

The Center for Education Reform

Memo

Date: Thursday, April 27, 2006

To: Jeanne Allen

From: Cindy Boyd

RE: Compilation of Answers from Stakeholder Surveyed in Tennessee



1 - Are you aware of organizations in Tennessee that serve as resources for, or provide assistance to, charter schools?

Nine were aware, four were not.

Seven of the nine could identify the name of the organization, the other two knew Jeremy's name but not the organizations name.

2 - How familiar would you say that you are with these organizations?

Five were very familiar with the Resource Center

Three were somewhat familiar

Five were not at all familiar with the Resource Center

3 - What specific information or resources did this organization provide?

Provided answers to questions

Provided information

Assistance to charter applicants

Law guidance

Compliance information

Provided good news on the performance of charter schools

Charter school conference

Coordinated lobbying efforts/testifying

4 - Do you feel that the charter school supporters provide you with sufficient information to determine your position on education issues?

Six said they were given sufficient information.

Three said insufficient information was given.

One said it was too early to say.

Three either did not or could not answer.

5 - How familiar would you say that you are with Tennessee's current charter school law?

Six were very familiar

One was somewhat familiar

Two were vaguely familiar

Two were completely unfamiliar

Two did not answer the question

6 - If you were to seek assistance on an educational issue right now, what would you request?

Personal income by district to help set equalization rates. This information is available by county but not by district.

① How many children who are failing are not eligible to attend charter schools under current rules that only allow students from failing schools, not necessarily failing students.

Pay for high performing teachers, especially in high poverty schools.

② Data of success/failure/etc on charter schools in Tennessee.

-Current legislation

General accountability

The negative impact of teachers unions and how they are ruining public schools.

③ Test scores of every child in Tennessee.

7 - If you were to seek assistance on a charter school issue right now, what would you request?

① Conversion schools.

-More opportunities to lobby and meet with lawmakers.

More educational/networking forums with other charter operators/teachers.

-Better PR to share information about what charter schools are and how successful they are.

Roadmap to move the state toward open enrollment for all failing students.

Better awareness. PR

-More information on legislation that would impact charter schools.

Information on how other states have passed their charter school laws.

8 - Is there any other person or group that provides you with information or resources on charter schools?

Nine said yes.

Four said no.

Other organizations included:

CER, NACS, National Charter School Clearinghouse, USDOE, KIPP Foundation, NACSA, NASDE, Memphis Tomorrow, School Board Associations, Chamber of Commerce, Philanthropic Roundtable.

9 - What is the single greatest challenge facing education in Tennessee right now?

The crisis is not recognized

Lack of high standards and accountability on students

The inability to remain globally competitive.
Unions stronghold on the schools and legislature
Not inspiring teachers
Not meeting the needs of students
Failure of vision
Lack of money
Failing schools
Not a lot of value placed in education
Low graduation rate
Lack of accountability
Lack of parental support
Lack of leadership
NCLB Act standards being set low to keep expectations low

10 - What is the single greatest challenge facing charter schools in Tennessee right now?

Unions stronghold on the schools, school boards and legislature
The lack of public knowledge of what charters are
The current restrictive laws.
The publics perception that charters are harmful.
Cannot afford failure. Ensure that schools succeed and are based on academic excellence
Oversight
A Democrat governor who is unlikely to push charter schools.
Facilities funding
Restrictive laws on admission
Negative public perception

There were multiple comments that there is no PR for charter schools in Tennessee.
The union issue was huge. As was the weak charter law.