



MONTHLY LETTER TO FRIENDS OF
THE CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM
NO. 80

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10TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

In the Beginning

"Subject: Today's Briefing – The Center for Education Reform celebrated its kickoff last night with a reception at its Washington, DC headquarters. The Center is a national clearinghouse for research and action in matters related to school choice, accountability and general education reform. The Center will support and help shape coalition building locally, statewide and across the United States."

"The White House Bulletin" October 7, 1993

"The Center for Education Reform is the newest player on the school-reform field...It is founded and directed by Jeanne Allen, an alumna of the Education Department and the Heritage Foundation [and] a walking clearinghouse of information on education reform in this country...The Center for Education Reform will serve as the organizing principle, and as a source of support, encouragement and reassurance, for the many and varied, large and small arms of the school-reform movement."

Editorial, The Washington Times, October 18, 1993

Dear Friends:

So much has happened in the decade since the founding of The Center for Education Reform that it's sometimes hard to remember where we were when we started, or to appreciate how far we've come, or to recount the specifics of how we got here. But in this Tenth Anniversary edition of the *Monthly Letter* we will try, and look back at some of the highlights, large and small, of our travels together over these past ten years.

For me personally and professionally it has been ten years of challenge, reward, and exhilaration, tempered by occasional frustrations and, in a few cases, deeply painful loss. But through it all, with your support and our joint commitment to move forward no matter the obstacles, we have not just survived, but thrived and made the kind of differences I had hoped for when I started out with you ten years ago.

There is no way my words can adequately express my gratitude to all of those who, over the past decade, have lent their time, resources, and talents to our work. We couldn't have gotten to where we are without you, and the great changes that have, and are, leading to reforms in education across the country wouldn't have either.

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Ten years ago we took that step, and today we look back on how far we've come in order to renew our strength for the miles still ahead. As you'll see, it's been a great trip and I only hope that the next ten years are as exciting and rewarding as the last ten.

Enjoy, and I look forward to our continued travels together. With heartfelt appreciation,

A word about our organization

In reviewing the work carried out by as active and involved an enterprise as CER is, we quickly discovered that it was impossible to chronicle every one of our undertakings of the past ten years. We also found it impossible to neatly categorize the initiatives we ultimately chose to highlight. A single effort might be seen as advocacy, activism, grassroots development, community education, legislative outreach, communications, or education – or all of those things combined and more! Thus the following is organized somewhat less scientifically than you would find under, say, the Dewey Decimal System, but with more precision than you might achieve by throwing a dart (albeit not much more).

MAJOR INITIATIVES

While much of our work has always been (and always will be) targeted to the specific challenges at the local, state and federal levels – fighting for charter legislation, working with groups and individuals to create choice opportunities, advocating standards and accountability – we've also enjoyed success in establishing programs that meet key challenges in a broader, on-going way. Here are some of the major initiatives we've undertaken over the past ten years.

Education Leaders Council

In response to national organizations that were actively opposed to education reform efforts – and a dearth of pro-reform groups of state education leaders – in 1995, the Center convened a meeting of nine reform-minded state school officials who shared in the belief that something needed to change. That meeting marked the founding of the Education Leaders Council (ELC).

This national organization of state education officials is currently led by Council founder and former Arizona State School Superintendent, Lisa Graham Keegan. ELC supports parents and teachers working together to chart the course of a child's education, and ensures accountability and professionalism in the teaching ranks. In its eight years of work and now with nearly 400 members, ELC has become a powerful voice for effective, responsible reform.

School Board Network

"CER's School Board Network is a great resource for me. Keep the pressure on."

Phil Enright, New York

"Every time we come up with a new idea for accountability, the superintendent and his staff finds a way to knock it down – even if it's worked somewhere else. Now, [CER's School Board Network] gives a place we can go to get what we need to combat this mentality."

Rita Thompson, Virginia

In April 2001, CER set out to build a network of activist, reform-minded local school board leaders. Providing best-practice guidance and the actionable tools needed to effectively advance education reform at the local, state and national levels, the Network helps convert ideas into action, and turn advocates into activists.

Initially, a few hundred members received a bi-weekly "Friday Report" and participated in CER-conducted conference call meetings where experts addressed school board members' concerns on a variety of issues. Now, an estimated 1,200 school board members regularly consult CER, and visits to the School Board Network section of the CER web site are approaching 10,000 per year.

