



Making Schools Work Better for all Children

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* **EDUCATION PLANS:** They're calling it "Education Week," and today at 1:00 p.m. the new Bush Administration will unveil the details of their education plan. Though the details are sketchy at our "press time," it appears the kick off involves the guts of the education plan the President described during the campaign. That would include:

- Some requirements on states to do testing in order to measure their progress;
- More money for success and less for failure;
- Sanctions on other programs that fail to prove their usefulness (we can only hope!);
- Options for parents whose children have no way out of a failing school; and,
- Some emphasis on reading throughout the programs, making Head Start more of an educational program with some goals and measurements for success.

Even the news media is finally catching on, as NBC reporter Campbell Brown noted that under the Bush proposal "the money will follow the child"— exactly the point that creates empowered parents who can make decisions for their children.

The bill being offered up by Senators Joe Lieberman and Evan Bayh, nicknamed the "3Rs," also offers flexibility for states to spend federal money as they see fit, but excludes some of the consequences. The race is on, and now it's time to see whether the term "bi-partisan" means watering things down or whether it means having the courage to horse trade and stick to one's guns, no matter what the opponents say.

Links:

- [CER Summary of Key Provisions of the Bush Plan.](#)
- [W.'s A+ PLAN -- THE RIGHT THING TO DO](#), by Jeanne Allen, *National Review Online*, January 25, 2001.

- [QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE BUSH EDUCATION PLAN](#), By Knight Ridder Newspapers, *Seattle Times*, January 24, 2001.
- [BUSH PRESENTS EDUCATION PLAN, DOWNPLAYS VOUCHERS](#), *Washington Post*, January 23, 2001.

* **CHARTER SCHOOLS:** [Edison Schools, Inc.](#) is being challenged in San Francisco, where 8-year school board veteran, and now chairman, Jill Wynn has decided that the high-achieving school operated by Edison should break the partnership that caused it to succeed simply because she doesn't like the contractor.

In Wynn's eight years on the board, the school Edison took over was at the bottom of the heap. In Edison's one year managing the school, it saw a dramatic turn-around. Last fall 49% of 5th graders at the Edison school scored at the national average or better, compared with 28% a year before. In reading, the percent of 5th graders performing at national levels has gone from two percent to 35%. And the school has the third most-improved showing on statewide tests of all of San Francisco's schools.

Wall Street Journal on-line subscribers can review an editorial on the subject at <http://interactive.wsj.com/articles/SB979691324342371644.htm>.

* **CHARTERS AND COURTS:** Utah's charter law is indeed constitutional, according to the state's Supreme Court. The high court called the challenge by the school board association "unreasonable," making it the 12th law to be upheld by a state's high court against the wishes of state school boards associations. Such facts are apparently unfathomable to National School Boards Association President Anne Bryant who wrote to *Education Week* to complain that we had blamed their members for opposition to charters. Wrote Bryant: "Neither the NSBA nor any of our 50 state school boards' associations is leading a frenzy of litigation against charter schools."

The fact is that while local school boards have often mouthed nice words about the charter school concept, they've kept charter organizers busy by initiating a flurry of lawsuits against them. In Utah, the Utah School Boards Association challenged the constitutionality of a 1998 law authorizing as many as eight charter schools for a three-year experiment with rigorous controls. Eight was evidently too many for the school boards association, but the Utah Supreme Court rejected the argument.

For an in-depth look at charter school issues, visit our [charter pages](#).

* **TEACHING:** As the proposals for more teachers and more money begin to fly from this capital and the next, policymakers need to study the most recent research from the highly regarded William Sanders, a Tennessee professor who shows that teacher effectiveness has a stronger relationship to student performance than class size, ethnicity, location and economic status. In a report to the Nashville (TN) Metro School Board, Dr. Sanders also described data showing that the best teachers are not leaving the inner city schools to teach in the suburbs, and that there is an even distribution of effective teachers across economic lines. Link to the story at: <http://www.tennessean.com/local/archives/01/01/01776708.shtml>.



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