



A YEAR IN REVIEW

2017-2018

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CER'S
YEAR IN
REVIEW

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Six terms, and four presidents in, CER knows how to work within any political context. As unions lick their wounds with the unexpected election of Donald J. Trump as the 45th President of the US, CER moves to draw broad and bold strokes for how an Administration—and a still-fresh Congress—ought to act to enable and facilitate a big, New Opportunity Agenda fused with innovation so that all learners at all levels, and all schools, might someday be great again (to use a new term of art!) So CER got right to work before any oaths were taken to ensure there was a clear path for action in this new environment. Thus was born *The First 100 Days: The path to going bold on education innovation & opportunity*.

The Prescription?

Spending: Federal spending needs to be redirected, repackaged, and permitted to be used across traditional program lines.

Teaching: Solve the crisis in teaching. Encourage the opening up of the teaching profession.

Higher Education: Recast the federal role in higher education.

Educational Choice: The federal government should recognize state initiatives that provide opportunities for students beyond the limitations of traditional public schools.



PUBLICATION:

This is an historic opportunity for the Department of Education to redefine the focus and effectiveness of the federal government's role in education. *The First 100 Days* lays out an assertive plan of action that can truly launch a revolution in education.

The attack on the direction being taken by the new administration manifested itself most notably in the relentless criticism of Betsy DeVos as the nominee for U.S. Secretary of Education. Sure, we argued, she's not everyone's cup of tea. But what's wrong with giving everyone an opportunity to show the stuff of which they are made? Indeed, without a vested interest that protects their employment or field, DeVos is a unique and unbridled supporter of opportunity for all. Our quotes and citations in the nation's leading media and newspapers were extensive:



LETTER: DEVOS CRITIQUE IN NEW YORK TIMES FILLED WITH GREAT LAKES-SIZED HOLES

One could argue that it wasn't their fault that Detroit schools failed, so why not let them fix things? But the problem was bigger than that. Their failure then, and now, to see the limitations of a school district model created some 150 years ago—which vests all power in a central office bureaucracy and the contractual employees they are mandated to hire—was an impenetrable roadblock to success.

Our CEO was the go-to source for objective, clarifying comments on the nomination. As she told **ABC News** in the coverage picked up by scores of other news outlets:



We've been fighting education wars for years. It doesn't matter how tepid we are—any suggestion of changing the status quo emits screams and howls from the traditional establishment. If we can't be controversial... in debate about how to help our kids, then we should be out of business.

— JEANNE ALLEN



Her on camera *Wall Street Journal* interview also made clear the opportunity for kids with a pro-reform secretary in office.

CER takes the opposition to task, calling out the overblown efforts at fear-mongering as 'outrageous and contradictory.'

NEWS RELEASE: UNION ATTACK ON DEVOS 'OUTRAGEOUS AND CONTRADICTIONY,' CER'S JEANNE ALLEN SAYS

“...But charter schools are public schools, they're just not the kinds of public schools that the AFT likes,” Allen said. “For the head of an organization that purports to represent teachers by attempting to create fear among them is outrageous and contradictory to success.”



Kentucky Moves to Enact a New Charter School Law

A major initiative in support of a strong charter law is launched. This month we usher charter pioneer, Seth Andrews, founder of Democracy Prep Charter Schools and Washington Leadership Academy around the state to provide his counsel on why legislators must take positive these steps for kids.



CHARTER SCHOOLS: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR OPPORTUNITY

The General Assembly has the opportunity to expand public education options for all parents, students and educators. Legislation allowing for public charter schools is long overdue. Kentucky is one of only seven states that does not allow for these innovative public schools.



#SchoolChoice changes lives. The time is now to advance education opportunity for learners of all ages.



@edreform president Jeanne Allen sounds off on teachers unions effort to discredit Betsy DeVos and her push for school choice

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Boys Latin Charter School Founder and CER Board Member David Hardy launches *Black Degrees Matter* to a packed house with leaders from around Philadelphia, like State Senator Anthony Williams and many others.



With 100 Days underway, CER undertakes a conscious effort to reshape the discussion on education introducing the concepts of innovation and opportunity as key drivers of reform and carrying that message to Capitol Hill with an education innovation roadshow. We seek to convince lawmakers to create a new platform for ed tech entrepreneurs and innovators, and provide counsel to over 50 members of congress and their staffs.



As these key education reform initiatives take shape under the new administration our leadership takes to the national stage to discuss the issues.



Meanwhile, with the DeVos controversy continuing into February, and as she became the lightning rod for all criticism of the new administration, CER is continually solicited for our opinions.



And we offer a few of our own thoughts to the Secretary.

JEANNE ALLEN: MY OPEN LETTER TO BETSY DEVOS

You're a highly accomplished executive, thought leader, philanthropist, and a mother, so the last thing you need is advice. That said, and with deep respect, I offer you a few thoughts I've assembled, not just in reaction to the past few weeks, but as a result of my three decades (that hurts to write) in Washington and my experience with the U.S. Department of Education throughout that time.



Back in the Bluegrass state, with opponents trying to create controversy by questioning the constitutionality of charter schools, CER takes the question to the top legal scholar on such issues, former solicitor Paul Clement, who provides a report with sound evidence to allow the debate to continue.

STATEMENT: A STRONG KENTUCKY CHARTER SCHOOL LAW CLEARLY MEETS CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS, TOP LEGAL EXPERTS FIND

Clement and his colleagues find that, “by their plain terms, these provisions do not limit the General Assembly’s broad authority under Section 183 to structure the common school system as the General Assembly sees fit.” ... The Kentucky Constitution “clearly grants the General Assembly broad authority to decide what reforms will make the common school system most efficient.”

OP ED: WHEN IT COMES TO CHARTER SCHOOLS, KENTUCKY IS DOING IT WRONG

But there’s a right way and a wrong way for a state to join the charter school movement. And despite the prevailing winds, Kentucky appears to be about to do it the wrong way.

HUFFPOST

RELEASE: WHAT WE WANT TO HEAR FROM PRESIDENT TRUMP IN HIS FIRST “STATE OF THE UNION” ADDRESS

“President Trump has a primetime opportunity to tell Congress that the watchwords in the field of education for the next four years are parental choice and freedom for children to attend a school that meets their needs,” declared Jeanne Allen, the founder and CEO of the Center of Education Reform (CER).