The Partners Program

There is a vast array of organizations, individuals, parents, teachers, community leaders and innumerable others for whom education reform is a hope, a cause and a commitment. In July 2001, CER brought the strength of partnership to these disconnected entities by forming its 'Partners Program.' As a first step in the program CER identified 400 potential grassroots 'partners,' and then began to recruit these organizations.

CER's partners receive strategic consulting, organizational support via conference calls, ongoing email discussions about how to approach issues, grassroots mobilization support, priority status for research and action, free publications, and media and op-ed support.

To bring more attention to grassroots and state-level efforts, CER has worked with its partners to increase their media coverage, and has fostered communication among the groups through its Leaders Forum, regional meetings and website. And in a demonstration of true partnership in June of 2002, 12 CER partners joined in the Amicus Brief filed with the U.S. Supreme Court on the issue of school choice.

Grassroots Action Center

Launched in April of 2003, the *Grassroots Action Center* (GAC) is CER's latest activist support initiative. GAC gives CER Partners and other groups a rapid mobilization and activation tool for the effective coordination of their membership activities quickly and effectively. In just six months of operation more than 50 individual groups have used the Grassroots Action Center to mobilize their members over important issues and to generate nearly 500 letters and emails to lawmakers in support of charter schools and other school choice policies.

CHARTERS

"You all must have more on charters than anyone on the face of the earth."

Fawn Vrazo, editorial writer, *Philadelphia Inquirer*

From our work to educate legislators on charters, to our help in drafting legislative language for charter bills, to on-going efforts to strengthen weak charter laws and to protect strong charter laws from being weakened, since our beginning we've been heavily involved in the creation, adoption and support of charter laws in states across the nation. Some highlights:

The Early Days

- In one of its first major outings, in 1993, CER leads a team of experts and community organizers to Detroit, Michigan for a town hall meeting on charters. An unexpectedly large and diverse crowd flocks to the forum after which CER receives nearly 50 requests for information on how to develop charter schools and support the charter movement.

- Arizona is another of the states where CER focuses its early efforts in support of charter schools. By 1994, Arizona's charter school law is enacted and over the next ten years, CER becomes one of the state's biggest champions, promoting its work in such places as *The New York Times* and in 1998, setting the record straight with *U.S. News and World Report* when it ran an unfair, inaccurate cover story on charter accountability in the state.
- In 1995, Arkansas enacts a charter law and CER offers its hand in working to improve the state's charter school infrastructure, increase charter autonomy and the number of charter schools, and educate parents and school officials on the benefits of charters and public school choice – all work that continues today.

Ohio

In the fall of 1995, CER begins work with Ohio lawmakers, including Representatives Mike Fox, Sally Perz and other state officials, to build support for charter schools. In a process of nearly two years of education, advocacy and activism, with CER's input and support, Ohio's charter law is enacted in 1997.

"Your presentation to state officials changed the whole mood of the legislature about charter schools [and] as a result of your meeting with the Governor's top advisors, the Governor's Chief of Staff now says the Governor will support charter school legislation."

Andrew Little, (then) President, The Buckeye Institute, Ohio

DC – Slow but Sure

In 1997, Congress begins to take notice. Jeanne Allen is asked to testify before the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring, and the District of Columbia. Her testimony, entitled "Improving Educational Opportunities in the District of Columbia," calls for an organized, cohesive, and supportive infrastructure for DC Charter Schools. Six months later she is back before the committee with testimony entitled: "Charter Schools: A Vision for the District of Columbia."

A Part of It – New York

Following enactment of New York's charter school law in 1998, with which CER was heavily engaged, work begins in influencing the media, and CER heavily promotes new charter schools and offers guidance and support to the SUNY authorizer and the New York Charter School Resource Center, on whose board Jeanne serves.

A One and a Two

- In 1999, New Jersey becomes an unexpected battleground as the Whitman Administration tries to rollback charter school freedoms. In May, CER organizes testimony in Trenton to a joint education committee on how the effects of charter schools on public school solvency are exaggerated. A year later, CER provides advocacy-training materials to New Jersey charter leaders to empower them in their political arena.
- On two other fronts in the Spring of 1999, CER devotes itself to helping adopt charter legislation in two states. On-site analysis and strategic planning; direct contact with, and education of key Democratic legislators on the value of charters; drafting and placement of op-eds; formation of alliances with state leaders; grassroots activation; rapid response with information and responses to arguments against charters — all this and more is brought to bear throughout two bruising legislative sessions. The result: in May, Oregon joins the ranks of charter school states and is followed just a few hours later by Oklahoma making them the 36th and 37th states with charter school laws.

