

THE Center for Education Reform



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FAX ALERT

For Immediate Release

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CHARTER SCHOOL CLOSURES: AN INDICTMENT OF THE SYSTEM, OR AN INDICATOR THAT THE SYSTEM WORKS?

February 19, 1999: Charter schools are public schools of choice that must abide by the rules of the state and their charters. If they don't, the schools can lose their charter and be closed. The Center for Education Reform (CER) documents these closures in *Charter Schools: A Progress Report; Part II The Closures*. CER provides detailed examples of all charter closures to date and gives supporting information on the viability of accountability of these schools to the system and the community.

Since Minnesota passed the first charter school law in 1991, more than 1,100 public charter schools have begun operating in 26 states and the District of Columbia. Today there are 35 charter laws in the nation, (34 states plus D.C.). As of November 1998, thirty charter schools have closed their doors. This number represents less than 2.6% of the operating charter schools.

"Some of the 30 closed voluntarily or were financially compelled to do so as a result of low enrollment," stated CER President Jeanne Allen. "Remember, charter schools are schools of choice, and are subject to the needs of children. If those needs are not being met, parents can, will, and should bring their business elsewhere."

The accountability aspect can be called one of charter schools' biggest selling points. While it is difficult to see any school fail, what comes out of that failure is the clear understanding that the system works. The system is geared to guard against failure by stopping undesirable behavior or practices by shutting down the ineffectual, or poorly run schools. "What a shame that traditional public schools aren't subject to the same measure of scrutiny" said Allen. "If all public schools had the same level of accountability as do charter schools, then a whole generation of children would be in much better shape."

To obtain copies of *Charter Schools: A Progress Report; Part II: The Closures* or information on charter schools and other education reform issues please call the Center for Education Reform at (202) 822-9000 or go to CER's website at www.edreform.com.

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The Center for Education Reform is a national, independent, non-profit advocacy organization founded in 1993 to provide support and guidance to individuals, community and civic groups, policymakers and others who are working to bring fundamental reforms to their schools.