



*Making Schools Work Better for all Children*

Newsire - May 1, 2000

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Welcome to this special CER Newsire in honor of National Charter Schools Week, which begins today. All around the country there are open houses, celebrations and noteworthy events joining communities with the families, children and teachers served in charter schools.

· [VISIT A CHARTER SCHOOL TODAY!](#) If you want to visit a charter school but are too busy to get out, check one out in cyberspace. CER this week launches Visit a Charter School Today!, and is linked to nearly [500 of the nation's charter schools](#) and other individual stories that the world needs to hear and see.

· CER is proud to announce two major reports that coincide with "the Week:"

- [Charter School Laws Across the States 2000](#). In its third consecutive review and ranking of charter school laws, CER's expert panel gives 19 states with strong laws As and Bs. Strong laws foster the development of numerous, genuinely independent charter schools. The 18 remaining states are weaker across the spectrum, precluding parents and children from fully benefiting from inclusion of charter schools in the public education system, and meriting them grades of C or below.

According to the [AP story \(4/27/00\)](#), "States trying to promote charter schools are heading the wrong way if they don't give the special public schools ample freedom and funding, say supporters in a new report on state laws... CER - "whose newest analysis comes as charter school support widens and intensifies - examined states for policies it associates with strong charter school laws."

- National Charter School Directory 2000 is also out and the 280-plus page volume reflects the tremendous growth in charter schools nationwide. The new directory includes information on about 2,000 charter schools, year by year enrollment and growth trends and more!

· Everyone is getting in the act! National Charter Schools Week will see visits to charters by

President Clinton, Vice President Gore and possibly even Tipper, too, sources say. Governor George Bush is planning on making a charter week visit, and here in Washington, DC, the [Congressional Salute to Charter Schools](#) has kicked off the issuing of proclamations and applause for charters. The week will end with a school bus tour by leading Members of Congress to two Washington, DC charter schools. For more details on state-based events, go to [www.charterfriends.org](http://www.charterfriends.org).

- In related local charter news, the Capistrano, CA school district is nearing success in its long sought after quest to become the first charter district in California. Last week the Senate passed a bill to free the district from major state regulations, but its fate throughout the rest of the legislative process is still uncertain.

- Join us for an on-line chat on iVillage.com tonight, May 1, at 8:00 pm for a discussion about charter schools with six of the nation's charter school leaders including Vickie Marble at Bradenton, FL's PAL Academy; Mary Connole at the Washington DC-based [School for Arts in Learning \(SAIL\)](#); and Tom Commeret at the Massachusetts-based Marblehead Charter School. Join us at [www.ivillage.com](http://www.ivillage.com).



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