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NJPCSA Applauds Governor Murphy for Signing Landmark Public Charter School Facilities Funding Legislation

NEW JERSEY – January 17, 2024 – The New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association (NJPCSA) today applauded Governor Phil Murphy for signing historic legislation, A4496/S3247, which establishes the Public Charter and Renaissance School Facilities Loan Program in the Economic Development Authority (EDA) for public charter and renaissance schools in Schools Development Authority (SDA) districts. The bill is the first-ever funding framework for New Jersey’s public charter schools since their inception 26 years ago, and will allow schools located in SDA districts to make critical upgrades to charter school facilities, start new charter school construction projects, or perform major renovation and rehabilitation projects.

“With Governor Murphy’s action today, New Jersey is taking a monumental step toward equity for public charter schools who will finally have a state funding solution for much-needed projects to replace broken boilers and air conditioning systems, fix leaky roofs, repair classrooms that have flooded, and create space in century-old buildings in our most under resourced communities,” **said Harry Lee, President and CEO of NJPCSA.** “Today’s bill signing is truly a watershed moment for the New Jersey public charter school community and could not have been achieved without the support of our legislative champions. As the 221st Legislative Session begins, we will continue to work with the Legislature and Governor to make sure that public charter school students are fairly funded and have access to safe, clean, modern buildings so that they can reach their fullest potential.”

New Jersey was previously a national outlier without a dedicated mechanism for funding public charter schools’ facility improvement and building construction needs. The new EDA low-interest revolving loan program will allow public charter schools in SDA districts to fund new construction, critical facility upgrades, and major renovation and rehabilitation projects.

“As part of our renewed commitment to public school facilities, I’m pleased our new law includes a low-cost, statewide loan program for charter and renaissance school capital needs,” **said Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin (D-Middlesex).** “After increasing school

aid to a record level in last year's state budget, we want to help all districts with effective, efficient strategies and resources for modernizing and constructing campuses for our state's kids."

"All students deserve to learn in a modern facility with access to tools that help them learn and grow to their fullest. This measure marks a significant and necessary change to the way the state helps our districts make essential improvements to their schools, and build new ones. I am pleased that the collaborative engagement of so many individuals and stakeholders resulted in a law that will benefit children throughout the state and I am grateful to the Governor for his support," **said Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt (D-Camden, Burlington).**

NJPCSA, on behalf of the 60,000 students in public charter schools, offers their heartfelt thanks to the following prime sponsors of bill A4496/S3247 for their leadership in advancing educational equity for all students: Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin, Assembly Education Chairwoman Pamela Lampitt, Assemblymen Rob Karabinchak and Benjie Wimberly, and Senators Andrew Zwicker and Linda Greenstein.

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About Public Charter Schools

Charter schools are tuition-free public schools run by non-profit organizations open to all students regardless of zip code, race/ethnicity or ability level. Charter schools operate with more flexibility than traditional public schools in exchange for increased accountability and high financial, academic and managerial standards by an authorizer. A "charter" is a contract with an authorizer detailing the school's mission, program, performance goals and methods of assessments. In New Jersey, the New Jersey Department of Education serves as the sole authorizer and oversees all public charter schools in the state.

About the New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association

The New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association (NJPCSA) is the non-profit membership association that represents the state's public charter school community and, by extension, charter school students and their parents. There are currently 85 public charter schools in New Jersey serving more than 60,000 students. We are committed to advancing quality public education for New Jersey's children through the cultivation of excellent public charter schools. The Association seeks to influence legislative and policy environments, leverage collective advocacy, and provide resources to support our members in developing and operating high quality, public charter schools.