

# Newark Charter School Fund

12 Years of Success Transforming  
Education Through Innovation and  
Collaboration

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# Foreword

**from Mayor Ras J. Baraka**

Newark is a remarkable community working collectively to achieve a strong future for today's youth. There is no greater investment that we can make than to ensure that every child can become healthy and successful adults. Every day, we see the passion, potential and energy of our youth but we also face and must act upon the personal and societal challenges being placed on them as they navigate their lives. My entire life has been committed to ensuring that children have the ability to reach their full potential. My work as a Newark teacher and principal has brought me the greatest blessing of being able to educate our youth and ultimately enhance and improve their lives. Today, as Mayor, my approach is identical with a more comprehensive and strategic approach by creating a culture of true collaboration in our city that utilizes every tool and resource to teach and empower children and their families in every neighborhood.

Strong institutions and organizations across the City of Newark are working collectively to achieve this vision and make sure every child taps into their immeasurable and vast potential. For the past 12 years, our partners at the Newark Charter School Fund (NCSF) have been working towards that vision by creating innovative school options for our students. Through NCSF's strategic collaboration with Newark Public Schools, academic achievements in Newark are improving everyday. Through high-quality learning, we are attaining higher test scores, improved class attendance and bold improvements in key areas to ensure that Newark's youth have the greatest access to their highest level of educational attainment.

One of the many things that I can truly appreciate about the NCSF is that they understand that the success of our students is not a singular effort. This is why, I was pleased to be part of a collaborative effort with NCSF and other community leaders to help transition the city to more local control of our education system. This included supporting and helping elect members on the “Moving Newark Schools Forward” slate to the Newark Public Schools Board.

I am more than happy that one of those new school board members is A’Dorian Murray-Thomas, a graduate of public charter schools, who was named a White House Champion of Change when Barack Obama was President. Today, she successfully runs a Newark nonprofit aimed at empowering young girls and creating Newark’s future leaders.

Thankfully, we are blessed in Newark to have so many willing partners working together, side by side, to accomplish one mission--helping every child realize their full potential, while at the same time making sure they get the love, support and services they need.

However, while our education system has vastly improved, we cannot lose sight of the fact that measuring success cannot be found in test scores alone. We must look beyond the walls of the classroom to ensure that we are helping students meet their physical, social and environmental needs both in school and in the communities where they live. We must simultaneously ensure that we engage and provide opportunities and support for those students who may be disconnected for various reasons from school and our growing workforce. There is no straight path in life but we can help create a path to success for all children.

Finally, we must not only prepare our students for college and ultimately a successful and rewarding job but also encourage continuing education at any age to pursue life-long learning opportunities. Our anchor institutions such as New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) and Rutgers-Newark are centers of educational excellence and learning that should be afforded every student. This is why I started a City partnership with our institutions to help every student take advantage of opportunities that are right at our doorstep. While we have accomplished much together, there is still much more work to do. I’m excited for the challenges and know we will meet them and be victorious because of our unwavering commitment to each other and with the help of many partners and leaders like NCSF, we will continue to put Newark’s children first.





# Foreword

**from Superintendent Roger León**

As a lifelong Newark resident, I have had the great privilege of working in our city’s education system, both as a teacher and now as Superintendent of the Newark Board of Education. In both capacities, I can tell you that when it comes to providing a strong education for our city’s children, it begins with a singular focus—the children.

I call them “the heartbeat” in our schools.

To that end, I believe that any group or organization that is going to play a critical role in helping to prepare our children for the future has to have, as the bedrock of its mission and purpose, the best interests of children, their parents and families in mind.

**Our city’s charter school system has certainly played a pivotal, leading role in this effort, thanks to the vision, hard work and dedication of the Newark Charter School Fund (NCSF).+**

For 12 years, NCSF has worked tirelessly alongside other nonprofit and community leaders in Newark to ensure that when it comes to choosing the best school for their child, parents - and not Trenton - know best. I believe 100% that families should be in control of these decisions, and that is a reality that should be here to stay.

