

THE Center for Education Reform



1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 204 • Washington, DC 20036

Tel 202-822-9000
Fax 202-822-5077

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Contact: Kristin Battista

THE CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM ISSUES 1997-1998 NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Jeanne Allen, president of The Center for Education Reform (CER), today announced the release of the 1997-1998 *National Charter School Directory*, the nation's only comprehensive listing of America's charter schools.

"*The National Charter School Directory* provides an overview of the dramatic momentum of the charter school movement, which is likely to be over 1,000 schools strong in the 1998-99 school year. Over 300 new charters opened this past year, 400 more have been approved to open or are awaiting review and since the publication of the Directory, 71 new charter schools have been approved," Allen said. "The impact of charter schools, which currently educate over 166,000 students, on the public school system and education reform policy is significant. Look for more states, in the coming legislative sessions, to join the 29 and DC that already have charter school laws."

According to Allen, "Charter schools are providing exciting and viable new educational choices to educators and families across the nation, in an inclusive, individual manner. Charter schools are generally small, enrolling on average 241 students, and they serve every grade from Pre-K to Adult." Fifty-nine percent serve the elementary grades, 18% serve the high school grades, and 23% serve both. "Clearly, charter schools are filling a need in the education system. In our survey of charter schools, we found that 65% had a waiting list, averaging 135 students," Allen said.

The Directory has become the definitive source for national information on operating charter schools, by both the media and charter experts and advocates. Said Allen, "It has been extraordinarily difficult for reporters and writers to get accurate numbers, creating confusion for them and for the public, but the Directory has helped dispel the inconsistencies and misinformation with comprehensive, up-to-date charter school data on a national scope."

Currently, 784 charter schools are in operation in 23 states and the District of Columbia, a 63% increase over the 480 schools open in Fall 1996. Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and South Carolina all opened their first charter schools in 1997.

CER's *National Charter School Directory* provides, state by state, profiles of over 760 operating charter schools, as well as profiles of over 100 more approved and pending

schools. Included in the information are school addresses with telephone numbers and contact names, enrollment figures, grades served and a brief description of each school's educational program.

New in the 1997-1998 National Charter School Directory

In addition to the new data on average enrollment and grades served, the Directory also includes the results of The Center for Education Reform's first annual survey of charter schools. CER surveyed schools in operation in the 1996-1997 school year on their educational programs and operations. In addition to the waiting list figures, some of the findings include:

- 24% offer a back-to-basics curriculum, 19% use E.D. Hirsch's Core Knowledge curriculum, and 11% offer a home or independent study program;
- 40% serve drop outs or students at-risk of dropping out, 24% serve gifted and talented students, and 10% serve adjudicated youth;
- 68% are new, start-up charter schools, 19% are converted public schools, and 14% are converted private schools;
- 44% are sponsored by a state chartering body, 43% are sponsored by a local school board, and 16% are sponsored by a university or college;
- 22% were started up and/or run by parents, 17% by teachers, 7% by for-profit firms;
- 33% are located in a district facility, 24% in a retail or commercial facility, 12% in a church facility;
- 19% have multiple school sites.

The complete survey results are included in the directory and are also available on The Center for Education Reform's Website at <http://edreform.com>.

The *National Charter School Directory* is available for \$9.95 plus shipping and handling. For more information, contact The Center for Education Reform at (202) 822-9000.

The Center for Education Reform is a national, non-profit education reform advocacy group and an active broker in providing help, support and guidance to hundreds of communities and most of these United States.

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