



HOW CER ADVANCES STATE AND LOCAL EFFORTS

STRATEGIC SUPPORT

- ◆ Design and help implement highly-focused parent-led grassroots campaigns that have been successful in either creating a new charter school law, improving an existing law, or fighting rollback attempts
- ◆ Create state-specific strategic plans to help partner groups achieve their goals and direct legislative strategy, media outreach, grassroots contact and more
- ◆ Provide advice on how to run new candidates to the school board, and how to approach incumbent board members
- ◆ Lead grassroots leaders through strategic-planning conference calls and workshops
- ◆ Identify and support people who want to start charter schools or other grassroots efforts

TOOLS AND TRAINING

- ◆ Offer a variety of Tool Kits to equip parents and others on a range of topics such as: how to approach legislators, how to start a group, how to start a charter school, etc.
- ◆ Submit amicus briefs in charter and/or choice litigation
- ◆ Supply attendees at numerous state charter school conferences with important and timely materials relating to key school reform issues
- ◆ Provide guidance on how to reach African-American and Latino parents whose children are benefiting from choice and charter schools
- ◆ Provide advice on how to coordinate rallies and press conferences



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CONNECTIONS AND LEADERSHIP

- ◆ Connect key leaders at the grassroots level with high-profile media contacts to create momentum
- ◆ Sponsor and co-sponsor conferences, workshops and meetings on the pertinent issues, when necessary and timely
- ◆ Maintain close relations with top officials in the House, Senate and the U.S. Department of Education and suggest opportunities to express support for charter schools
- ◆ Make speeches and write about charter schools in more than a dozen venues each year
- ◆ Support National Charter Schools Week, including CER-initiated Congressional Salute, School Action kits with theme ideas for each day, and recommendations for events
- ◆ Submit numerous letters to the editor and opinion pieces
- ◆ Help state charter school organizations with thorny political issues or challenges, often brokering deals or ideas with people in positions of authority
- ◆ Advise business leaders about getting involved in or investing in charter schools
- ◆ Provide guidance and ideas to the U.S. Department of Education for programs and conferences
- ◆ Organize tours/visits of charter schools by policymakers
- ◆ Provide access for newer charter school leaders/reformers to CER members and high-level opinion leaders



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INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

- ◆ Start and keep fires burning by providing frequent updates in our weekly Newswire
- ◆ Focus on public awareness, through media outreach, brochures, dissemination of charter school stickers, bumper stickers, pencils, etc.
- ◆ Maintain largest collection of data on charter schools, their achievement, the obstacles, the ripple impact, and the closures
- ◆ Disseminate news of top charter schools and their successes to the public
- ◆ Conduct and publish Annual Survey of Charter Schools and develop and publish the highly valued Annual Directory of Charter Schools, the only comprehensive listing of charter schools in the country
- ◆ Track and analyze opposition to school choice and debunk misinformation

ADVOCACY AND ANALYSIS

- ◆ Assist key leaders with research, media outreach, and even provide contact names for expert testimony at legislative hearings
- ◆ Maintain expertise in all charter issues, such as finance, elements of law, the effects of traditional mandates, etc.
- ◆ Provide expert analysis of, and recommended language for charter school laws and amendments
- ◆ Proactively inform and educate legislators about issues that need their attention, including the drafting of legislative bills and amendments
- ◆ Track Federal legislation and provide direction to Capitol Hill leaders
- ◆ Initiate contact between state charter school leaders and policymakers on pending issues





CER AT-A-GLANCE, 2004

MAY

National Charter Schools Week is celebrated nationwide on May 3-8. As in prior years, CER is heavily involved in the leadership for this event. CER is organizing visits by top U.S. Department of Education officials to 7-10 states to see individual charter schools. CER is helping to lead the kickoff event with Secretary Paige, who will give a lesson on the history of charter schools. CER secures commitments from key Members of Congress to serve as honorary co-chairmen and sends legislative language to the House and Senate for the National Charter Schools Week Congressional resolution.



Newly released in time for National Charter Schools Week: the latest edition of CER's **Charter Schools Today: Changing the Face of American Education**. This year's report is on **Statistics, Stories and Insights**. This unique and enormously valuable publication chronicles the impact of charters and is a useful compilation of four separate reports that look at different aspects of charter operations in the United States. This includes the most up-to-date national charter school data; the results of CER's annual survey of America's charter schools; stories of successes and obstacles overcome from schools around the country; and, finally, a chapter showing how charters are an example of the most accountable schools in all of public education (the report of charter school closure data).

