



New Jersey Children's Foundation

For Immediate Release

Contact: press@njchildren.org

STATE TESTS SHOW 4TH STRAIGHT YEAR OF IMPROVEMENT FOR NEWARK'S CITYWIDE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

Newark's Charter Sector Beats NJ State Average for Second Consecutive Year

NEWARK, NJ - According to a local foundation's analysis, Newark public school students posted a fourth consecutive year of improved results on New Jersey state tests--with the city's charter school sector continuing to stand out.

"This data is proof positive that Newark is on the right path: a citywide school system of improving district schools alongside growing charter schools that all work together as neighbors and collaborators," said **Kyle Rosenkrans, Executive Director of the New Jersey Children's Foundation**, the group that authored the analysis.

"The bottom line is that a larger share of Newark kids are reading and doing math on grade level again this year, and in so doing, they show the rest of the state and the country what's possible."

Newark's education system has undergone a transformation over the last decade-plus. Notable amongst the changes was growing the city's charter sector from just 7 percent of the students in 2006 to nearly 40% in 2019. The impact of those transformations was catalogued in [a June 2019 report by New Jersey Children's Foundation and Margrady Research titled "A New Baseline."](#)

The new data covers the first full school year under new Superintendent Roger Leon--the first school district leader selected by the city's elected board of education in decades. Leon has rolled back several changes put in place while the district was under state control, but has maintained a collaborative relationship with the city's growing public charter school sector.

Notable findings from the foundation's analysis of the scores include:

Newark Charters Beating the State Again: Newark’s public charter school students posted stand out results, besting New Jersey’s statewide average for the second consecutive year--a notable feat in a state that was [recently ranked number one in public education](#). 53 percent of public charter school students were proficient in ELA and Math this year, continuing their work to reverse the achievement gap for Newark kids who are more than twice as likely to be from low income, black and hispanic households than the average New Jersey student.

Combined ELA-Math Proficiency Averages: 2019 Grades 3-8			
Grouping	% Proficient	% Low Income	% Black & Hispanic
Newark Charter Schools	52.9%	84%	98%
NJ State Average	51.5%	38%	44%

The charter school results are consistent with [research that ranked Newark’s charter sector as number two in America](#), second only to Boston’s which is stifled by a charter school cap.

Citywide Trends Continue to Point Up: The citywide average of math and reading test scores across all district and charter school students showed improvement yet again this year. This measure has improved every year since the state began using new, more rigorous learning standards five years ago.

Citywide Combined ELA-Math Average: Grades 3-8					
Grouping	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Newark District & Charter Schools	27.6%	32.4%	36.6%	38.7%	39.2%

Key components of the test changed for 2019, which some have attributed to the slower overall rate of improvement--as is common with such transitions. While the rate of improvement may have slowed, the increase in the percentage of proficient students citywide is likely attributable to the growing overall number of students in the city’s high-performing charter school sector. A more detailed breakdown of proficiency rates in math and reading shows that Newark’s schools largely followed the statewide pattern of slower increases in proficiency.

Historical ELA-Math Proficiency In Newark: Grades 3-8										
Grouping	ELA					Math				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Newark Charter Average	46%	52%	56%	60%	60%	40%	43%	46%	48%	46%
Newark District Average	22%	29%	33%	35%	36%	19%	23%	26%	26%	27%
Newark Citywide Average	30%	37%	41%	44%	45%	26%	29%	33%	33%	34%
NJ State Average	50%	53%	56%	58%	58%	40%	45%	46%	45%	45%

About the New Jersey Children’s Foundation:

The New Jersey Children’s Foundation is a non-profit organization aimed at promoting a fact-based discussion about public education in Newark. Our mission is to invest in people, programs, and partnerships that will improve public education systems by putting the interests of children first. Our vision is that every child will break down the walls of inequity through the creation of high-quality public education systems. Our theory of change is that when communities are armed with accurate information about public education and given the tools to act, cities will demand great schools for every student.

###