The Maryland Saga

Jeanne Allen also travels to Annapolis in 1999, to begin a long fight for a charter school law in Maryland. She advises legislators on model charter language and testifies in favor of strong charter school legislation before a joint Assembly-Senate committee hearing – testimony that is picked as an op-ed piece and distributed to the media statewide. During the next four years CER develops grassroots support and public awareness of charter schools. In 2003, CER again has a presence, and testimony is eventually delivered to the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee urging support for Governor Ehrlich's strong charter school proposal. A month later a bill is passed, but not the strong bill wanted by the Governor and needed by reformers. The bill contains weaknesses that, in eight other states, have effectively strangled charter growth. CER urges Governor Ehrlich to veto proposals that don't increase teacher autonomy or create new chartering authorities. But CER remains committed to aiding parents and teachers who want charters. Through its new "Building Better Schools in Maryland" project, CER will help develop 5 charters in poor neighborhoods.

Back Home Again in Indiana

Indiana's charter school law, ranked by CER as the sixth strongest in the nation, is adopted in 2001, culminating seven years cooperative effort between CER and State Senator Teresa Lubbers. In June, CER co-sponsors and coordinates the first Indianapolis Charter School Conference providing guidance to more than 450 attendees on organizing, authorizing and operating charter schools. And the Center's work continues in Indiana as it works with parents, legislators, universities, public school officials, and private advocacy groups to help create a uniform, responsive, and supportive infrastructure in which charter schools can flourish.

California Here We Are

Always-interesting California is a recurring player in CER's charter work as the Center becomes involved, in one way or another, with the opening and maintenance of more than 200 California charter schools. In 1996, CER marshals grassroots action to remove the cap on the number of charter schools. In 2003, it works against attempts to rollback charter school gains and brings to the table the need for a new charter infrastructure in the state, in turn contributing to the development of the new organization. Through the Center's longstanding relationships with reformers in Los Angeles, CER trains parents to be charter activists, assists more groups trying to create charter schools, and helps Granada High School in its efforts to convert to a charter.

This, That and the Other

- Jeanne Allen serves as keynote speaker for the Florida Charter School Resource Center's 4th annual Charter School Conference with the Florida School Board – October 1999.
- CER External Affairs Director, Anna Marcucio, speaks at Arkansas' 2003 state charter school conference.
- Wyoming is the focus of CER efforts as the Center coordinates with grassroots activists to strengthen their charter law.
- Brochures and information from the Center's Charter School Grassroots Toolkit are delivered to the Maine Association for Charter Schools conference.

"Thank you so much for your analysis of the Washington State charter bill and for the model legislation. I appreciate your being in communication with Senator Johnson so that the best possible bill can be put forward for Washington State."

Cindy Omlin, Washington

National Charter School Week

- 2001 – CER provides an online “toolkit” to give local charter schools the resources needed to promote their schools and activities.
- 2002 – CER orchestrates a week of events to nationally showcase the charter school movement.
- 2003 – CER arranges for Secretary of Education Rod Paige to celebrate charter week in Washington, DC

OUTREACH

“Some 3,000 miles away, the Center for Education Reform responded to a simple plea for help. They [put] the group in contact with a nationally syndicated columnist whose editorial... powerfully spelled out the plight of these parents. They [worked] selfless[ly]... Through deep contacts and quick thinking, they put parents in touch with several supporters. While others stood silent, the Center for Education Reform answered the call. Thanks to their efforts, over 500 low-income children, mostly black and Hispanic children, will be able to attend their charter school this fall.”

Gary Larson, Activist, California

One of the true pleasures of the work of the Center is the opportunity it provides for contact with individuals and organizations from across the country that are at the frontlines of education reform movement. Their commitment is truly inspiring and their unflagging efforts are what have kept the ideas and dreams of reform alive and well. Here is a small sampling of the Center’s outreach to community organizations and activists and efforts to support their good works.

Out West, Back East and In-between

- 1999 – CER lends its support to the Arizona Parents Association for Children’s Education and travels to the state to attend conferences and meetings, including the Arizona Charter School Conference in Tucson.
- The Center supports California’s Gary Larson (now Public Relations director of the state’s charter association) in his parent-led grassroots fight to keep the San Francisco Unified School District from closing the Edison Charter School in 2001. Down in Los Angeles CER works with hundreds of parents and activists and helps form United Parents for School Choice.
- In Tennessee, CER supplies charter legislation information to, and works closely with, local foundations and organizations to develop a strong charter school law.
- In the spring of 1999 CER sponsors and helps organize parent conferences in Maine to encourage parental involvement in education and activism in reform. That fall, CER helps support and widely promote a community meeting on charter schools.

