

# The One Newark Plan

## FEBRUARY UPDATE | FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Our administration has and will continue to focus on creating an environment where all Newark students are in excellent schools. In order to reach all students, charters and other educational partners must be aligned to one clear city-wide goal and our individual success must be defined by our collective success.

- Much like every city has a “master plan”, we knew we needed one for our schools. We got to work compiling achievement data, data about what families want and are demanding, enrollment trends, population trends, building quality information, charter growth, projections of building deterioration, and neighborhood revitalization plans.
- Through monthly stakeholder roundtables and School Advisory Board (SAB) meetings, we shared data as quickly as it was compiled.
- Last Spring, we gathered as a city to launch a bold idea: One Newark – a community-wide agenda to ensure all students are in excellent schools and thriving communities and are on the path to excel in college and 21st century careers.
- Once we felt we had plans that could solve seemingly impossible challenges and competing forces, we took them to those directly impacted first: principals, faculty and families.
- We briefed SAB members, principals, conducted family meetings, and hosted faculty meetings at 15 schools – we hosted nearly 100 meetings in the two weeks before the winter break. Concurrently, we worked to inform and invest other stakeholders on the specifics through our roundtables and one-on-ones.
- We trained community-based partners on how to use One Newark Enrolls and hosted family meetings at every school about the new enrollment system.
- We listened intently to the feedback we were getting and the following things became clear: we need to keep focused on solving the challenges, keep working to attain our goals, and make key adjustments based on the input we receive.

## ONE NEWARK

- 1. What are the five characteristics of the 20 “good” schools?** Research confirms that successful schools, with high levels of achievement, share the same five characteristics:
  - Great School Leader
  - Excellent Teachers
  - Clear Mission and Vision
  - Safe Building with Flexible Resources
  - Engaged Students and Families
- 2. How will my child be better off because of these changes?** We aim to create a system that has high quality school options for all students in Newark from which they can choose. New is not always better, but it is unacceptable to allow our students to remain in schools that are not meeting their needs. We will work hard to ensure that all new schools have all five of the winning ingredients – Mission & Vision, Great School Leader, Excellent Teachers, Safe Building and Excited Families/Students – from day one. In some cases, we will start from scratch to develop new schools,

and in the case of our consolidations, we will work with the school communities to create a best fit and best-in-class education experience for our students.

3. **What's next? How can I shape my child's school for next year?** Beginning this week, Central Office and community partners will begin extensive community engagement at the Charter Launches and comprehensive high school campuses to ensure students and their families fully understand their enrollment options. Throughout the spring and summer, staff and school community members from impacted schools will become part of planning teams and have the opportunity to provide input on various parts of the plan.

## CHARTER LAUNCHES

1. **What is a charter launch?** Charter launches transform schools previously operated as district schools into charter-operated schools. Many of our charter partners have a stronger track record of success compared to NPS – even when you compare across subgroups. **This plan does not add new charter seats** – it redirects charter growth plans to neighborhoods most in need of – and demanding – innovation. Currently, approximately 8,000 students are in public charter schools and 10,000 families are on waiting lists. In the South ward alone, 40% of families are applying for charters. As one example, many of families at Bragaw Avenue, which will become a TEAM Charter Launch, are on TEAM's waiting list.
2. **Is this about selling charters NPS buildings?** No. Charter Launches transform previously district operated schools into charter-operated schools. We are pursuing Charter Launches because:
  - Charters have a stronger track record of success compared to NPS – even when you compare across subgroups.
    - NPS-run elementary schools in the South and West wards have a reading proficiency rate of about 30%.
    - Charter elementary schools, specifically TEAM, North Star, and Newark Legacy, are nearly doubles that.
    - Charter students in Newark gain an additional seven and a half months of learning in reading and nine months in math compared to their NPS peers.
  - These are **not** new seats. Charter Launches align with already approved growth plans of each charter partner; unlike years prior, NPS and charter partners are coordinating where schools open based on the needs of neighborhoods.
    - In previous years, many new charter schools were built downtown, leaving some of the poorest wards – primarily in the South and West – with even fewer students in crumbling buildings.
  - Charter Launches are redirecting charter growth plans to neighborhoods most in need of – *and demanding* – innovation.
    - All NPS K-8s in the South ward and all but one K-8 in the West ward are classified as low performing.
    - Currently, approximately 8,000 students are in public charter schools and 10,000 families are on waiting lists. In the South ward alone, 40% of families are applying for charters.
3. **I am a student currently at a school that will launch a charter in 2014. Am I guaranteed admission to the charter launch next year?** Students who currently attend schools that are impacted by charter launches will have a high preference to remain in the charter launch or attend

another school of their choice should they prefer to attend other schools and apply through the One Newark Enrolls process. Though there is not a guarantee to a charter launch school in the same way that there is no guarantee to a seat in a charter school now, the system is designed in such a way to provide a high preference for those families who would like to remain at the charter launch.