OP ED: IN EDUCATION, AMERICA REMAINS A NATION AT RISK

The State of Education still is not strong, and thus the union is not either. As best said in *A Nation at Risk*: “In a world of ever-accelerating competition and change in the conditions of the workplace, of ever-greater danger, and of ever-larger opportunities for those prepared to meet them, educational reform should focus on the goal of creating a Learning Society.”

Schools of choice have the ultimate accountability because they’re schools parents chose to go to --
@RepLukeMesser
#dccharterconference



Glad 2 C @POTUS @mike_pence @BetsyDeVos @KellyannePolls w/school consumers of all stripes. @edreform also suggests this concrete next step:



—
Finally, the federal government should dedicate its resources to helping parents become informed customers.

A national agenda for reform. CER has set out to change the conversation—and, as such the actions—surrounding education in the U.S.

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Joining forces with national and local colleagues to defend the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program, which even under a friendly Congress is threatened with a standstill, we mobilize parents and schools and help them carry the message personally to members and their staffs. We cheer the ultimate result, but it was a heavy lift to get there.

TOP 3 REASONS CONGRESS SHOULD SUPPORT SCHOOL CHOICE IN WASH., DC

Leaders from throughout Washington have been advocating for this program for years. It's time to put politics aside and come together as a city to embrace Congressional support of options in the capital city.



Speaking out is our custom, and so this month we come to the aid of students and families in Georgia to avert harmful policy actions.

OP ED: NEVER TRADE FLEXIBILITY AND AUTONOMY FOR MONEY AND BUILDINGS

There's nothing wrong with having the State Board of Education and/or the State Charter Schools Commission developing what they believe to be best practices for authorizing, but it should be just that—best practices. There should be flexibility and autonomy for authorizers to do this in the way they deem best for the types of schools they oversee.

Kentucky's first step toward a charter school law fails the test.

STATEMENT: KENTUCKY HOUSE PASSES CHARTER SCHOOL BILL

CER has been working for months with leaders in the state to create a better understanding of the conditions necessary for a strong charter school law. But we respectfully disagree with our colleagues who joined the fight later that simply passing a bill is progress.

If they only paid attention...the work requires a relentless focus, and constant education. That's why annually we do the research necessary. Thus we release the annual ranking of the nation's charter school laws—the premiere guide for lawmakers—demonstrating that over time, charter school practices have lost a degree of their innovative flair, a result of the regulatory rollback spurred on by opponents and not challenged firmly by some advocates.

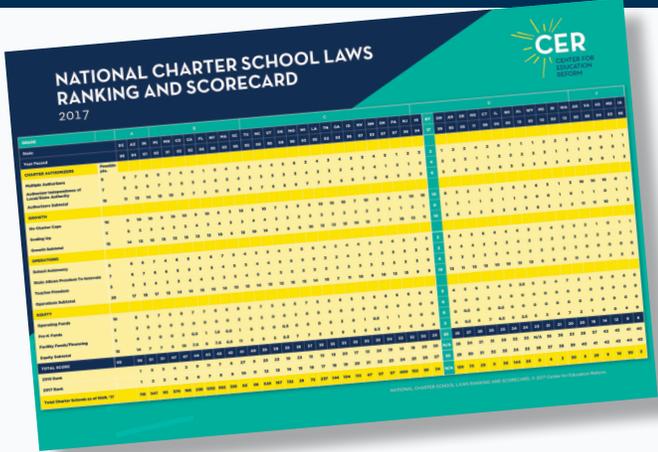
17th Edition of CER's National Charter School Law Ranking & Scorecard

66

It's a troubling commentary. Too many laws are not being implemented as envisioned when they were adopted, and it is stifling the effectiveness and growth of charter schools across the country.

— JEANNE ALLEN

Thank you, @BetsyDeVosEd, for meeting with us and other ed-reformers today!

CER gave above-average grades to only 25 percent of school laws—a significant drop from past rankings, which, as recently as 2014, had half the schools earning above-average marks.

A Visit with the Education Secretary & The Birth of the Charter School Roundtable

Organized by CER, charter school network leaders, small and large, profit and non-profit, arrive in Washington to meet with Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos and to impress upon her the dire consequences of too much government interference in chartering. The Secretary was surprised and dismayed to learn of the obstacles created at the federal and state levels and asked our help to resolve it.



Weighing in on President Trump's executive order on education.

JAN
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TRUMP ORDERS STUDY OF FEDERAL ROLE IN EDUCATION

Trump's order brings "welcome attention to a much-overlooked problem of behavior that has festered through all administrations," said Jeanne Allen, a veteran of the Reagan administration who runs the D.C.-based Center for Education Reform, which advocates for vouchers, charter schools and other forms of choice.

The
Washington
Post

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STATEMENT:

We applaud the Trump Administration for pushing forward on one of the four main points of CER's recommendations for the *First 100 Days: The path to going bold on education innovation & opportunity.*

MAY

Aiding efforts at innovation in North Carolina and challenging policies that pose a threat to charter autonomy in Arizona.

JUN

STATEMENT: EIGHT SENTENCES WOULD GIVE ARIZONA LAWMAKERS THE POWER TO MICROMANAGE AND SECOND-GUESS CHARTER SCHOOLS

In one breathtaking move, the bill's eight sentences of text would give the state government the authority to micromanage and second-guess every decision that a charter school operator may make about apportioning its resources to provide a quality education.

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Highlighting successes...

HOW A FORMER CATHOLIC CHURCH BECAME AN EXTRAORDINARY CHARTER SCHOOL

In 2005, David Hardy, a local education leader (and board member of my organization, the Center for Education Reform), saw that young men in Philly could benefit not only from greater academic achievement, but also from character development. Two years later, his vision became a reality, when Boys' Latin welcomed its inaugural class. By 2008, Hardy had transformed a former Catholic church and school into one of the most modern, state-of-the-art institutions in the region.



Kudos to **@DougDucey** and **@DebbieLesko** for expanding portable public-education funding in Arizona!



<http://nyti.ms/2oSx8OT>

In remembrance:



THE ENORMOUSLY IMPORTANT LESSON THAT KATE O'BEIRNE TAUGHT ME

As an early board member of the organization I founded, the Center for Education Reform, Kate was intensively dedicated to CER (even though education reform wasn't the issue that grabbed her most). She was steadfast in her commitment to conservative principles.

— JEANNE ALLEN

Watch the faces of these parents when they learn that their children have been accepted into a charter school:



<http://bit.ly/2oW8bOR>

OUR MISSION:

To expand educational opportunities that lead to improved economic outcomes for all Americans, particularly our youth, ensuring that the conditions are ripe for innovation, freedom and flexibility throughout U.S. education.