Another critical part of strengthening our education system is ensuring that all stakeholders are working together in unison because when it comes to educating our children, no one can go it alone.

When I became Superintendent over a year ago, I was impressed by some of the initiatives in charter schools, especially when it came to student mentoring, intervention and preparing our 8th graders for high school. It also became abundantly clear to me as I saw this work firsthand that if Newark is going to experience a new Renaissance in education, then there needs to be more collaboration between all stakeholders, including the traditional public and charter school sectors working together in harmony.

To that end, I am proud to have worked with the charter sector. For example, last year I sent some of our guidance counselors to a training class in Texas so that they could sharpen their skills related to helping high school students pick the right college or university. That program was led by one of our Newark public charter schools.

I have also worked to keep intact Newark's universal enrollment system, "Newark Enrolls," so that parents have one centralized online portal to register for school, whether that be a charter or traditional public school.

And, my "Clarity 2020" plan for the District calls for greater collaboration with parochial, private and charter schools and to develop protocols to ensure that collaboration takes place.

There is no question that the creation and expansion of the Newark charter school system has played a critical role in improving education in the city, with NCSF helping to lead that charge. Now that education is back in local control and there is a new plan in place to strengthen education in new and exciting ways, I look forward to continue working with the charter sector so that we can all achieve the same goal -- one of ensuring every student has access to a high-quality school and empowering parents with the tools and resources to help make those decisions.

# Introduction

by Michele Mason

## After a Decade of Success, Newark Charter School Fund Celebrates Its Sunset

Over the last decade, the Brick City has seen a transformation in its education system, and we are proud to have played an important role in this effort by working to create a high-quality charter school sector. Additionally, we have worked collaboratively with public school and community leaders across Newark to ensure that all stakeholders are working in concert to give every student an education that will help put them on a path to future success. As a result, important barometers such as test scores and graduation rates have greatly improved for both charter and traditional public schools. With our education system back in local control, community stakeholders are charting a new course to build upon this progress and ensure that it continues for all of our students. This includes calling for more collaboration between all schools in the city.



At the Newark Charter School Fund (NCSF), we have reached a point in our growth where we are excited to see that greater collaboration among all stakeholders has begun to sustain the progress that has been made and to help ensure that every student in Newark has access to a good school and high-quality education.

To that end, In December of this year, NCSF will be concluding its public work in order to help empower other local stakeholders in their work towards a citywide vision for a high-quality education for all Newark children.

Founded in 2008, NCSF was created to address an urgent need—meeting the demand for high-quality school options for Newark students. Shortly after charter schools came into existence in New Jersey in the late 1990’s, [less than 1% of the school age population was enrolled in charter schools](#). Today, [over 35% of public school students in Newark attend charter schools](#).

NCSF led the charter sector to signing the Newark Charter School Compact, an agreement between diverse charter schools in the city to adhere to a common set of principles including collaborating as a charter sector and with Newark Public Schools, and elevating the voice



of parents and families. This agreement, the first of its kind in the country, formalized the sector's commitment to kids, and the 8th Compact will be signed this December.

And, the results speak for themselves.

**In fact, according to a June 2019 report, Newark's charters have shown particularly strong test score gains, and in 2018, they beat the state proficiency rate for the first time in both math and ELA.**

After four years, 88% of charter students attend high-quality schools where more than 50% of students are proficient in English Language Arts (ELA) Standards and Math. A 2015 Stanford University study found Newark's charter sector rated as the second highest performing in the country.

Thankfully, a majority of Newark residents agree that improving education and educational choice is important. In a [recent survey](#) of Newark residents, "respondents said they agreed with the statement that 'public charter schools are an important part of the public school landscape in Newark' by a two-to-one margin. [The survey](#) also found that "nearly 90% of Newark voters agree (with two-thirds of all voters in strong agreement) that families should have even high-quality school options, including public charter schools."

