

RECOVERY CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL - ABSTRACT NARRATIVE

Name and Location of School: Recovery Charter High School, Newark, NJ

Grade Levels: 9-12

Application status: Applied to NJ Department of Education in March 2010 and awaiting decision by September 30, 2010. Plan to open in September 2011.

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School Mission: The Recovery Charter High School will provide a safe, sober and supportive school environment where students in recovery and/or wishing to maintain sobriety can develop the skills and strengths needed for academic, vocational and community success and for personal well-being.

Rationale: Substance abuse is a critical issue facing today's high school youth. The establishment of the Recovery Charter High School addresses this issue head-on, stressing not only abstinence but healing and recovery. The Recovery Charter High School is designed to be a safe haven for all students, no matter where they are on the substance-abuse continuum. Students who have never used as well as those working a recovery program will be welcome and will benefit from the program that will encourage, emphasize and support sobriety and abstinence from illegal substances and alcohol.

Innovative features: The pedagogy, curricula, and instructional approaches of the Recovery Charter School will be life-skills focused, project-based, and portfolio driven; they will prepare students to meet the challenges of standardized testing and entry into higher education and the workplace. The curriculum will be standards- and competency-based, and fully aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. Students will have access to a full range of academic supports, including special education, bilingual education, test preparation, elective courses, and assistance with special medical conditions.

Alongside strong academics, the Recovery Charter High School will support sobriety and recovery by integrating counseling, reflection, and group support into the daily schedule. Each day will begin and end with group meetings in which students hear announcements, prepare for the day, self-report drug or alcohol use, relapse or near relapse, and discuss their progress and their academic and substance-abuse related issues. The first question of their day is "what did you do last night?" The last question of the day is "what are you doing tonight?" The Recovery Charter High School's goal is to surround these youth with the combination of compassion and rigor that will aid their recovery. The program gives them the sense of security they need to regain their balance and push themselves to accomplish their next goal.

The funds from this grant will be used to establish strong governance systems and a rigorous academic program that will foster high student achievement within a safe, sober and substance-free environment.