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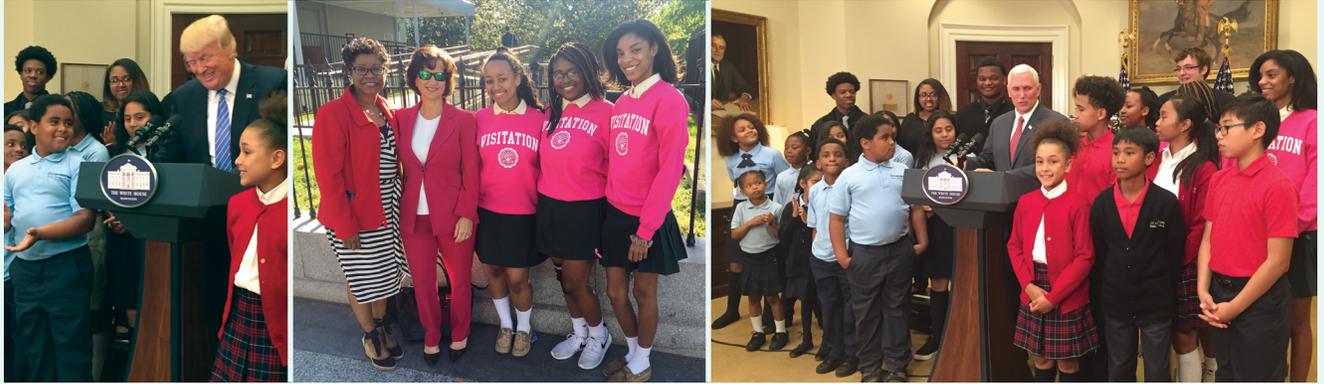
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White House Celebration Of School Choice—With A Surprise Visit From President Trump

Inside the Vice President’s office, the call was made—we need help to gather students so that the White House can salute the reauthorization of the DC scholarship program and the greater progress made in school choice. CER was the first call, and within 24 hours we delivered representatives from DC and IN schools of choice, who gathered to hear from VP Pence, or so they thought.

In the midst of remarks by Ed Secretary Betsy DeVos, the president appeared and took over the podium. His comments were warm and reassuring, as was the fact that the White House was once again recognizing the accomplishments of reformers everywhere.



EVENT: AEI FORUM: ADVICE TO YOUNG REFORMERS

Educating the next generation of edreformers is always our thing, so having our Founder and CEO join AEI scholar Rick Hess in discussing his new Letter to Young Reformers was a joy and a privilege.

ASU + GSV Summit—Ed Innovation at Work

Continuing its proud partnership with this path breaking national forum for investors, technology CEOs, and people on the cutting edge of the knowledge industry, CER sets up shop in Salt Lake to bring perspective and policy discussions to innovators who are not normally exposed to our work. In the process, we draw new supporters and activists, and make the tent bigger.

Jeanne also was called upon to conduct the first public event interview of Ed Secretary DeVos, which garnered much appreciation by attendees.



Saluting Progress in Florida: Gov. Scott ushers in more opportunity, more equity for kids signing HB 7069.



GOV. SCOTT USHERS IN MORE OPPORTUNITY, MORE EQUITY FOR KIDS SIGNING HB 7069

Governors like Rick Scott and state leaders like Speaker Richard Corcoran are shining lights for greater educational opportunity for kids, flexibility for educators. We hope others will follow their lead.

— JEANNE ALLEN

Encouraging words from @POTUS this morning at the @WhiteHouse. Thank you, @realDonaldTrump. And @VP. And @BetsyDevosEd.

During my campaign for President, I promised to fight for school choice — very important. It was featured in my Joint Address to Congress. And today, I'm calling on all lawmakers to work with us to help extend school choice to millions more children all across the United States of America, including millions of low-income Hispanic and African American children who deserve the same chance as every other child in America to live out their dreams and fill up their hearts and be educated at the top, top level.

Fwd: Remarks by President Trump at a School... email Shared via Instagram

Focus on cutting red tape, promoting innovation, transforming education...

OP ED: HERE'S HOW WASHINGTON, D.C. CAN DRIVE INNOVATION IN EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY— WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED

But Congress has a unique quality, quite apart from its partisan divide, which seems to have been overlooked by most, if not all, pundits and casual observers—this may be the first Congress whose members have lived an entire generation with technology at the center of their lives.



Lt. Gov. Dan Forest
@LtGovDanForest

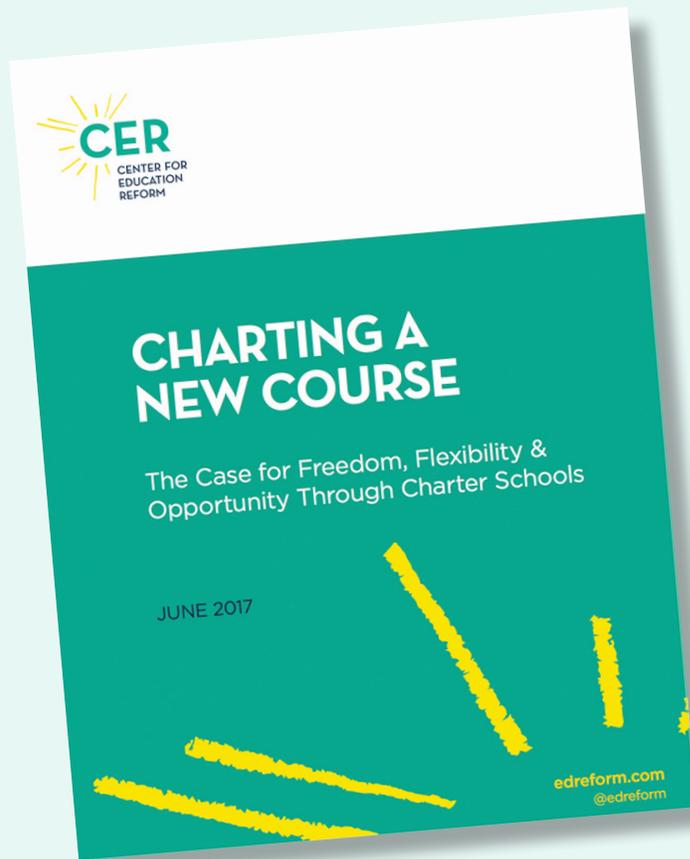
Thanks @edreform for having me to discuss how we need to constantly innovate & allow flexibility in our education system #asugsv2017



OP ED: THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO REFORM EDUCATION—THIS NEW BOOK EXPLAINS WHY ONLY ONE OF THEM WILL SUCCEED

Once upon a time, education reform reflected revolutionary change. Today, ed reform has become synonymous with the status quo. There's little urgency, too many excuses, and too few entrepreneurs.

