

Center for Education Reform



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

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

FAX ALERT

FEBRUARY 4, 1997: AROUND THE NATION IN THE PAST 30 DAYS

With the President addressing education prominently in his State-of-the-Union address tonight, we highlight the emerging news and recap what has occurred in just 30 days that gives cause for optimism, and reminds us how hard people at the state and local levels are already working to improve opportunities for **children**. (Much more is discussed in the Center's Jan. Monthly Letter).

- **Indiana:** The senate is holding hearings Wednesday on **charter schools** with two "witnesses" CER secured, Jonathan Williams of the Los Angeles-based Accelerated Charter School and Mark Weston of ECS. Sen. Theresa Lubbers is once again trying to bring a strong law to the state. Other states fully immersed in attempts to bring about charter schools include Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Ohio.
- **Texas:** While various reports confirm that the state is gearing up for a legislative choice effort, a private school company has signed a **contract with the Houston school district** to educate students with behavioral and academic problems, guaranteeing a 2 grade-level rise in achievement each year or "your money back." Community Education Partners' contract with Houston will cover about 450 students. Similar private-public ventures are at work in other cities nationwide, educating low-performing or special needs' children on contract with districts. This effort should provide some strong local fodder for choice advocates nationwide.
- **New York City:** The School Choice Scholarships Foundation was announced today, a program founded by 13 leading New Yorkers (including CER Board member Peter Flanigan) that will provide \$1400 in **scholarships for three years** to qualified, low-income public school students. The Foundation will serve 1,000 children, and was warmly received by Mayor Rudolph Guiliani. The group's number is 1-888-KIDS LEARN.
- **Pennsylvania:** The Southeast Delco School Board is considering a plan to offer a limited number of scholarships to students in grades 5-10 to attend another public, or a private **school of their choice**. Like the Lincoln Park, NJ and Lake Travis, TX school districts, board members are being pressed by increasing enrollments and uneven education results and see these locally-driven plans as a way to stabilize enrollment and spur educational improvement.
- **Congress:** There is bi-partisan support for the recently introduced Safe and Affordable Schools Act, which would provide **\$50 million in grants to fund choice programs** for children attending unsafe schools, and provide block-grant funds to states to establish school choice programs and spur other local innovations.
- Over one hundred grass roots, community-led groups so far have responded to CER's call to build an **education network** through our Web site (www.edreform.com). These are the real leaders in reform; parents, teachers and civic activists who are working to restore excellence to their schools and to wrest control from the bureaucracy. Stay tuned!