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PRESS ALERT

FROM THE NEW JERSEY CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

For Immediate Release

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CHARTER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION COMMENTS ON REACH CHARTER SCHOOL CLOSING

(4/20/2000) The New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association today welcomed Commissioner of Education David Hespe's decision to revoke the charter of the REACH Charter High School in Egg Harbor Township, but the charter group noted the loss to the children. "Charter schools are all about accountability," said Executive Director Sarah Tantillo. We are saddened that the children in the REACH Charter School are losing their preferred choice, but we are very serious about the quality of all charters and welcome the accountability that allows troubled schools to close."

Currently, 46 other charter schools are in operation in New Jersey, serving nearly 9,000 students, with another 20 approved to open in the next two years. "According to our research, most of the charter schools in New Jersey are doing exceptionally well in providing academic rigor, highly focused programs, and exciting new choices for students, parents, and educators," said Tantillo. And the demand for these schools continues to expand." More than 3,000 students are on waiting lists statewide.

Most of the 200 students from REACH are returning to high schools in the Atlantic City and Pleasantville districts, where less than 50 percent of the 11th-graders have passed all three sections of the state-mandated High School Proficiency Assessment in recent years.

Nationally, since the first charter schools opened in 1992, the charter school movement has spread to 36 states plus the District of Columbia, with nearly 1,700 schools in operation serving nearly a half million children. To date, under three percent of charters (about 70 schools) nationwide have been revoked, according to the Washington, DC-based Center for Education Reform. All but a handful were closed for fiscal reasons.

"The New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association will be working with every charter in the state to maintain the high standards and responsiveness that is their hallmark," said Sarah Tantillo. Charter schools have accepted the challenge of meeting performance contracts and we stand by the concept that only successful public schools should be open to serve children."

For more information about charter schools, evidence of success and closures, go to:

www.njisi.org
www.charterfriends.org
www.edreform.com