



Making Schools Work Better for all Children

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* **CHARTER SCHOOLS:** The close of the annual union conventions has come and gone. Both the NEA and AFT adjourned having pronounced serious misgivings with the whole concept of charter schools. The AFT went so far as to adopt a several-point resolution that makes it clear that any charter not run by existing schools and tied to the union contract are not something they'd support. Which means they don't support about 90% of the charters that are currently operating in the nation. (For more on the unions' Convention 2000 activities, see CER Education Reform Update from July 6 and the July Monthly Letter, as well as, *WITHOUT MERIT*, *Wall Street Journal* Editorial, July 10, 2000, or search for articles by Anjetta McQueen on <http://www.nandosearch.com/>.)

* **WASHINGTON STATE:** The campaign for charters is on again, with the more than enough signatures collected to guarantee a place on the ballot come November. The "Good Choices for Public Schools" effort is joining entrepreneurs like Paul Allen, with Governor Gary Locke and Seattle Mayor Paul Schell, who celebrated the submission of petitions to the Secretary of State's office yesterday. The charter initiative would offer parents and teachers the modest ability to create up to 20 charters a year free from most district rules and regulations. For more information go to <http://www.Wacharterschools.org>.

* **UNIONS:** The *New York Times* echoed our concerns about AFT's proposal to add a year of schooling for children in trouble. Their opinion piece on Friday, July 7, entitled "Recipe for Weaker Schools" reads: "Public high schools need to make far better use of the four years they already have... An extra year for a few students would quickly be expanded to cover a greater number of students...on the theory that there would be time for them to catch up academically somewhere down the line." The Times also points to the forthcoming report by the Education Trust about achievement, which finds, sadly, that the current high school now "yields less academic growth among their students than in any other phase of the public school system." See CER Newsire for [July 6](#) for more union conference coverage.

The NEA also voted to increase union dues by \$5 to fight voucher attempts in the states. Individual states are also increasing dues for political purposes. See CER Newsire for [July 6](#) for more union conference coverage. Complete and detailed analyses of the unions can also be found through Education Intelligence Agency at <http://hometown.aol.com/educintel/eia/>.

* **CAMPAIGN FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN:** Theodore J. Forstmann, Wall Street investor, today announced a \$20 million advertising campaign aimed at rallying public support for alternatives to the existing public education system. The newly formed organization, Campaign for America's Children, will run the ad campaign between now and the November election. Two former Cabinet secretaries – William Bennett and Joseph Califano -- were recruited by Forstmann to head the Board of Advisors of the organization.

* **TESTING:** A concerned group of Virginia parents have created a wonderful web page dedicated to Virginia's nationally acclaimed Standards of Learning and the accountability provided by the tests.



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