

THE Center for Education Reform



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SOUTH CAROLINA GETS A C FOR EDUCATION LAW

Washington, D.C., May 5, 2006 – South Carolina’s education law authorizing public charter schools still retains a C grade, despite a bill creating a new statewide authorizer, according to an analysis by the Center for Education Reform (CER). Using criteria established by CER for ranking the nation’s charter laws, H 3010 provided only a small boost in the score for South Carolina’s charter school law.

“We’re grateful that the legislature corrected a longstanding funding irregularity for charter schools authorized by school districts,” said CER president Jeanne Allen. “But despite the best of intentions, the new law will not yield the growth of high quality charter schools that proponents intended.”

Charter schools approved by the South Carolina Public Charter School District will receive only state and a portion of federal aid, and not the local funding that is fundamental to solvent, successful charter schools. Independently prepared analyses shows that this may amount to as little as 60 percent of per pupil funding allocated to other public school children. [links to CER analysis and Connections]

Another aspect that weakens the new authorizer is its status as a local education agency. That means the South Carolina Public Charter School District is responsible for administering all federal programs to the schools; a regulatory job that requires government staff and resources to support it--functions that were previously administered by South Carolina’s local districts and the state Education Department. Successful charter states allow for entities independent from state agencies to authorize charter schools.

Charter schools are new, innovative, public schools designed by educators, parents, or civic

leaders that are open by choice, accountable for results, and free from most rules and regulations governing conventional public schools. Today, more than 3,600 charter schools serve more than a million children in forty states plus the District of Columbia.

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The Center for Education Reform (CER) creates opportunities for and challenges obstacles to better education for America's communities. Founded in 1993, CER combines education policy with grassroots advocacy to foster positive and bold education reforms. For more information, visit www.edreform.com