Former NCSF CEO, Mashea Ashton, to whom we owe a great deal of credit for this success, said of these accomplishments, "I am extremely proud of the hard work, commitment and contributions of the NCSF leadership and staff to help significantly grow the charter sector in Newark to what it is today. As a former teacher and now operator of a charter school, I have witnessed the positive impact these schools can have on students, parents and communities. As the charter sector continues to grow, we must also continue to work to ensure that the charter and traditional public school sector is working collaboratively so that every child has access to a high-quality education."

Most notably, NCSF has helped to empower the local community. The Fund was an active partner in not only the transition to local control, but also in recent Board elections. We have worked to ensure a strong universal enrollment system that provides families the opportunity to make the best educational decisions for their children. We have worked closely with other local leaders to ensure the success of their education initiatives. This includes being a part of the Children's Cabinet and the #NewarkReads literacy campaign.

Now, as the education landscape continues to evolve, we believe that the time has come to shift the focus of the education conversation in Newark away from one about district schools versus charter schools, to a more holistic conversation about ensuring that we continue to build an entire system of great schools. We believe the best way forward is to transition the duties of NCSF to other nonprofits and public sector partners that have a broader focus and can carry the baton to improve collaboration and school quality. We are proud to see this work already well underway with initiatives like Newark City of Learning Collaborative's 25% by 2025 and the work of the Education Funders Affinity Group with Newark's Philanthropic Liaison, Kevin Callaghan.

In Newark and across our state, we are blessed with a strong network of partners who share our passion and vision of ensuring every student has access to a high-quality education, which ensures that the work lives on outside of any individual organization. I especially want to thank the organizations that have provided generous financial support to help NCSF carry out its mission to improve high-quality outcomes for students and families across the city of Newark.

They include the Prudential Foundation, The Walton Family Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Doris and Donald Fisher Fund, Victoria Foundation, The Robertson Foundation, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, GEM Foundation and the MCJ Amelior Foundation.

Certainly, this is a bittersweet moment. However, we are mindful that regardless of the goals that have been reached, when it comes to educating our children, no mission is ever accomplished. So, while we believe the time has come to empower a new generation of district and nonprofit leaders to build upon our successful work, I am confident that NCSF's vision to serve Newark students and their families will continue to live on through the efforts of others for years to come.

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Michele Mason

# My Charter School is Helping to Prepare Me for College and My Professional Future

by Kyla Williams

*Eighth-grader at Link Community Charter School*



*“I’m ready to work and excited to see my dreams come true!”*

The best part of going to Link is having teachers who make their students want to learn. Each student gets plenty of one-on-one, personal attention too. The teachers here are also very hands-on, which is important for me because it is hard to stay focused when there are a lot of distractions in class.

My favorite subject is English Language Arts (ELA) and my second-favorite class is math. I actually used to struggle with writing — but since my teachers have spent a lot of time helping us practice essays, I now feel more confident in language arts. I am enjoying ELA a lot and am excited about where these skills can take me as I start to look at high schools.

I think it is important that I go to a good high school. Another reason why I love Link is that they have a program designed to help place students in competitive high schools. The staff at Link helps us look into a range of schools to help us find the best match. My top choice is Worcester Academy in Massachusetts, which is a boarding school.

After graduation, I want to become a pediatric nurse. To help me prepare for my professional future, Link started an after-school program that brings pre-med college students in to speak with students interested in medicine. This has helped me learn about working in hospitals. We learn how to use equipment, what it is like to work with doctors and all about different diseases and conditions. A lot of the graduates who help with the program are also from New Jersey, and so they can relate to us.



# Executive Summary

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In 2008, Newark's public schools were struggling. Most of the city's students were underperforming, few were pursuing postsecondary opportunities, and hardly any could opt for alternative educational options. Charter schools, which came into existence in the Garden State in the late 1990s to widen education options for students, were struggling as well. Charter school enrollment went from 1% at their creation to just 8% in 2008. This was due to limited space and inefficient enrollment systems.

Urgent and fundamental change was needed.

To help address the community's serious demand for high-quality school options, the Newark Charter School Fund was created. At the outset, NCSF's goal was to ensure every child had access to a better education, regardless of their family's ZIP code.

