



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

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

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

**CONTACT: Mary Kayne Heinze**  
**(202) 822-9000**

### **NEW REPORT FROM CER FINDS CHARTER SCHOOLS HAVE POSITIVE IMPACT ON NATION'S SCHOOLS**

*NATIONWIDE CHARTER SCHOOL SURVEY RESULTS ALSO RELEASED*

**(Washington, DC, 2/11/00)** Hot off the presses from the Center for Education Reform (CER) is a path-breaking report that provides a vivid snapshot of the charter school movement in the United States. *Charter Schools Today: Changing the Face of American Education* will serve as a guidepost to those interested in the progress and impact of charter schools on American education. "If these early reports are an indication, the impact of charter schools on the system might be profound," said CER President Jeanne Allen.

The release of *Charter Schools Today* coincides with the release of the U.S. Department of Education's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on Charter Schools, and with similar findings. CER's report illustrates that less than a decade after the first charter school opened its doors, 1,674 charter schools now not only provide a very popular alternative to traditional public schools, but are having a dramatic impact on other competing schools in the communities where they have been established.

Although public schools outnumber charter schools by more than 40 to 1, the ripple effect being created by charter schools is being felt. Wherever a large number of charters are clustered, traditional schools have begun to behave differently in order to keep up, and in many states their presence is accelerating system-wide school improvement.

While charter schools are having a widespread and positive impact on public education, the movement has often generated a powerful reaction from vested interests. They have faced more than their share of roadblocks, including both political opposition and operational hurdles.

Today's charter schools are encountering different types of obstacles than they did just a few years ago. In the beginning, charters faced mainly facility and operational hurdles, but the most common

obstacles now involve political opposition from teachers unions, state boards and bureaucracies, and local board/district offices.

To date, more than 50 reports on the progress, success rates and achievement of charters have been completed by states, universities, and regional and national groups. More than 80 percent show that charter schools are achieving their goals.

A relative handful of charter schools have failed. As of the end of 1999, 39 charter schools had closed their doors, representing 2.3 percent of the 1,713 charter schools that have opened for business. Far from being an indictment of charter schools, however, these closures are evidence of accountability, one of the great strengths of the charter school movement.

"CER is very pleased to be able to bring hard data from the schools in its nationwide survey of charters," said Allen. "It is the largest sample to date of activity in and around charter schools nationwide." The survey includes data compiled from the 1997-98 and 1998-99 school years. Responses were received from 305 of the 1,208 charters operating as of June 1999 in 23 states and the District of Columbia. Among the major findings:

- Small is Beautiful.
- Charter schools serve large percentages of children who are typically underserved in America's schools.
- Charters offer more choices. Charter schools have responded to students' and parents' well-documented demand for higher standards and more specific, comprehensive school curricula.

In just eight years, charter schools have had a measurably positive impact on the health of traditional public schools and have often shown enormous achievement among even some of the nation's poorest children. *Charter Schools Today: Changing the Face of American Education*, provides a comprehensive profile of a charter school movement that is now beginning to mature, learn and provide real lessons for all who are concerned with the quality of education in America.

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To obtain a copy of *Charter Schools Today: Changing the Face of American Education*, call the Center for Education Reform at (800) 521-2118. Copies may be purchased on-line at [www.eduventures.com](http://www.eduventures.com). The cost of the book is \$19.95 plus \$3.00 shipping.