



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

### NEWS RELEASE

PO BOX 004

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor  
(609) 777-2600  
Peter Peretzman(DOE)  
(609) 292-4041

TRENTON, NJ 08625

RELEASE: January 21, 1998



---

### Gov. Whitman Announces Approval of Twenty-Three New Charter Schools

Gov. Christie Whitman today announced the approval of 23 new charter schools, continuing her commitment to give parents more choice in their children's education.

"This is a truly exciting day," said Governor Whitman. "Our charter school program is growing by leaps and bounds. I have always believed that the more options available to parents the better our state's education system will become."

"I think it is great news that we will now have 35 charter schools up and running in September. Also, once our school choice program gets underway in the 1999-2000 school year parents will truly have the educational options for their children that they deserve."

Nineteen of the schools will be opening in the 1998-99 school year, while the remaining four will open in the 1999-2000 school year. Thirteen charter schools began operating in the current school year and another three schools that were approved in last year's first round will begin operation in the 1998-99 school year. All told, in the 1998-99 school year there will be thirty five operating charter schools.

Currently there are nearly 1400 students attending charter schools statewide. In the 1998-99 school year that will quadruple to more than 5500 students.

"We have always believed that charter schools will inspire parents and community groups to create an educational program that best meets the needs of their children," said Commissioner of Education Leo Klagholz. "It is our hope that charter schools, freed from most of the regulations that exist in public schools, will enable the development of innovative educational strategies that can then be applied to schools around the state.

"Judging by the quality of applications received from the 23 schools that have been approved, we have a great deal to be excited about as our charter school program enters its second year. We will see many new exciting ideas and concepts put in place that all of us will be watching closely."

Charter schools were created by a law enacted by Governor Whitman in 1996. Under the law, charter schools are required to seek the enrollment of a cross section of the community, including racial and ethnic factors. Admissions policies and practices at a charter school cannot discriminate on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status of a handicapped person, proficiency in the English language, or any other basis that would be illegal if used by a school district.

In her State of the State message last week, Gov. Whitman called on the State Board of Education to expand the educational options now available to parents and children by implementing a public school choice program in every county by Sept. 1999. This program will allow parents to send their children to schools out of their home district.

####

---

**nj**home