HUFFPOST



CER kicks off summer by shaking up the EdReform community with the release of *Charting a New Course: The Case for Freedom, Flexibility & Opportunity Through Charter Schools*, the result of a months-long review with leading scholars and education reform policy advocates that began in November 2016 with **EdReform: Revived**.

The landmark document fuels a new debate on what it means to have truly student-centered schools.

REGULATIONS ARE STRANGLING CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charters are slowly morphing into bureaucratic, risk-averse organizations fixated on process over experimentation. Such organizational behavior is called isomorphism, allowing once-innovative organizations to resemble those they disrupted. The root cause has been a regulatory push of laws at both the state and federal levels. These have empowered state agencies to micromanage everything from the approval to the authorization of charters. Some call it accountability. Others know it better as bureaucracy.



Supreme Court Decision in Trinity Lutheran v. Comer is a Significant Victory for School Choice.

Advocates of school choice cheer as the Supreme Court’s decision in Trinity Lutheran v. Comer hands a significant victory to equitable access in schooling and parental choice. Trinity Lutheran had been denied state funding for a playground surface solely because its school is a religious one. But the High Court found that such a prior ruling is “odious to our Constitution all the same.”

Joining our partners nationwide in promoting this decision, we recognize that while the Court did not take the opportunity to review the constitutionality of discriminatory Blaine Amendments, it was firm and clear that denying a generally available benefit solely on account of religious identity imposes a penalty on the free exercise of religion, and potentially paves the way for future review.

OP ED: SUPREME COURT DECISION IN TRINITY LUTHERAN V. COMER IS A SIGNIFICANT VICTORY FOR SCHOOL CHOICE

CER will work to ensure that there will be other opportunities for the court to review the constitutionality of Blaine Amendments and pave the way for parents to decide the best educational opportunities for their children, be they private, religious or public in nature.



SUPREME COURT PLAYGROUND RULING FEEDS SCHOOL VOUCHER DEBATE

But the pro-school choice Center for Education Reform said that even without reviewing the constitutionality of Missouri’s prohibition on the use of state funds at religious schools, the justices had bolstered the choice movement by condemning the denial of a public benefit to an otherwise eligible recipient solely on the basis of its religious identity.



HOW A U.S. SUPREME COURT CASE MAY HELP TURN THE TIDE FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE

This decision has the potential to change all that. Now all we need are lawmakers willing to put that premise to the test. With a nation where only 35 percent of all students are proficient in core subjects, we don’t have time to waste.



Take a minute to read these powerful words from @Dyrnwyn, @HowardLFuller, and @CitizenStewart on liberating black kids from broken schools

Our belief is that low-income and working-class families need, as one of the few levers of power at their disposal, the power to choose the right school for their children — and that those choices should include traditional public, public charter, and private schools. Our belief is grounded not just in our understanding that no one type of school is the right fit for every type of child, but in the frank, stark, brutal reality and history that colors the pursuit of education by Black people in this country.

Bradford, Fuller & Stewart: Liberating Black Kid... thekenyon.org Shared via Instagram



Wonderful evening hosting a Salute to Charter Schools. Thanks to all who attended!



Beyond the First 100 Days

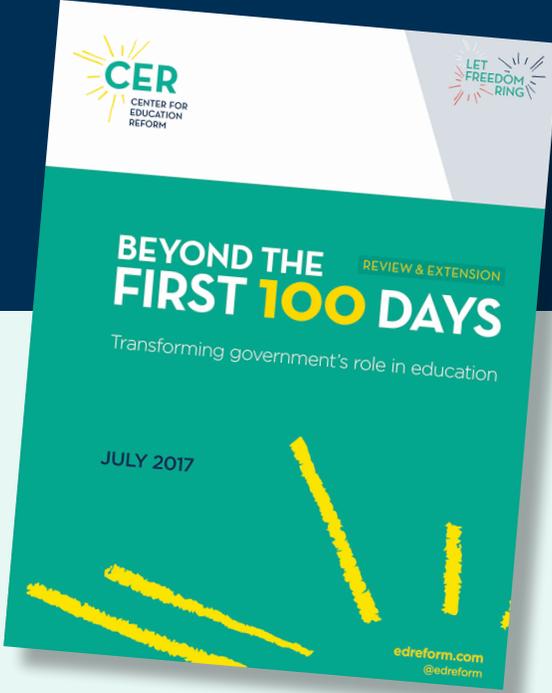
On the eve of July 4th CER releases *Beyond the First 100 Days: Transforming government's role in education*—a review of the Administration's progress in addressing education issues at the federal level and a reiteration of the directions and recommendations CER published in January.

The report urges the Administration to be bold and consider what's possible when taking control of a \$70 billion agency. *We need to remember that the freedoms our Founders fought for are just as critical in education as they are in our day-to-day lives. We all hope this effort will serve as a call to 'Let Freedom Ring' for all learners, at all levels.*

“

We said at the outset that this is an historic opportunity for change and that remains true. And there's plenty of time to accomplish great things, but it will take focus and commitment, which is what *Beyond the First 100 Days* is all about.

— JEANNE ALLEN




CER founder and CEO Jeanne Allen joins business leader, former CER board member and Heritage Foundation Director Bill Walton at his podcast, Common Sense, to discuss options for improving the nation's education system.

Nevada Takes Giant Step Backward For Charters

In June the Nevada State Legislature takes up a proposal that would create an overly bureaucratic and unfriendly environment for charter schools in the state; the action would limit the growth and development of all charters that don't operate like traditional public schools. CER organizes charter school leaders to caution Nevada's policymakers against enacting the measure.

NEWS RELEASE:

In the letter, the Roundtable, a national leadership group dedicated to sound charter school policy and representing hundreds of thousands of students, cautioned the lawmakers that this bill would put charter schools in the same regulatory path that traditional public school educators have been fighting for years.

CER's Salute to Charter Schools

Leading the way during National Charter Schools Week, CER hosts a major gathering of charter school advocates, policy makers, and charter school operators from around the country in a Salute to Charter Schools. Emceed by founder and CEO Jeanne Allen, the event drew several hundred guests who were treated to remarks by Jimmy Kemp, President of the Jack Kemp Foundation, Congressman Paul Mitchell (R-MI) and Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.