“Thanks for your information on charters – we are in an early stage of working on legislation and your support will be invaluable.”

Emanuel Pariser, The Community School, Camden, Maine

- In the District of Columbia in the summer of 1999, CER sponsors a Leaders Forum to introduce reformers from around the nation to the greater-DC community. In early 2000, parents seek out the Center to help establish local reform groups and implement agendas that will bring other parents to the cause and attract legislative attention.
- In 1999, and 2000, CER provides Maryland parents with advice and materials to help them establish local reform groups, collaborates with the Maryland Coalition for Educational Reform to advance key issues, hires a Maryland coordinator and supports the Monocacy Valley Montessori School in developing the state's first charter school.
- Throughout 2000, and 2001, CER provides information, guidance and support to local contacts and partners in Indiana who are working to win passage of charter legislation.
- In Michigan, attendees at the 2000 Michigan Association of Public Schools conference receive CER's charter school brochures and information from its Grassroots Toolkit.
- The 1,600 attendees at the 2001 Texas Educator Agency Parent Conference and the 300 participants in the Texas Charter School Public Forum receive education reform information from CER.

BATTLES WITH THE BLOB

"The BLOB [is] the hundreds of sincere but unhelpful panels, boards, councils, union locals, departments, federations, alliances, and consulting firms that make up the educational establishment. 'Not really a wall but, rather, more like quicksand or a tar pit where ideas sink slowly out of sight, leaving everything just as it had been,' notes Jeanne Allen of the Center for Education Reform, a spunky, non-BLOBBY group."

Jonathan Alter, *Newsweek*

From brief skirmishes to protracted sieges, we have had our share of run-ins with the education establishment over the past ten years, and while we don't like to dwell on the negative, we thought it appropriate to at least give mention to just a few of the dust-ups that have occurred.

California – We're Still Here

In 2002, legislative bill AB2160 – giving school employee unions control of the development and implementation of any program designed to enhance pupil academic performance, the selection of textbooks and instructional materials, the development and implementation of local education standards, development of curriculum and instruction, and the right to decide how parents will or will not be allowed to participate in schooling – is a little more than CER can stand. The Center is a participant in successfully quashing the measure.

2002 also sees several attempts by the union-backed legislature to rollback earlier-won reform gains (some of which, unfortunately, proved successful). CER is vigilant, consistently contacting state leaders and grassroots activists to rally their support and try to hold the line against the rollbacks.

Thomas Jefferson in the Land of Lincoln

CER lends its support to Thomas Jefferson Charter School, which has been plagued for years by unfriendly school boards, zoning boards, city council members and anti-reform nags who stymie its plans. Thanks to this support and the determination of its organizers, in 1999, this Core Knowledge direct instruction-based charter finally opens in a few vacant classrooms in a large public school in downtown Chicago. But the protracted battle leaves wounds, and bureaucratic meddling leads to its unfortunate closing.

Beware of Greeks Bearing Gifts in the Land of Lincoln

A careful critique by CER of a 2002 labor bill that, to the joy of reformers, has the potential to raise the cap on Chicago charters, reveals that it calls for an increased percentage of certified (not "qualified") teachers in charters; a provision restricting charters to one campus per; and a two-year moratorium on charters contracting with for-profit management companies. When legislation raising the charter cap in Chicago finally passes, CER again sounds the alarm on the signed compromise bill, which restores collective bargaining rights – and thus control over issues like privatization and class size – to teachers.

Throwing Mud in Michigan

A disconcerted parent in Rochester, Michigan informs CER that anti-choice propaganda is being sent home from school with her child. CER looks into it, and decries the tactic, bringing statewide public and media attention to the covert, PTA-backed anti-choice work. Later in the year, Jeanne Allen submits a letter to *Education Week* responding to an article on the experience of Inkster, MI, with charter schools. The letter defends the rights of parents to remove their children from ineffective schools when given the choice, supports the charter movement as providing necessary competition to districts with a history of failing its students, and notes that *Ed Week* would have found arguments and evidence supporting these facts in CER's paper on charters, "The Ripple Effect: A Cresting Wave."

