

# Center for Education Reform



*Making Schools Work Better for all Children*

Newsire - January 10, 2000

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Happy New Year!

This is the first CER newsire of the New Year, and we're resolved to continue our weekly delivery of vital information to you from around the country each week.

First we go northwest to **Oregon**, where the first charter school under that state's 1999 law was just tentatively approved. It's a bit of a cause celebre there, as the McCoy school has had its share of struggles since it announced its intention to charter. Becky Black is an educator who took in failing and troubled students from the Portland school district for several years. The district paid her to educate these children, but when she announced that she wanted to charter, the success came to a screeching halt. After several months back and forth in negotiations (Oregon's law requires school board approval), it seems as if the McCoy charter school is finally approved. Let's hope it's the specter of good things to come.

Speaking of which, the following comes directly from the **New Jersey** Charter School Information Center, which does a great job of monitoring charter school progress and providing necessary technical assistance:

Tune in! Students from Oceanside Charter School in Atlantic City have recorded the first song on their upcoming CD, a project to be completed in conjunction with Platinum Sound Recording Studios. The students' first release entitled "It's Tough Being A Kid" explores the challenges young people face in their homes, schools, and communities. Proceeds will benefit the completion of the school's new facility. Plans are already in the works to promote the song on well-known radio stations in the New York and Philadelphia areas. Let's wish Oceanside much success with this exciting venture!

The Garden State, incidentally, just approved 14 new charter schools. However, darkness still looms in the legislature, where numerous bills to limit their autonomy and funding are pending.

The Illinois Charter School Facs (618-233-0428 to get on the list) reports that the fourth proposal for a charter school has been filed in St. Louis, **Missouri**, which currently has none. The K-2 school is being sponsored by a chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, and would focus on math, science and technology. The proposal was made to Harris Stowe State College. Currently a bill is pending in the Show-Me State that would allow some funding to chartering authorizers, a move which observers say would help the chartering process there immensely.

Incidentally, the lawsuit by the School Boards Association in Missouri challenging the charter law was dismissed by a judge last week. The Center had filed an amicus brief in that case along with seven existing charter schools stating that there's nothing unconstitutional about creating new public schools.

Legislators nationwide are bracing for a busy season...Look for more news on charters, proposals to revamp the teaching profession and a whole myriad of things in the coming weeks from the Center.



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