Background and Methodology

The New Jersey Children’s Foundation’s mission is to promote a fact-based discussion about public education in Newark. In service of this goal, NJCF commissioned a survey to understand Newarkers’ opinions on a host of relevant issues facing our public schools.

Change Research polled 431 registered voters in Newark, New Jersey from December 17-20, 2021. The margin of error as traditionally calculated is 4.71%. Post-stratification weighting was performed on gender, race/ethnicity, education, and zip code. Weighting parameters were based on census data and data from New Jersey’s voter file.
Key Findings
62% of Newark voters said public charter schools are an important part of the public school landscape in the city, up from 60% in 2020 and 59% in 2019.

By a 57%-23% margin, voters believe that public charter schools help improve public education in the city.
Support for public charter schools is especially high among:

- Black voters (66%)
- Parents of children <18 (67%)
- Senior citizens (65%)
- Supporters of Mayor Baraka (69%)
Newarkers Prefer Candidates Who Support Public Charters

By a 17-point margin, voters are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports expanding public charter schools.

Such a candidate would have an advantage with voters of all political affiliations, and with nearly every racial and ethnic group, age group, and gender.
Charter school parents are particularly enthusiastic about their children’s schools. 93% of charter school parents feel positively about their child’s school, compared with 66% of district parents who feel positively about their child’s district school.
Newarkers are More Pessimistic About the State of Education

The percentage of Newark voters who say education is on the right track fell by almost 20 percentage points, from 42% in 2020, to 23% in 2021.

Still, a plurality (44%) think that there are more high quality schools available to Newark families than there were 10 years ago.
In a ballot test against a generic opponent, Mayor Baraka leads by 24 points (47%-23%).

Supporters of Mayor Baraka support public charter schools by a 42 point margin (69% favorable to 27% unfavorable).
85% of voters say they are concerned about the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Newark students and their future, and two-thirds (66%) report that they are very concerned.

42% say they aren’t confident that Newark’s local school leaders have a plan to address students’ learning loss due to the pandemic.
55% of voters believe that the best way to use federal ARPA funding is to provide direct academic assistance to students to help them catch up, like hiring additional classroom aides, offering after-school tutoring, and expanding summer learning opportunities.

Addressing Learning Loss is Top Priority for Federal Relief $