A Day Without the A+ Plan is Like a Day Without Sunshine

Jeb Bush makes education reform a political, policy and personal crusade in the Sunshine State as a private citizen, as a candidate for public office and as the state's governor. One result (of many): his renowned A+ Plan which produces dramatic turnarounds in some of Florida's most troubled schools. It's all a bit too dramatic for some, though. The plan's success drives the blob, the unions and the usual anti-reform suspects nuts and they move to kill it. Having lent years of support to Florida's efforts, CER steps up to the plate again to go to bat for the program, distributing literature and providing guidance to grassroots supporters. We win, they lose.

The Greatest Show on Earth – Choice in our Nation's Capital

In a struggle too complicated to convey and that continues up to this very minute – from charters, to vouchers, to standards, to mismanagement, to union corruption – DC remains a three-ring circus of education reform and choice. In 1993 CER opens its doors, turns on the lights, and enters the fray. Charters are first on the agenda as CER becomes the main advocate for enactment of a charter law and seeing that schools actually open. Eventually they do, thanks to CER and many others... and no thanks to the DC School Board. In what comes to be a near-annual event, CER rounds up charter schools parents, students and community choice advocates and marches up to the Capitol to put faces and names on those for whom House and Senate action will mean hope and progress — and for whom in action will mean their being left behind.

In May of this year, in one of the most gratifying turns in the twisted path of DC school reform, DC Mayor Anthony Williams appearing at a CER-sponsored event, breaks ranks with the blob and announces HIS SUPPORT FOR A VOUCHER PLAN FOR THE CITY! As the voucher battle rages on, in July CER again advances the cause of reform, preparing the definitive fact sheet on ed reform in DC and distributing it to Capitol Hill. (A quick update – the Mayor has now asked that the schools be taken away from the school board and that they be given to him to run. Don't go away—we're pretty sure the trapeze act is next.)

The Issue that Made Milwaukee Famous

Milwaukee becomes the site of one of the hottest choice battles ever waged, as vouchers are advanced by reformers and attacked by the antis. CER is there through the thick and thin of it: promoting choice and one its greatest advocates, Howard Fuller, doing the research and writing and distributing *School Choice: The Truth About Vouchers* and *Nine Lies About School Choice*, defending pro-reform Rep. John Gardner against attacks designed to unseat him (he won re-election), and signing on to the amicus brief when the Milwaukee choice program was put on trial.

CHANGING THE DEBATE

"I really enjoy the excellent job your organization does at bringing some reality to the educational discourse.... Keep the lines of communication open and fight the good fight."

Gene Cleveland, Carson City, Nevada

"You continue to be the voice of reason and clarity when it comes to education reform."

Michael Moe, ThinkEquity, San Francisco, California

"I read [Jeanne Allen's letter in the Miami Herald] this a.m.—well said and greatly appreciated. I sent [it] to Governor [Jeb] Bush and Lieutenant Governor Brogan."

Brewser Brown, (then) Chief of Staff, to the Lt. Governor, Florida

On an issue as broad and emotional as education reform it is difficult to shift the debate away from endless arguments over how to protect the status quo and move it toward a discussion of ideas on how to change it – especially when those ideas are under constant attack from the establishment that they threaten. CER has written and placed dozens of op-eds and letters to editors in newspapers across the country – including virtually every major daily, worked with hundreds of reporters to educate them on issues of reform and done countless print, radio and television interviews on virtually every aspect of education reform. And that's just some of the work carried out in our efforts to change the debate.

There is no way to adequately report on how much we've done in this area over the past ten years – a two column list of newspaper interviews alone runs for six pages – so it will have to suffice to say that whenever we've been offered the chance to speak up or somehow further the debate, we've taken it...and when we haven't been offered the chance, we've taken it anyway.

Goin' to Graceland

NEA president Bob Chase attempts to shift the terms of the debate, skirting the union's responsibilities. CER places an op-ed in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* – and redistributes it nationally – taking on Chase.

Anecdotal Schmanecdotal

In March 2003, *New York Times* education columnist Mike Winerip uses one piece of anecdotal evidence from Arizona and a single statistic on the performance of Arizona charters to announce that "the charter bubble has burst." In a letter to the *Times*, Jeanne Allen takes Winerip to task for his rhetorical liberties and use of circumstantial evidence to draw such a woefully inaccurate conclusion, pointing to the results of the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools survey reporting 67% of parents of charter school students rating their schools as A or A+, compared to 38% of Arizona's traditional public school parents.