## Uniting the Charter Community

NCSF's vision was founded on a common set of key principles:

- To serve all students in the city, especially the highest-need students who require special education services, students who are English Language Learners, students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, and other under-served and at-risk populations.
- To ensure transparency and accountability in schools' efforts to meet high expectations.
- To collaborate with one another and with the city to improve educational options and outcomes.
- To elevate the voices of parents and families as key stakeholders



Under these foundational pillars, the Fund established the Newark Charter School Compact. Every year since 2011, Newark charter schools have re-signed this contract, cementing themselves as a bedrock for collaborative advocacy — with the education sector, the philanthropic community, legislative leaders and other key stakeholders — to give parents more choice and control over their child’s education.

## **Growing the Charter Sector**

Over the past 12 years, the Fund’s work has fundamentally helped reform the city’s education system by fostering the growth of high-quality public charter schools — and because of these efforts, the sector has quadrupled in size within the last 8 years. Today, 35% of Newark’s public school students are now enrolled in charter schools. There are 44 charter school campuses in the city, and there are three times more black students in Newark schools who beat the state average in academic benchmarks.

## **Driving Political Support**

When NCSF began its work, one of the most daunting hurdles to overcome was working under New Jersey’s state-mandated control of Newark’s public schools. Through its support of a coalition of civic groups and leaders, however, NCSF eventually helped transform Newark’s school system as control of education moved from Trenton back to the Brick City. This included working closely with other local leaders to ensure the success of city education initiatives, like the Children’s Cabinet and the #NewarkReads literacy campaign. As a result of this collaboration, there is a recognition now that charter schools are here and here to stay.

For example, new School Superintendent Roger León’s ten-year education plan for the City stresses increased cooperation between Newark’s schools and closer partnership with the community and outside organizations needed to ensure the city maintains local control.

Additionally, NCSF, with the backing of Mayor Ras J. Baraka, helped to successfully put the first charter school advocate on the local school board. A testament to these efforts can be found in the election of new school board member A’Dorian Murray-Thomas. A graduate of KIPP public charter schools, Ms. Murray-Thomas was named a White House Champion of Change by former President Barack Obama. Today, she runs a Newark nonprofit that aims to empower young girls. Ms. Murray-Thomas and like-minded individuals continue to protect the initial investment in high-quality schools that NCSF started 12 years ago.

## Results

As the charter sector continued to grow, NCSF remained committed to ensuring that there were results to show as well. They are quite impressive.

- After four years, 88% of charter students attended high-quality schools where more than 50% of students were proficient in math and English language arts.
- In 2015, Stanford University's CREDO study ranked Newark's charter sector as second of 41 cities across the country in terms of academic impact and achievement.
- Also in 2015, the Center on Reinventing Public Education found that more than 86% of Newark charter students are enrolled in schools considered to be "beating the odds" in math, and 76% are enrolled in schools "beating the odds" in reading.
- In 2018, Newark's charter schools beat the New Jersey state average for the first time in both reading and math scores, outperforming hundreds of districts that serve much wealthier student populations than those served by charter schools in Newark.
- Education outcomes have also improved across the City of Newark as a whole. A number of studies show that low-income and minority students in Newark not only outperform the majority of their peers in similar districts in New Jersey, but that Newark's students are some of the highest performing in the country for their demographics.

These statistics prove the powerful and lasting effects when all stakeholders get together and act in a collaborative manner.

Today, nearly 90% of Newark voters agree that families should have even more access to a range of school options, including public charter schools. At NCSF, we realized that despite these successes, there was more to be done to ensure we were working to educate all of Newark's students. This required partners who shared our vision.



## **Collaborative Successes**

NCSF has successfully partnered with the school district's leadership, the philanthropic community and key stakeholders to completely transform Newark's educational landscape to ensure that whether a student went to a charter or traditional public school, they were getting a high-quality education.

