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## Governor Christie Hears From More Charter School Parents To Improve Education For All Students

Wednesday, June 1, 2016

Tags: [Education](#)

**Trenton, NJ** – Governor Chris Christie today held a roundtable discussion with parents of Trenton-area charter school students on how public schools can better meet the needs of students and families. Governor Christie's meeting at Village Charter School in Trenton is part of his continued effort to solicit input from those directly involved with charter schools to improve New Jersey's public education system for all children to succeed and excel.

"Charter school parents are very passionate that their children reach their full potential through the highest quality educational opportunities possible," said Governor Christie. "We will use their input to continue to improve and expand charter school education in an accountable, innovative way, allowing all students to pursue excellence in their own unique abilities, talents and interests."

Village Charter School's mission is to create an environment where children develop critical thinking skills, learn to communicate effectively, feel a sense of well-being and live responsibly in an atmosphere that promotes tolerance and empathy for others while uniting parents, teachers and the community in the common pursuit of excellence. The school opened in 1999, serving 153 kindergarten to second grade students and has grown to now include two classes each of grades kindergarten through sixth and three classes each of grades 7 and 8, all with maximum class sizes of 20.

Last week, Governor Christie announced at a Charter School Conference in Atlantic City a number of reforms that resulted from input received through meetings with charter school leaders last fall. These regulatory improvements are designed to give charter schools more flexibility to operate and expand by:

Allowing single-gender charter schools that meet appropriate criteria and single-purpose charter schools for educationally disadvantaged students, such as a school serving over-age, under-credited students who, because of life circumstances, are unable to graduate in four years;

Allowing applicants of the Charter School Certificate of Eligibility for Business Administrator to hold a CPA license in lieu of a master's degree and course credit requirements, permitting qualified financial experts and business managers who have CPA licenses to be considered in the hiring process;

Having charter schools apply to the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) with regard to certification standards for applicants who are excellent teaching candidates but who might not meet all of the certification criteria;

Expediting charter renewal for high-performing, Tier 1, schools that are not on probation for fiscal or organizational reasons. Charter schools that do not meet fiscal management/compliance standards or present concerns regarding their fiscal viability will remain subject to deeper review;

Expanding weighted lotteries by adding language explicitly allowing these lotteries for educationally disadvantaged students;

Reducing redundancies by removing the requirement that charters send corrective action plans to the Executive County Superintendent as they already are submitted to the Department of Education (DOE) Charter Office;

Requiring all State-operated districts to offer leases to charter schools for any available, unused facilities in the district. Additionally, DOE will propose rules to require districts to report to DOE, on a rolling basis, any closed, unused or unoccupied school facility available for lease that would be posted online in order to facilitate cooperation between districts and charter schools;

Redefining satellite campus regulations to allow charter schools in all districts to take advantage of available facilities that might be situated further from their main school, now only currently allowed in Abbott (or SDA) districts. The

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requirement that charter leases cannot exceed the length of the charter -- a barrier to obtaining financing -- will be removed; and

Clarifying in new regulations that renovations, expansion and reconstruction will be exempt from the Charter School Act's restriction on construction with State of local funds.

Governor Christie has demonstrated a strong commitment throughout his administration to ensure the success of charter schools by investing in innovative, successful schools that outperform and exceed expectations at every level.

"Just a couple miles away from where six-figure union bosses come and go in their luxury vehicles from the politically charged taxpayer-abuse-center that is NJEA headquarters, Village Charter School provides opportunity and hope for hundreds of disadvantaged students, spending approximately \$5,800 less per pupil than the Trenton City school district and also less than New Jersey's average total per-pupil cost of \$19,652," Governor Christie added.

There are currently 89 charter schools in New Jersey, with the number of authorized charter school seats expected to increase by 10 percent next year to more than 50,000. Thirty-nine of those schools have opened in the last six years. In February 2016, the DOE approved the expansion of 16 charter schools, renewed the charters of 19 schools, and approved three new schools to open in the 2017-2018 school year.

In districts such as Newark and Camden, charter schools are educating almost one-third of their public school populations. There are an estimated 6,500 additional Newark students on a waiting list to get a charter school seat and about 2,000 Camden students on a waiting list, demonstrating how critical it is that more charter school opportunities are provided for students and across the state.

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