CER inaugurates the use of an exciting high tech tool which will allow it to easily identify, motivate and equip education reform activists in legislatures and at the grassroots level all around the country. This new service, offered in partnership with **E-Know**, vastly improves the quality of the interaction between CER and charter supporters around the country. It allows CER to communicate easily, to collect and validate their responses, track who has and hasn't responded, remind those who haven't responded, compile and display databases, reports and analyses, and manage even large projects and complex processes easily. Our first test of this new capability was done in Texas, where CER has been working with a coalition of charter school organizations, helping to prepare them for the **Special Session of the Texas Legislature** focusing on school finance issues. CER conducts a survey of the almost 300 CER's other activities have included media training, legislative research and analysis, and strategic advice.



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MAY (CONTINUED)

As part of our continuing efforts to equip all parents to make the right choices about their children's education, CER this month publishes our popular **charter school brochure in Spanish**.



Throughout the summer CER runs a **Target States** media program using billboards, bus advertising, etc., to educate and inform the public about the value of charter schools.

Jeanne Allen celebrates with the **Milken Family Foundation** as it presents checks for \$25,000 to 100 teachers recognized for excellence across 48 states.

CER's popular publication **Parent Power!**, covering a variety of articles to help parents do the best job possible, is sent out to subscribers.

CER participates in the following **state charter school conferences** held this month: **Pennsylvania** (CER staff attends and provides state-specific charter school materials) and **New Mexico** (6-7, CER provides state-specific charter school materials).

CER celebrates the successful election of longtime CER friend Chris Jacobs to the **Buffalo School board**, along with other charter school supporters. Chris was one of two charter supporters running for local office who were featured in CER's March issue of Parent Power.

Now that the U.S. Department of Education has chosen the Washington Scholarship Fund to run the **DC School Choice Incentive Program**, CER this month begins its work to assist them. WSF asked CER to help them develop a training program that guides parents in their parent ambassador program to make good decisions in selecting non-public schools and understanding how to play a role in supporting their child's education. CER provides DC-specific materials for WSF to share and helps build a training program that is parent-friendly and useful in helping them make quality selections.

CER's staff increases during the summer as we are joined by a group of eager and enthusiastic college students who will serve as **interns** in our Washington, DC office, where they learn more about education reform, why it's important and how to make it happen. CER's internship program gives students an opportunity to work in External Affairs, Communications and Marketing, Policy and Planning, Outreach, Media Relations, and State Relations.



CER releases its bi-annual **CER Clip Book** this month, featuring significant news clips covering CER's work around the country.



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JUNE

CER President Jeanne Allen is invited to participate as a plenary speaker at the U.S. Department of Education's **National Charter Schools Conference**, planned for June 16-18 in Miami. This important event is being supported by CER Vice President for External Affairs Anna Varghese Marcucio, who spent several months participating in the planning committee. A large number of CER staff attends the event to maximize our opportunities to interact with a broad cross section of the charter schools community.



In conjunction with this conference, CER sponsors the **Charter Schools Marketplace**. This popular event allows charter school leaders from around the country to interact with more than 60 key vendors who help supply them with the services and materials they need to run successful schools.

Our Target State activities for this month include our popular and successful **Media Training** sessions, conducted in Arizona and Michigan. In addition, CER conducts several **Parent Training** sessions in those two Target States.

The **National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)** holds its **National Small Business Summit** on June 16-18, 2004 here in Washington, DC. CER staff attends.

The **Philanthropy Roundtable** gathers for a meeting in Jackson Hole, Wyoming June 22-23 where they hear from CER President Jeanne Allen.

The **National PTA Annual Conference**, on June 26-28, gives an opportunity for CER to provide parents and PTA members with its "Possible 10 Questions to Ask..."

CER continues its strategic activities in the Show Me state of **Missouri** where this month charter school supporters begin the struggle to make sure that charter school students receive dollar-for-dollar what students in traditional public schools receive. "Equity" becomes the motto of the effort assisted with strategic advice, organizational development and support, along with additional partnerships and coalition building generated by CER.



Media activity: May sees the release of the sixth round of **FCAT scores released** in Florida under the A+ Plan. Some charters may receive their second "F".



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JULY

This month also sees the unveiling of the final stages of CER's website at edreform.com. Thanks to new additions, CER is able to significantly increase its friendliness to users as well as allow it to meet CER's needs to provide more services to website users, particularly those interested in CER's many publications.

The second meeting of the **Parent Connection Advisory Board** for our federal PIRC (Parents Information Resource Center) grant is held this month.