One of NCSF's greatest accomplishments in this area was in helping to create Newark Enrolls, a one-stop universal enrollment platform to help ensure all families have access to the full range of the city's schools, both traditional public and public charter. This system quickly streamlined the enrollment process for thousands of families, who are now able to examine all available schools to ensure they meet their child's educational and personal needs without gaming the system or having to visit multiple registration sites.

Thanks to the leadership of Superintendent of Schools, Roger León, the program is now in its sixth year.

## **Professional Development**

Recognizing how invaluable teachers and school leaders are in inspiring student success across the board, NCSF partnered with numerous organizations to ensure that Newark's schools were staffed with the best talent. NCSF worked with the Relay Graduate School of Education to provide further training to current school principals, while The New Teachers Center and the National Academy of Advanced Teacher Education provided professional development for both new and experienced teachers. Through partnership with Teach for America-NJ, specialized teachers were placed throughout Newark's neediest schools to provide more individualized instruction. In collaboration with Schools That Can (STC), NCSF united teachers across the district in professional development programming on Common Core and PARCC implementation, best practices sharing, special education, technology, and English Language Learners.

Future initiatives, like Newark City of Learning Collaborative's 25% by 2025, which aims to increase the proportion of Newark residents with a degree or credential beyond high school to 25% by 2025, and the work of the Education Founders Infinity Group, will no doubt lead to greater and more expansive successes for the students of Newark for years to come.

## Conclusion

Now that our initial goals have been achieved and the charter sector is mature, we believe the time is right for NCSF to pass the baton to a new generation of leaders and organizations in Newark that are positioned to focus on a new and important goal—having the charter sector work even more collaboratively with city government leaders and the Newark Public Schools to make sure every student’s educational needs are met.

NCSF considers its greatest success to be in meeting the needs of parents and students across the city by expanding the quality and scope of their educational options. By transitioning NCSF’s duties to other nonprofits and public sector partners, the conversation will now shift to a more holistic conversation about creating a comprehensive system of great schools in the city of Newark.

NCSF is proud to have played a key role in improving education in Newark over the past 12 years, and we are confident and excited for the future that lies ahead.





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# Thanks to “Newark Enrolls,” My Two Children Found a Second Home in a Charter School

by Keisha Tyson

*Proud parent of fourth-grader and kindergartner at Marion P. Thomas Charter School*



For today’s parents, finding the right school can be very challenging. More and more, families are looking for schools that prioritize their students’ holistic needs; a school’s health and safety measures are just as important as academic offerings. It’s key, too, for today’s families to have flexible educational options, like after-school programs, that match their busy lifestyles.

For me, selecting a pre-kindergarten program with aftercare for my young daughter was a challenge right off the bat. Our local district school had two spots open, but didn’t offer aftercare. This eliminated it as an option for my family. I’m a working mom, and didn’t have a babysitter or family member to take care of my child every day until I returned home from work.

To help overcome this roadblock, I utilized Newark Enrolls, a universal online enrollment system, to narrow my search to schools that offered pre-kindergarten with aftercare options. Through this service, I found Marion P. Thomas Charter School, which was accepting new students. After visiting the school and speaking with administrators, I decided to register my daughter there.

My son struggled with speech therapy, and appreciated that his teachers and classmates never made him feel different or self-conscious about his learning style. My daughter enjoys being challenged in class, and Marion's curriculum is excellent.

Five years later, my daughter is a fourth-grader at Marion and loves being a part of the “family” of classmates, teachers, and staff. Her experience has been so positive that we chose to enroll our son there, too. He's in kindergarten now and is on the same campus as our fourth-grader! Whatever kind of learner your child is, the school will meet their unique needs. For our family, it was really important that the school had sufficient special education programming.

Though I initially chose the school because it met my family's lifestyle needs, our daughter stayed at Marion and our son enrolled there because of the unique learning environment and extensive resources. I think it's important for parents to have choices when it comes to their children's education — and perhaps more importantly, that they have access to information that helps them make the best decisions.