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Brokering news coverage, CER works behind the scenes with the media to generate stories, first in ensuring state leaders are profiled in coverage of educational choice, and subsequently, in helping to develop, support and finish a story profiling the NAACP's challenge to charter schools, by focusing on a charter school that helps children of color get an education they cannot get in most Philadelphia public schools.



Special Report with Bret Baier



Sunday Night with Megyn Kelly

Clashing with AFT President Randi Weingarten

CER mounts a forceful response to American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten's outrageous attack on school choice that characterized education reform parents and advocates as racists akin to the southern segregationists of the past.

RELEASE: UNION LEADER'S ATTACK ON PARENTS AND OTHERS WHO SUPPORT SCHOOL CHOICE IS HATEFUL AND SHOULD NOT STAND

AFT president Randi Weingarten's characterization of education reform parents and advocates as racists akin to the southern segregationists of the past, is not just ill-advised hyperbole, it is a deeply offensive, highly inflammatory insult to all the parents and people—of all races, backgrounds, and regions—who have worked to bring options, opportunities, and reforms to an education system that has failed them for generations.

ALLEN RENEWS CALL FOR UNION LEADER TO STEP DOWN

Regardless of whether or not it was an act of insensitive ignorance, or ruthless political calculation, Weingarten should step down as head of the AFT.

— JEANNE ALLEN

OP ED: RANDI WEINGARTEN'S HISTORY LESSON: SCHOOL CHOICE HELPS THE POOR

NATIONAL REVIEW

Weingarten and the AFT deliberately ignore Milwaukee circa 1990, when Polly Williams, a state representative, led the fight to ensure that her "babies," as she called her community's kids, attending failing schools might have a leg up. A Democrat and a Black Panther, Williams found few allies among what she considered natural constituencies.

EVENT: GENNEXT SPEAKING TOUR & VISITING SCHOOLS IN LA & SAN DIEGO

The prestigious GenNEXT, an exclusive club of movers and shakers interested in changing the world, invited Jeanne Allen to address four chapters in July, providing her insights and know-how on how they can help transform American education. As we do wherever we go, we take time to visit schools—Fusion’s LA campus, an innovative personalized learning private school was on the list of school visits.



Did you see our board member @davidphardy on #SundayNight with @megynkelly? David is always fighting hard for kids and charter schools.

<https://twitter.com/edreform/status/885321247453794305/video/1>

Setting the NAACP Straight

In an unfortunate and unfounded campaign against charter schools, the NAACP calls for a moratorium on the opening of new charters. As their campaign against charter schools is detrimental and disrespectful to all parents who struggle to ensure a quality education for their children, members of CER’s board are engaged immediately.



Dear @rweingarten — Thank you for your quick history lesson the other day. Here’s a real one for you.

<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/449881/randi-weingarten-american-federation-teachers-segregation-school-choice-response>



Our CEO @JeanneAllen just renewed her call for @AFTunion boss @rweingarten to resign.

STATEMENT: AFRICAN-AMERICAN EDUCATION LEADERS SPEAK OUT AGAINST NAACP ACTIONS

The NAACP’s campaign against charter schools is detrimental and disrespectful to all parents who struggle to ensure a quality education for their children.



Illinois: School funding in Illinois is a topic of national discussion as the governor and legislature are deadlocked on how to move forward. Jeanne Allen shifts the debate with a solution that would turn an obstacle into opportunity.

Defending choice...

OP ED: A NEW BLUE-STATE EXPERIMENT WITH SCHOOL REFORM
NATIONAL REVIEW

The governor has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to improve education for families in Illinois. He should take advantage of it and ensure that students across the state have access to the quality educational options they need and deserve.

OP ED: SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON A FLAWED REPORT ON SCHOOL CHOICE
HUFFPOST

There are three kinds of lies, the saying goes: lies, damned lies, and statistics. And while that adage may overstate the case, it can, at least, stand as a constant caution. First, to average people who read stories based on statistics, heed this generic advice: don’t believe everything you read.

Challenging the Unions

As the AFT continues its campaign to discredit charter schools and demean education reform advocates, it becomes clearer than ever that its efforts are a matter of political positioning. With an administration that stands firmly behind choice and opportunity, and firmly against the status quo and power elite represented by the AFT, and with an ever-growing national community of non-union teachers and education professionals, Randi Weingarten is fighting not just for relevance, but survival.

OP ED: RANDI WEINGARTEN'S RACIAL DEMAGOGUERY

Ms. Weingarten likes to style herself as a defender of the urban poor, but her recommendations for education tell another story. Her primary concern seems to be self-preservation. But the biggest threat to her power and position won't be from the Trump administration or school-choice advocates. It will be from AFT members who recognize that she's undermining the union's credibility for her own gain.

THE
WALL STREET
JOURNAL.

Interpreting the Polls

There are, arguably, more polls, studies, and analyses of data conducted on all facets of education than on any other issue. Annual polls on the state of education are vehicles for leading, and misleading, public debate. Unfortunately, many of them repeat the same flawed findings again, and again.

OP ED: NEW GALLUP POLL REINFORCES NEED FOR SCHOOL CHOICE

It's time to demand that we provide our school leaders the flexibility from contracts and labor demands to deliver the best, and to permit a wide variety of new learning opportunities—whether private, charter or other—to work to meet the needs of all kids. Not only does the public want it, but it's the right thing to do.

STATEMENT: CER'S RESPONSE TO 49TH ANNUAL PDK POLL

While PDK is a widely respected organization dedicated to supporting and advocating for the traditional public education system, and its annual survey is a good opportunity to take the public's temperature, it nevertheless fails to reflect the reality in American education.

Educating about the Blaine Amendment...