The **National Education Association Annual Meeting**, scheduled for July 2-7, and the **American Federation of Teachers Annual Meeting**, set for July 13-17, both again provide an opportunity for CER to provide parents and union members with its "Possible 10 Questions to Ask..."

The Summer months are the perfect time for families in the Southeast to come to one of CER's Family Picnics, as hosted by CER's **Parents Network for Better Education** (www.theparentsnetwork.org), and our parent liaisons located near the more than 2,100 low-performing schools in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. This is the organization CER created to coordinate the activities of our federal grant, under which we are charged with notifying parents of their rights to a better education for their child under the No Child Left Behind Act. CER also provides additional full-color materials to our parent liaisons in each of those four states, including a brochure for community partner organizations in each state, a flyer for parents, and a Parents Guide to help parents understand their rights.

If it's an election year, it's time for the CER **Candidate Meter** to be released. This handy tool helps parents and others assess the positions and potential effectiveness of their local candidates, for state legislature, local school board, Congress or other offices influencing education reform.

The **National Conference of State Legislatures** holds their **Annual Meeting** July 19-23 in Salt Lake City. CER staff attends to give us further opportunities to meet directly with state legislative leaders responsible for education issues, and to provide them with up-to-date data and research regarding choice and charter schools.

The **Democratic National Convention** is held in Boston July 26-29.

The **American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)** holds their Annual Meeting July 28-August 1 in Seattle. CER plans to be on the agenda for this event. CER staff attends this important meeting of state legislators and key legislative staff.



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AUGUST

Following the formal launching of the **DC Charter School Association**, CER conducts media training of the charter leaders.

EDVentures 2004 Conference, sponsored by the Education Industry Association, will be held at Northwestern University August 4-6, attended by Jeanne Allen.

Media activity: Release of the annual **Phi Delta Kappa poll**, likely the week of the 16-20. Last year's headline: "Another Year, Another Skewed Phi Delta Kappa Poll."

The **Republican National Convention** is held in New York August 30–September 2.



SEPTEMBER

Media activity: Back to School (Aug-Sep). This year, this program includes additional work on the implementation and start of the DC School Choice program, where the first DC kids will be using government-funded vouchers.



In Maryland, CER works towards the opening of 3 new charter schools approved to open in **Baltimore** by this month.

CER participates in the following **state charter school conference** to be held this month: **North Carolina**, where Jeanne is invited to speak. (CER also sends state-specific education reform materials).



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OCTOBER

CER celebrates 11 years of serving as a national voice for more choices in education and more rigor in education programs.



Still in the mood to celebrate, CER joins in the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the **National Center for Education Information**, which specializes in survey research and data analysis.

CER participates in the following **state charter school conference** to be held this month: **Florida** (CER staff attends and provides state-specific charter school materials).

CER releases its second **Clip Book for 2004**

NOVEMBER

Election Day: Tuesday, November 2.

CER participates in the following **state charter school conference** held this month: **Michigan** (CER staff attends and provides state-specific materials).

DECEMBER

Other Issues for 2004 (undated):

Choice: Court challenges to the **Colorado and Florida voucher laws.**

Media Activity: NAEP data is released in foreign language (grade 12, administered in Fall 2004), as well as long-term assessments in reading, mathematics (administered in Spring 2004). These long-term trend assessments are designed to give information on the changes in the basic achievement of America's youth. They are administered nationally and report student performance at ages 9, 13, and 17 in mathematics and reading.

Analysis of Major Reports (e.g., GAO, Harvard University, RAND, etc.)





CER AT-A-GLANCE, 2005

JANUARY

CER's annual survey of charter schools is summarized and produced in its annual document, **Charter Schools Today: Changing the Face of American Education**. First published in 2004, this comprehensive publication includes important national data about charter schools, including information about charter schools that have closed. We also highlight the obstacles overcome, ripple effects felt, and the many inspiring success stories from charter schools all across the country.



Media Activity: The **No Child Left Behind Act** is three years old this month.

FEBRUARY

This month CER releases several of its publications important to the charter school movement. The first, **Charter School Laws Across the States, 2005: Ranking Scorecard and Legislative Profiles**, is the culmination of a year's worth of research and analysis. It provides CER's ranking of the strength of each state's charter law, which research now shows is a predictor of charter success and most importantly, academic achievement. 1,500 copies are distributed.



The much-heralded **National Charter School Directory 2005** is released in February, providing the only national directory of all operating charter schools, and which includes other valuable data about charter schools nationwide. 5,000 copies will be distributed.