When my children spend most of their day at school, I need to have confidence and trust in the staff. Not only do they feel safe and happy, everyone — from the custodian, to the nurse, to the principal — is there for you. The staff takes an active presence in their students' lives, and they involve parents and keep families abreast of school news.

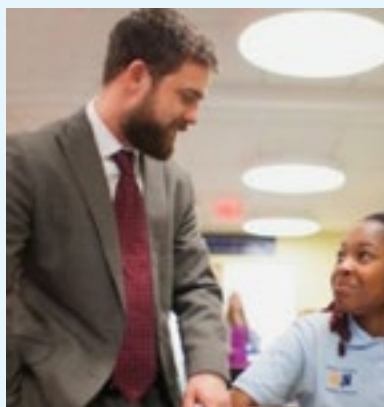
Marion is more than just a school. For my family, it is a home away from home. I'm so thankful my children have access to a safe, challenging environment where their full potential may be unlocked.



# Newark Charter Schools: Giving Teachers Autonomy to Help Meet Students' Diverse Needs

by Jared Taillefer

*Executive Director at The Great Oaks Legacy Charter School*



I have been teaching for more than a decade and could not be more grateful to work in Newark's charter school system. In this system, teachers enjoy greater flexibility in their classrooms and have more room for innovation. It is this autonomy that really attracted me to charter schools.

Soon after I founded Great Oaks Legacy Charter School, I witnessed the school continuously pushing the envelope in favor of a more effective educational model, to the benefit of all of its students.

The best part of working at Great Oaks is the ability to leverage our autonomy. We offer tutoring and support on the individual level and can cater to students' strengths and weaknesses. We even go so far as to meet the personal needs of students as well — assisting them when they face hardships at home. The teachers, administrators and staff have actually become mentors and guides to each of our students. That's what makes our school truly unique. We are a family.

We certainly would not be where we are without the support of the Newark Charter School Fund. NCSF's support helped Great Oaks Legacy get started and has been instrumental ever since in facilitating collaboration among our school, neighboring charters and traditional district schools. In the past nine years, NCSF has helped us with several fundraising and advocacy partnerships as well. Undoubtedly, their support propelled our school and other Newark charters to be some of the highest-performing in the nation.



I believe Newark is poised to become a national model for quality schools and diverse parent offerings. As the school district evolves, it is important that Newark's leaders in education maintain key collaborative partnerships that foster autonomy and accountability and include ALL schools in Newark. It is vital, too, that the city properly funds the upkeep of school facilities, special education programming and charter school expansion efforts. Progressive formulas and autonomous leadership is what helps students reach their full potential.

I'm so grateful for the opportunity to serve Newark's students as a leader, and I'm excited to stand alongside other charter leaders as we look to further contribute to ensuring Newark's bright future for years to come.

# The Path Forward

by Michele Mason

Now that the work of NCSF is coming to a close, it is time to continue to empower the community to continue the progress.

As enough of our initial goals have been achieved, it is the right time for organizations with different focus areas to step forward and carry out a new mission of how this high-quality charter sector can most effectively collaborate with city government leaders and the school district to ensure all schools provide a great educational experience for Newark children and their families.

Just because we are closing, however, does not mean in any way that our work to improve the charter sector is finished. Much work remains to ensure we continue to provide high-quality results for all students. That is why many of those individuals who have been part of NCSF's inception and growth the past 12 years, including myself, will continue to be a vibrant part of the Newark community at large.

Looking at the charter landscape ahead in Newark, I see the following opportunities:

First, we must ensure that there is more advocacy being done legislatively at the local and state levels so that policies now in place that allow charter schools to remain autonomous are protected. Advocacy and empowerment are greatly needed to elevate the voice of parents and help the charter sector remain vibrant and effective.

Second, we must ensure that we are aligning our goals and initiatives with city-wide goals. Newark City of Learning Collaborative's aim to increase the proportion of Newark residents with a higher education credential or degree to 25% by 2025 is one such important initiative.