4. **Why these charter partners?** One goal of One Newark is to ensure that each student has high quality school options – regardless of the neighborhood that they live in. We know that the selected charter partners are providing high quality options for families. For more information, please see <http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/domain/2323>. All charter partners involved in charter launches have committed to the following:
  - A common accountability system that is fair, transparent, and prioritizes student outcomes and limits student mobility;
  - Equitable access to high quality schools options for all students in every neighborhood through participation in One Newark Enrolls;
  - Leading extensive community engagement with Charter Launch schools and preserving the original names of each school;
  - Investing in building upgrades and renovations; and
  - Deeper collaboration with NPS to ensure systematic sharing of effective practices across schools.
5. **I thought NPS was not supporting new charters. Are these new seats?** The charter launches align with the already approved growth of each of the charters. The charter launches for the 2014-2015 school year do not add new charter seats, but rather redirect the charter seats that were planned to be open to meet the needs of Newark students.
  - **What will community involvement look like at these schools?** Charter partners have committed to leading extensive community engagement with Charter Launch schools. Beginning this week, Central Office and community partners will begin extensive community engagement at the Charter Launches and comprehensive high school campuses to ensure students and their families fully understand their enrollment options. Charter Launch partners and NPS will hold family meetings at Alexander Street, Madison Avenue, Newton Street, Bragaw Avenue, and Hawthorne Avenue. In addition, NPS will host One Newark Enrolls trainings at each school site for families. Throughout the spring and summer, staff and school community members from impacted schools will become part of planning teams and have the opportunity to provide input on various parts of the plan.
6. **How will these charter partners ensure that schools remain identity and culture?** To ensure that each school maintains their identity and culture – rooted in the community in which they serve students – each charter launch will retain the school name and other features that may be important to the school community. Current staff, including leaders, teachers and others, will have the opportunity to apply for positions at the school, if they choose.
7. **How will students apply for these schools?** Students who may have the opportunity to stay at the charter launch and would like a seat will apply through the One Newark Enrolls process. The student will be able to select the charter launch from the list of available school options and order the charter launch in whatever place they would like on their application.
8. **How will leadership be chosen for charter launches?** Charter partners will continue to use their interview processes to select school leaders. Current NPS staff may choose to apply.

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## HIGH SCHOOLS

1. **Will the school names and colors change at Shabazz, Weequahic, and West Side?** To ensure that each school maintains their identity and culture – rooted in the community in which they serve students – each high school will retain the school name and other features that may be important to the school community.
2. **Will Shabazz, Weequahic, and West Side remain neighborhood schools or will students have a city-wide choice?** Similar to last year’s High School Admissions Process (HSAP), high school students can select schools in their neighborhood and across the city through One Newark Enrolls. The placement of students in schools is reflective of the school choices that they list on their One Newark Enrolls application. Should students want to remain in their neighborhood to attend school, they should list those schools that they would like to attend in their neighborhood.
3. **What will happen to Newark Vocational?** Newark Vocational High School career and technology offerings will continue at the West Side Campus over the next three years. Over time, new innovative career and technical education sequences will be added. Current Newark Vocational High School students may continue at Westside or make other choices through One Newark enrolls.
4. **What will community involvement look like at Shabazz, Weequahic, and West Side?** Throughout the spring and summer, staff and school community members from impacted schools will become part of planning teams and have the opportunity to provide input on various parts of the plan.
  - Individual counseling sessions will take place with students and families at Newark Early College, Newark Vocational, and West Side HS to ensure families are aware of their options and are prepared to make the best school choice for their child.
  - Every student and family at Newark Bridges will participate in an individualized placement conference to determine whether the Shabazz campus or another school is the best school/campus to meet his/her needs.

## WHAT FAMILIES NEED TO KNOW

K-8 SCHOOL UPDATES	FAMILY ACTION
<p><b>Newark Legacy at Madison</b> (School Snapshot: <a href="http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/domain/2323">http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/domain/2323</a>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All Madison families</b> must submit a One Newark Enrolls application.</li> <li>• Families will have preference to Newark Legacy at Madison or their top-ranked district or charter schools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>North Star Alexander Elementary School</b> (School Snapshot: <a href="http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/domain/2323">http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/domain/2323</a>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alexander families with <b>K-4<sup>th</sup> grade students</b> must submit a One Newark Enrolls application.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Families will have preference to North Star Alexander Elementary School or their other top-choice schools through One Newark Enrolls.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Alexander families with <b>5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders</b> must submit a One Newark Enrolls application and will have preference to their top-ranked district or charter schools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Life Academy at Bragaw Avenue</b> (School Snapshot: <a href="http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/domain/2323">http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/domain/2323</a>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bragaw families with <b>K-4<sup>th</sup> grade students</b> must submit a One Newark Enrolls application.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Families will have preference to Life Academy at Bragaw or their other top-choice schools.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Bragaw families with <b>5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders</b> must submit a One Newark Enrolls application and will have preference to their top-ranked district or charter schools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>BRICK at Hawthorne</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hawthorne families with <b>K-4<sup>th</sup> grade students</b> can continue at Hawthorne or participate in One Newark Enrolls.</li> <li>• Hawthorne families with <b>5<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> graders</b> will have preference to their top-ranked district or charter school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Newton Street</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All Newton families</b> must submit a One Newark Enrolls application and will have preference to their top-ranked district or charter schools.</li> </ul>
HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUSES	FAMILY ACTION
<p><b>Weequahic Campus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weequahic High School</li> <li>• Eagle Academy</li> <li>• Girls Academy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current <b>Weequahic High School</b> students may continue at the school or participate in One Newark Enrolls.</li> <li>• Current <b>Eagle Academy</b> students may continue at the school or participate in One Newark Enrolls.</li> <li>• Current <b>Girls' Academy</b> students may continue at the school or participate in One Newark Enrolls.</li> </ul>
<p><b>West Side Campus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newark Early College</li> <li>• Newark Vocational CTE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current <b>Newark Early College</b> students may continue at the school or participate in One Newark Enrolls.</li> <li>• Current <b>Newark Vocational High School</b> students may continue at West Side or participate in One Newark Enrolls.</li> <li>• Current <b>West Side</b> students may continue at the West Campus or participate in One Newark Enrolls.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Malcolm X. Shabazz Campus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shabazz High School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current Shabazz High School students may continue at the school or participate in One Newark Enrolls.</li> </ul>