OP ED: THE PROBLEM WITH THE BLAINE AMENDMENT

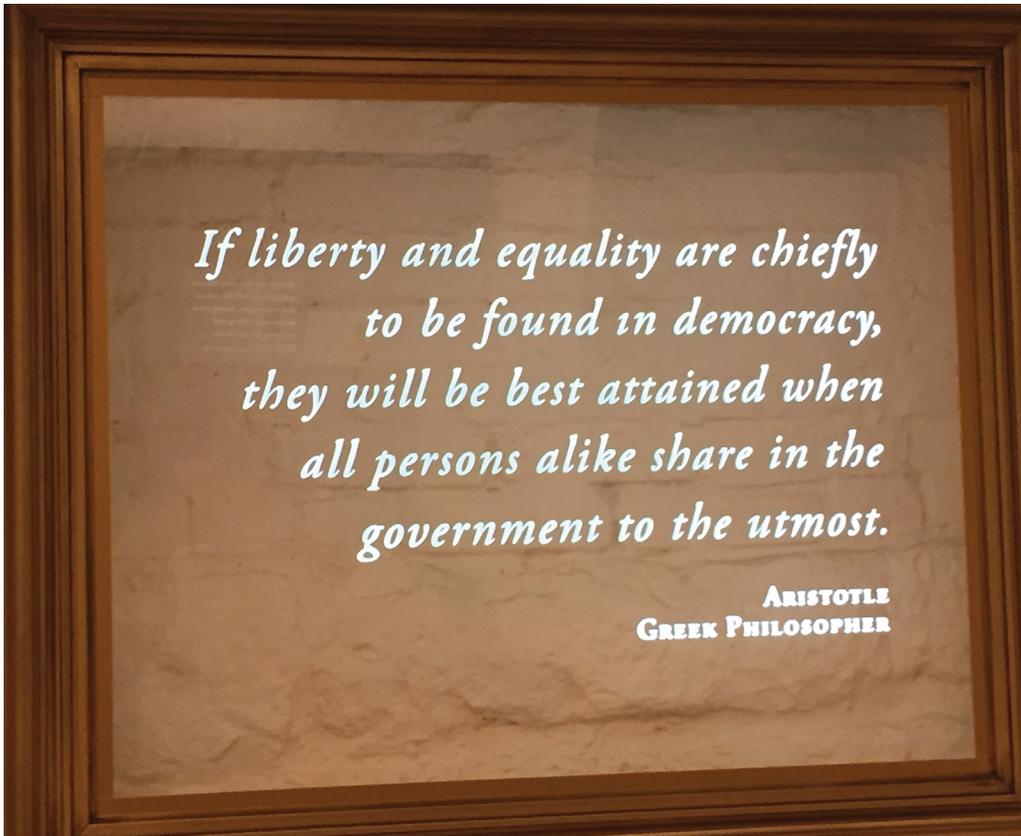
Blaine Amendments are the last line of defense for education choice opponents—the unions, the school districts and hundreds more who earn a living in the employ of traditional public schooling and thousands of related parties.



AN INCONVENIENT FACT. Martin Luther King Jr. would have been offended by the @NAACP's position on charter schools.



<http://bit.ly/2wIRe40>



While protests by the teachers' unions grow louder, their strength and influence grow weaker, as evidenced by their loss in the Illinois budget battle combined with political, school board and policy losses around the country, and the ever-thinning membership of their rank and file.

OP ED: HOW TEACHERS' UNIONS BECAME THE PAPER TIGERS OF EDUCATION REFORM

Although the NEA and its smaller rival, the American Federation for Teachers, have long used political donations, political intimidation, and organizing to control Democratic Party education policy nationwide, they're the very embodiment of a paper tiger.



**Voices of Color.
Voices for Opportunity.**

Continuing our offense on and defense of Parent Power to show the NAACP, unions and others the real diversity of our movement, CER organizes leading voices of color who support and work to expand education opportunity for all. The effort lands our colleagues from Hispanic and African-American communities in major newspapers, from *USA Today* to *The Wall Street Journal*; Millions are exposed to their words and work.

OP ED: SCHOOL CHOICE IS CRUCIAL FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS' SUCCESS

By T. Willard Fair, president, Urban League of Greater Miami

Here's what I need to say to them, to the people of this nation, to people of color— I am involved in the school choice movement because the future of my life and your life depends upon it.



OP ED: SUPPORTING BLACK COLLEGES HELPS CHARTER SCHOOLS

By Johnny C. Taylor Jr., Thurgood Marshall College Fund

The only solution is to improve educational outcomes and that begins with increasing school choices for parents. We have seen the dangerous domino effect if kids in these communities are forced to stay in failing schools. And while the NAACP and Weingarten seem to be perfectly comfortable with that scenario, we are not.



Our efforts to promote the opportunities charter schools bring to communities of color resulted in this Wall Street Journal feature interview with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund's then-president Jonny Taylor.



In 14 big cities across the U.S., 30% of all public-school students now attend a charter school.



Yesterday CER chair @CSUSAJonHage along with CER board member Susan Wolford and @JeanneAllen were shaking things up in the education world.



EVENT:

CER Board Member Susan Wolford hosts the annual BMO Back to School event for investors and Jeanne leads a discussion with Chair and CSUSA Founder Jon Hage and other leaders of education management organizations about the future of K-12 reform.

EVENT:

PDK Panel reviewing the poll results at the National Press Club



CER welcomes Rich Harmon, our newest Board Member in 2017. Rich is the head of the BB&T charter school practice, a passionate advocate for charters, and a great addition to CER's Board.



See page 26 for a list of all current CER Board Members

Context and Analysis—Janus v. AFSCME: Reformers are ecstatic to learn that the Supreme Court of the United States will hear arguments in *Janus v. AFSCME*—the case which argues that forced unionism and mandatory dues violate First Amendment rights. But many, especially many in the media, were left asking, “What does it all mean?” CER distributes a detailed briefing to the media via a Media Memo.

MEDIA MEMO:

Bottom line: a favorable outcome could pave the way for loosening the stranglehold that unions have on public sector employees which would benefit public school teachers, in particular, by allowing them to decide for themselves whether or not they pay union dues and fees.

Insights from CER’s 24th Anniversary Gathering of Innovators and Thought Leaders

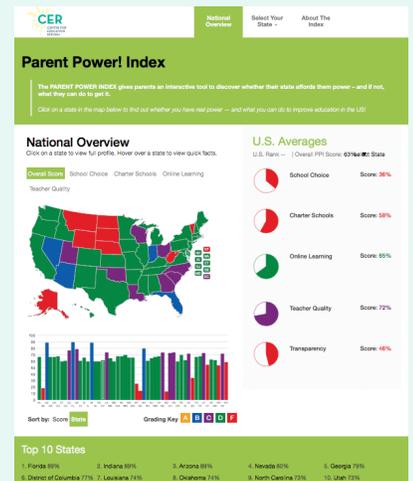


Twenty-four years in, we remain committed to a future for education that centers on the individual needs of the student and expand our focus to include learners at all levels, no matter what their stage in life so that all have what they need to access the American dream. That doesn’t require more funding; it requires different approaches that embrace the truly American idea of freedom at the core.