Third, we must ensure that our charter leaders who are on the front lines everyday working to help make a difference in the lives of our children, continue to be empowered. Our work would not be possible without their insight and expertise and so we need to ensure that their voices

continue to be elevated. This is especially critical as we move toward this more holistic view of education and ensure that every student, regardless of school, is prepared for a successful future.

Finally, I want to make sure that we not only continue to recruit charter leaders who reflect the communities in which they serve, but also ensure that financial and other resources are made available to all charter schools, and not just the well-established ones.

For the last 12 years, we have truly witnessed a renaissance when it comes to improving education in the Brick City. It is not just reflected in better test results and graduation rates, but - just as importantly - in the individual success stories that so many of our students and teachers have to share. When I reflect on all that NCSF has helped to accomplish, in concert with city and other education groups and leaders who have a stake in the future of our children, I can say that rising tides can and do raise all boats.

As the torch is now seamlessly passed back to the community, I am truly honored and humbled by so many warm, caring and engaging people that I have met and worked with along this incredible journey.

I want to thank all the members, both present and past, who served on the NCSF Board of Directors. Their vision and leadership was so instrumental in driving our work and the success we attained in establishing a high-quality charter sector in Newark. I also want to again say a very special thank you to all of our national and local sponsors for their generous financial support over the years. They include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, the Doris and Donald Fisher Fund, the GEM Foundation, the MCJ Amelior Foundation, the Prudential Foundation, the Robertson Foundation, the Victoria Foundation, and the Walton Family Foundation.

While our supporters don't always make the headlines or get the accolades and recognition, they are committed and care deeply about ensuring that the light of Newark's future, our children, continues to shine brightly.

**Thank you for the opportunity to serve such a great city. I wish everyone all the best!**

# What Leaders Are Saying About NCSF



It has been remarkable to witness the positive transformation of Newark’s education system over the past decade, thanks, in part, to the work of the Newark Charter School Fund. This success certainly did not happen overnight, but I was fortunate to see firsthand how a dedicated group of individuals at NCSF worked tirelessly over the years to help give parents the freedom and choice to make education decisions that were in the best interest of their children. In its role as convener, NCSF was instrumental in ensuring both large CMO’s and individual operators were engaged in accelerating student achievement by sharing resources and coordinating activities, ultimately benefitting all students. I am proud of the way this organization has approached their purpose and mission with a collaborative mindset. I am confident NCSF’s legacy will live on in the work of other organizations committed to Newark’s bright future.

— **Shané Harris** *President, The Prudential Foundation*  
*Member of NCSF’s Board of Directors*



I’ve been involved in the Newark community in a number of capacities for decades, and I can testify to the amazing transformation NCSF initiated in this city with respect to improving education. I’m so proud of Michele and the rest of the Fund’s leadership, who worked tirelessly to make better education accessible for all Newark’s families. I’m confident, too, that our community will continue to thrive and uphold these standards as NCSF passes the baton.

— **Celia King** *Executive*  
*Director of Leadership Newark*



The Fund has served children in Newark with extraordinary results. I'm so proud of the years of leadership, vision and work of those involved in the Newark Charter School Fund, and I'm grateful that I was able to play a role in helping to launch it and raise resources for its work. Students in Newark across the board — whether they attend public charter schools or more traditional district schools — now have access to more high-performing educational options, and for the first time in a long time, the overall educational trend in Newark is robustly improving — thanks in no small part to the tireless work of the Newark Charter School Fund and its partners in excellence.

— **Cory Booker** *36th Mayor  
of Newark, junior United States Senator from New  
Jersey*



The Victoria Foundation worked closely with the Fund for many years and, through grants and other philanthropic partnerships, helped NCSF steer Newark's schools down the path of success. We're proud to have worked to expand educational offerings while upholding our mission to strengthen families, help children develop into healthy, creative adults, and promote civic engagement and leadership. Every child holds limitless potential — and they deserve limitless opportunities. Through the leadership and efforts of NCSF, Newark's children have the tools and resources to reach that potential.

— **Irene Cooper- Basch**  
*Executive Officer & Secretary of the Board of the  
Victoria Foundation*



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