criminal background checks, special education, conflict of interest and public record and generally-accepted accounting principles. At the very least, allow charter schools flexibilities afforded to Renaissance Schools through the Urban Hope Act.
 - Reward high performing charter schools. Amend the current law to allow charter schools to undergo the first renewal after five years, rather than four, and allow for all future renewals to be up to 10 years based on performance.

Photos:



Newark parent Che Colter with Commissioner Lamont Repollet



Parents outside of NJ Department of Education

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