This philosophy was at the core of the discussion hosted by CER at its 24th Anniversary gathering. Life-long innovators and pioneers in the fight for education opportunity—CER Founder & CEO Jeanne Allen; former Gov. John Engler, Chairman of the National Assessment Governing Board; Silicon Valley entrepreneur Michael Moe, former D.C. Councilmember Kevin Chavous; and Chris Whittle founder of newly launched Whittle School & Studios (and a renowned education entrepreneur who started the first public-private partnership in education)—engaged in an wide-ranging discussion that covered everything from innovation, effective teacher training, the need for skilled technical and manufacturing training, technological literacy, and the vital role schools play in enabling students to succeed for the rest of their lives.

Parent Power!

Parent Power is one of the principles on which CER was founded, and on which it continues to carry out its work. The premise is simple: information is power, and that parents who are empowered with information about what their states do—and don’t—offer them in terms of rights, options, opportunities, and decision making can begin to control their own destiny and the destiny of their children. The Index scores each state and gives parents an interactive tool to discover whether their state affords them due power.



OP ED: FIXING SCHOOLS MEANS OVERCOMING THE EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENT

How can we, through a variety of efforts, whether it's through technology, innovation or policy, have an equal opportunity for everyone to participate in the future?



Backpack Full of Cash

October sees the release of a high-profile anti-charter school film “Backpack Full of Cash”—a union-backed, propagandized “documentary” narrated by star of stage and screen Hollywood actor Matt Damon, which employs our own CEO’s quote about money following kids as its title, albeit in a slanted way. As with the year’s other offenses—from the AFT and the NAACP—this might have been overlooked or shrugged off as mere howling at the moon. But its potential impact on shifting the debate, and skewing public perceptions over the long term makes it much more dangerous than that...and CER responded. As we quickly point out, as a child, Damon had the great fortune to attend a selective public school; as an adult, he has can afford to send his daughters to private schools...and does!



Christopher Columbus defines our understanding of the spirit of discovery. That's worth celebrating!



washesx.com/2y9Zybl



This new movie is called Backpack Full of Cash. It should be called Backpack Full of Hypocrisy. **#EducateMattDamon**

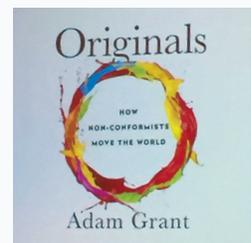
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BACKPACK FULL OF HYPOCRISY

Matt Damon and I are “in” the same film. I should be thrilled, but it’s a poorly contrived documentary with a storyline worlds apart from the reality of education for most Americans.

— JEANNE ALLEN



EVENT: GSV CEO SUMMIT

Adam Grant in his new book “Originals” reminds us that the best results come from those who challenge the status quo.

MEDIA COVERAGE: ALLEN PUSHES BACK AGAINST MATT DAMON



It was a shock to see them cunningly and deliberately cut my quote to serve their own purpose,” Allen says. “We always have to fight people who are, frankly, uneducated about the issue. If I could show Matt Damon what we actually do, and the options kids can have so they don’t have to go to failing schools, he’d be a supporter.”

OP ED: C’MON, MATT DAMON. YOU’RE BETTER THAN THIS



Controversy in this work is to be expected, but when film-makers create a false narrative in an attempt to bolster failing schools—and don’t acknowledge that the unions were probably their biggest funding source—it’s despicable.



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CER leads a major effort to develop and promote an Education, Workforce and Apprenticeship Tax Credit—which would encourage charitable donations to nonprofit organizations for community-based apprenticeship initiatives, career and technical education, workforce development, and educational preparedness.

STATEMENT:

We urge Congress to adopt the Education, Workforce and Apprenticeship Tax Credit Act which would encourage charitable donations to nonprofit organizations for community-based apprenticeship initiatives, career and technical education, workforce development, and educational preparedness.



OP ED: ANSWER TO VOUCHERS?

School choice not only gives poor parents the ability to buy up; it also gives school professionals more respect and choice, and communities embrace the choices that succeed.



For Those Who Serve...

OP ED: OUR MILITARY KIDS NEED AN EDUCATION SYSTEM AS FLEXIBLE AS THEY ARE

A military family has no choice when it comes to places of deployment. But we can help them ensure that their children attain their full potential by offering them educational choice.



Global Education Summit

Invited with world education leaders to the Beijing GSV Global Education Summit, our CEO gets a chance to share CER's work with hundreds who are now poised to follow our lead in their own countries, as well as allow us to bring their technologies to work on behalf of U.S. kids.



Below: CER Board Member and education pioneer Chris Whittle introduces the new Whittle School & Studios to Beijing leadership.



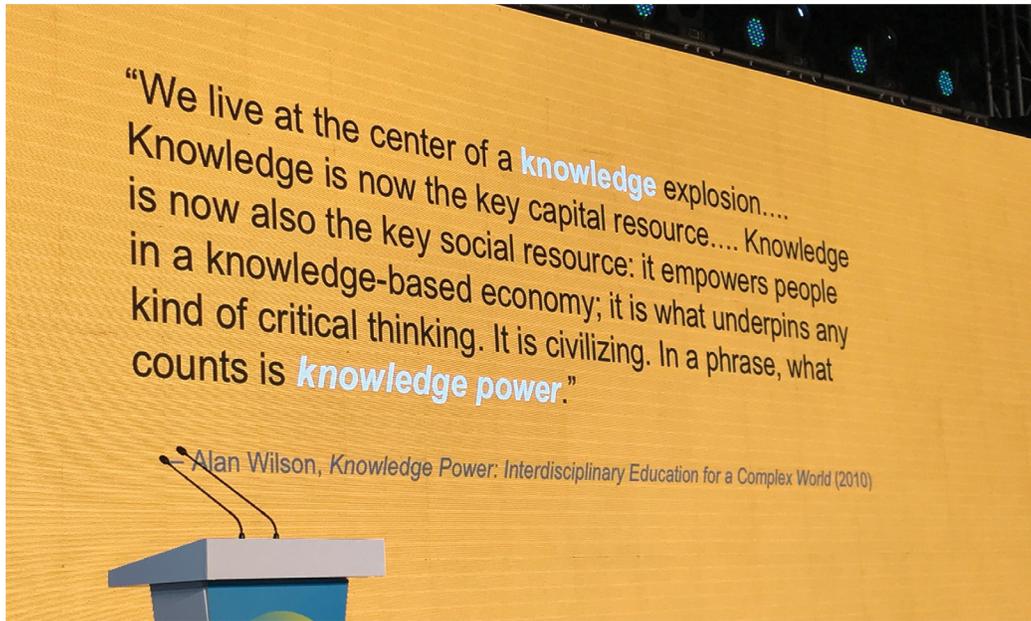
"Education is one place that shouldn't be partisan. It's about children."
 —@JebBush, keynoting #EIE17



