



*Making Schools Work Better for all Children*

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\* **Arizona** education leaders are working to bring about more parity in educational funding in the Grand Canyon State. Governor Jane Hull, State Superintendent Lisa Keegan and a group of lawmakers have announced their intention to place a measure on the November ballot that would generate more than \$400 million for K-12 schooling, including charter schools. The average per-pupil expenditure in Arizona currently stands at \$4,800, which is less than the \$6,600 national average.

\* Many **colleges and universities** around the country have been getting into education reform. Some have sponsored charter schools, some are the actual authorizers of such schools, and others as notable as Harvard and Princeton have programs designed to research and assess the status of reform developments, including charter schools and school choice. Now, one is getting into the **supplementary schooling business**. Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA has announced that it will be the first to operate a Sylvan Learning franchise. No doubt this will provide college officials a good glimpse of their community's needs as well as allow them to significantly contribute to getting students the help they need.

\* Interesting poll results from Zogby International about the public's feelings on some reform issues: When asked whether they agree with allowing states to set **mandatory student testing** and raise standards for graduation, 58.9 percent of the public responded positively. The public also believes that the goal of **Head Start** should be to lay the groundwork for reading and writing (64%) versus teaching children social skills (29.9%). Unfortunately, Head Start is doing mostly the latter. The poll is part of its American Values Survey, sponsored with the O'Leary Report.

\* In a Congressional hearing where the theme was "let bygones be bygones," DC officials were grilled about their involvement and interest in charter schools. **DC Charter School** Board Chair Josephine Baker testified that Paul Junior High students were told they wouldn't be allowed to attend the new charter. Other misinformation about the conversion her board approved was rampant. Virginia Congressman Jim Moran voiced his support for the conversion, but urged both groups to learn to get along. Time will tell.

\* **Florida** Governor Jeb Bush, on behalf of the state law authorizing the A-plus scholarships, filed an appeal to suspend the ruling of Judge Ralph Smith that would prevent the **full school choice** program from continuing. However, there is still time for the plaintiffs in the case (unions, etc) to file an injunction again. The issue of whether or not children may continue to attend private schools of choice under the A-plus plan, and whether other children in failing public schools will be permitted to choose

private schools over those failing public schools to which they are assigned by virtue of where they live, has begun its long journey through the courts. Maybe school choice will finally make Court TV!

Local readers might enjoy a night out this Wednesday when the Bethune-DuBois Institute sponsors a Public Policy Forum on school choice. The issue to be debated "Public Schools vs. Vouchers/Chartered Schools." Call 301-562-8300 for more information.



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