

Center for Education Reform



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State Education Officials to Discuss Reform Options

Education officials from at least five states will hold a private meeting at this weekend's National Governors' Conference to discuss what options are available to them in achieving such education reform measures as standards and assessments, school finance, charter schools and ways to institute increased local control.

Attending the meeting will be Arizona State School Superintendent, Lisa Graham; Georgia's Superintendent, Linda Schrenko; Pennsylvania's Secretary of Education, Eugene Hickok; and Brewser Brown, Assistant to Florida School Superintendent, Frank Brogan.

Also attending the meeting will be Jeanne Allen, President of The Center for Education Reform, who was asked to help arrange the gathering. Allen was invited to participate in the meeting to discuss current and emerging education reform issues facing states nationwide as well as to provide insight on the mechanics of pursuing reform measures.

The Center for Education Reform is a non-profit organization dedicated to furthering reform measures that allow for greater parental involvement in, and control of, local schools, to provide the best possible education opportunities for their children.

"A number of state school officials have contacted the Center over the past year to ask about core education reform issues, all with an interest in setting a course toward bringing meaningful improvement to their states' schools," Allen explained. "They decided their efforts might be better served if a meeting were held to exchange information and to find areas of common interest where coordination of efforts would be beneficial.

"Some of the issues that are most important to these officials -- and to parents in their states -- are taboo among education special-interest lobbies," Allen said. "You can't discuss choice, or charter schools, or even standards, without setting off alarms and inviting heavily funded, and, frankly, some heavy-handed attacks from education unions, lobbies, and associations."

Allen pointed to the recent fight in the Pennsylvania legislature to allow a comprehensive reform package in that state (an effort which failed), and to similar efforts in Connecticut and Georgia all of which have been heavily attacked by what she calls "the blob."

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"Officially you would call it 'the entrenched bureaucracy of the education establishment,' but anyone who has ever tried to deal with it calls it 'the blob,'" Allen explained. "It's the more than 200 groups with a vested interest in education as an *industry*, who fight rabidly for the status quo and their positions of money, power and control over the education of America's children.

"For many state school officials it's an us-vs.-them situation," Allen continued. "They are either ignored, given lip-service, or, if they're too insistent, attacked by the very groups that should be working with them to improve our children's' education. That is why this meeting is so important and why I'm so pleased to have been invited to participate.

"Educating our children is not an industry," Allen said in conclusion. "Children are not churned out of schools like automobiles, teachers are not assembly line workers, and America's schools should not be factories run by an educational cartel. These officials know that, and are working to change it."

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MEDIA ADVISORY: INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

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Please be advised that Jeanne Allen, President of The Center for Education Reform, and author of, *The School Reform Handbook -- How To Improve Your Schools*, is available for interviews, or to provide for-attribution information, on education reform measures nationwide.

Background: Jeanne Allen, President, The Center for Education Reform (CER)

A recognized authority on education reform, Allen is relied upon by federal, state, and local legislators and education officials for her insight and expertise on the why's, wherefore's, and how-to's of reforming America's schools.

Her grasp of the issues forming the national debate on education reform has also made her a frequent source for interviews by reporters from: The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Washington Times, The Chicago Tribune, The Los Angeles Times, Reader's Digest, Forbes, Time, and U.S. News & World Report; and by television correspondents from: ABC's Nightline, 20/20, Good Morning America, and World News Tonight; PBS's McNeil-Lehrer Newshour; CNN; CNBC's Business Insider; and CBS News Up to the Minute. Allen has also been interviewed on countless radio programs across the country.

Before founding the CER, Allen was associated with national policy/advocacy groups and served as an official in the U.S. Department of Education. Currently, she serves as an advisor to the Jefferson Center for Character Education, and the Indiana Policy Review Foundation.