Seeing is Believing

To increase Senate awareness of the value of the education reform initiatives contained in the 1996 District of Columbia Appropriations bill, CER organizes a visit by Senators Dan Coats (R-IN) and Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) to the private Dupont Park School in DC. Following the tour the Senators hold a news conference urging passage of the measure.

But you forgot to mention...

An April 2003 *Washington Post* article on schools neglects to mention the abysmal state of basic-skills performance in the District where nearly 85% of students do not test at basic levels in reading, writing, or computing. CER's media folks write the paper, pointing out the glaring omission of this important fact and urging stronger support for charter schools and for implementation of a broad school choice program.

Correcting the Record

In April 2002, Michigan's Commission on Charter Schools releases a report that includes recommendations for restricting the freedom of charters. CER fires off a news alert that includes a full analysis of the report and its errors, flaws and misassumptions.

Go Figure

Fed up with the annual PDK poll purporting to show overwhelming parental satisfaction with public schools and solid public opposition to choice, CER commissions its own poll on the same subjects. When biased language is removed from the poll questions, guess what the survey finds? Parents are not especially satisfied with their schools and they support school choice. The findings are distributed to the media nationwide.

The Power of the Press

"In February 1999, I stumbled upon an interesting story in Reader's Digest about charter schools... At the end of the article was the address for the Center for Education Reform, from which more information could be obtained. Soon after receiving this information packet, I organized a meeting with some friends."

Michigan's Marshall Academy Charter School founder, Erich Heidenreich



RESEARCH, MATERIALS, PUBLICATIONS

"[The Center] is a valuable resource and communications center for all interested in education reform."

Pat Heffernan, FloridaChild

"Thanks so much for the supportive material you sent us. It will go a long way in our own efforts to show the value and purpose of charter schools as agents of change."

Anne Alpert, Side By Side Community School, S. Norwalk, Connecticut

"Thanks for your brochure about the A Plus plan. You are a good friend!"

Governor Jeb Bush

From *THE SCHOOL REFORM HANDBOOK: HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SCHOOLS* (one of our very first publications) to the not-yet-released Charter School Survey of 2003, from this monthly letter to our web site (which I encourage you to visit), researching the issues and providing informative, useful materials to everyone from local parents to state and federal policy makers has been a key part of our work. Again, space limitations preclude our listing the books, reports, actions papers, brochures, information packs and publicity materials that we have available, but they're all listed on the web site, which gives you another reason to log on.

THAT'S NICE OF YOU TO SAY

Scattered throughout this month's letter are comments from friends from all walks of life from all across America. As much as anything else, messages and letters of support that we have received from so many over the years have helped us continue to move forward and wage the good fight. So it is again, with thanks to all of you, that we conclude by sharing a few of the kind words of encouragement we have received over the years.

"The Center for Education Reform ... helped us achieve a major education reform victory in Pennsylvania."

Eugene Hickok, former Pennsylvania Education Secretary

"You and your organization are a very bright light in this country and will make a big difference in the lives of our children."

Robert Luddy, Wake Forest, NC

"Thank goodness you are out there working on ideas to better education."

The Honorable Rita Martinson, Mississippi House of Representatives

"You have done much to advance a cause which is critical to the future of our country!"

Patricia Woehrer, Vine and Branches Foundation, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

"...any parent who dreams of having choice is in your debt."

Don Eberly, The Civil Society Project

"Again, the Center for Education Reform has proven to be one of the few national organizations that provides real value-added to grassroots organizations. If we get charter schools in 1998, you will deserve a considerable share of the credit."

Tom Carroll, (then) President, Empire Foundation, Albany, New York

"I believe [the Charter School Workbook] will be the equivalent of the Bible for charter school supporters during the ... 1998 legislative session."

Jim Spady, Seattle, Washington

"The Center for Education Reform's newsletter brings joy in the success of others, hope for the future ...and humor that reminds us of the absurd, undemocratic plight of parents having to fight for educational choice."

Sheryl Siegel, Grand Rapids, Michigan

"More than any other piece that I receive, [the Monthly Letter] keeps me informed on all the choice and alternative education issues throughout the country."

Joseph Byers, Kentucky League for Educational Alternatives

"I found your website full of so much great information, I don't think I'll need to ask for [more sites] anymore."

Joel Faul, San Diego, California

"I worked at a voucher school in Milwaukee, and have recently joined the public school scene in L.A." What a shock!... When I have a bad day, I come to you to be inspired!"

Ann Szekely, Teacher, Venice, California