.@EdReform's @JeanneAllen has the #StoryOfTheDay: How Silicon Valley Plans to Conquer the Classroom @natashanyt #EdChat

Jeanne Allen
Center for Education Reform

<https://twitter.com/ChoiceMediatv/status/927645136900755456>





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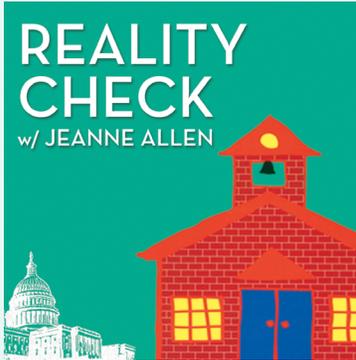
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CER-National Review Presents... “Reality Check with Jeanne Allen”

Dozens of friends and colleagues are lined up to help Jeanne tackle the issues of the day, on her new weekly podcast about anything and everything having to do with education. Among them: Basis Schools co-founder Michael Block, Princeton Review and Noodle Partners entrepreneur John Katzman, Philly Parent organizer Sylvia P. Simms and many more.



Tune in to Reality Check with Jeanne Allen—with new episodes every other Monday:
www.edreform.com/realitycheck/

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Founder & CEO
Center for Education Reform

NY EdTech Week: The Global Education Innovation Festival

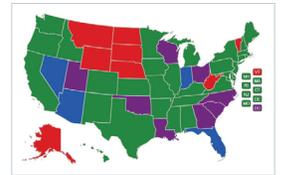
As a well-regarded player not only in edreform but edtech and innovation, Jeanne has helped launch the StartED Accelerator at NYU, and its annual festival showcasing the results of a robust ecosystem of reformers and innovators who CER has proudly connected throughout its work and tenure. The result is great learning opportunities for kids, and the recruitment of new and diverse edreform supporters.



CER's Founder and CEO, @JeanneAllen, is moderating a fantastic discussion with @RosenJeffrey of @ConstitutionCtr and David Coleman of @CollegeBoard. #nyedtechweek



Wish there were a way parents could discover whether their state affords them power in education decisions? There is! CER's Parent Power! Index:



parentpowerindex.edreform.com



National School Choice Week

The Washington, D.C. kick-off presents an opportunity to converge with the leaders and supporters of school choice at all levels. Onsite interviews at the Congressional rally make for a special hour-long Reality Check podcast, featuring Senator Ted Cruz, Congresswoman Virginia Foxx, and Ed Secretary Betsy DeVos. Also included: student voices, providing first-person testimony on what choice means to them.



School Choice in Action

To celebrate the week, CER also launched a mini video campaign highlighting schools where choice is helping students and communities thrive. Videos are an especially effective vehicle for communicating through social media, with CER exponentially extending the reach of its messages through its Twitter and Facebook accounts. Our first “School Choice in Action” feature: a video message from the students at Inlet Grove Community High School in South Florida.

Back on the Hill...

The Case for Better Education in Rural America: If you fix the schools, you fix the communities

That’s why CER’s Rural Education Initiative is in full force this year! It is designed to leverage government, business, philanthropic organizations, charter and private school operators, and universities to build an ecosystem of support around rural School Districts. By doing so, we aim to prove that we can reinvigorate struggling rural economies by focusing on expanding education opportunity. This January we returned to the Hill to promote it as part of the infrastructure bill, advocating the position that the development of any rural technological infrastructure effort must include innovations to support the needs of rural communities.

STATEMENT: CER URGES PRESIDENT TO KEEP EDUCATION FRONT AND CENTER IN RURAL INITIATIVE

We’ve recommended the use of new infrastructure dollars to support public-private partnerships that will drive the creation of new schools, connected by new roads and new digital pathways, that can encourage more education for learners at all levels.

Site Visit: Rural Opportunity in North Carolina

In a trip to rural North Carolina to learn of the conditions and the community that could be a pilot for CER's initiative, our team visits the first school designated for restructuring as a charter school as part of the state's new Innovative school district, which CER helped promote.



EVENT: BB&T CAPITAL MARKETS CONFERENCE

As big believers in the private sector to help fuel innovations in education, BB&T's annual Capital Markets Conference is a natural ally. Jeanne Allen's visit and keynote panel allows our message to get to the investors, accountants, lawyers, rating agencies, and financial advisors to drive understanding and grow the congregation so we aren't just preaching to the choir.

Reality Check with @JeanneAllen celebrates #SchoolChoiceWeek "I went from D's and Fs to straight A's I was surrounded by people who cared about me. Helped me apply to college. Something I didn't know was possible"
— @DenishaMweather



www.nationalreview.com/media/reality-check-jeanne-allen/reality-check-jeanne-allen-no-two-brains-are-alike

Taking Our Colleagues to Task

Natural born collaborators, CER team members always give credit where credit is due. But when our friends praise mediocrity it's too much for us. This piece highlights the difference between CER and the others—we expect our lawmakers to put kids first. When bad laws like that of Kentucky get praised, we simply have to set the record straight.

OP ED:

As for the unfortunate part of NAPCS' inflated ranking, aside from distorting reality it does damage by reinforcing an "our work is done here" mindset. Kentucky lawmakers worked hard on a bill but they came up short. NAPCS' endorsement helps them ignore that fact, and bask in the glow of being rated among the best when, actually, they're among the worst. In fact CER found Kentucky's law to be modeled after those of Iowa, Virginia, and Kansas—all laws rated "F" by CER that have resulted in no truly independent charter schools.

KICKING OFF CER AT 25...

Stay tuned for news about CER at 25—The Roadshow to Opportunity & Innovation, which over the coming year will shine a light on the problems—and solutions—entailed in ensuring a great education for rural Americans.

From the outset, public road planners intended US Highway 66 to connect the main streets of rural and urban communities along its course for the most practical of reasons: most small towns had no prior access to a major national thoroughfare. But our Interstate Highway system has left many of the towns along Rt. 66 virtually abandoned.

Has today's Education Superhighway bypassed rural America in the same way, creating educational ghost towns by not providing rural schools with "the last mile" link to high-speed Internet services? How might urban and suburban communities benefit from the wave of innovation that has advanced every other industry, except education?

Throughout the coming year, leading up to CER's 25th anniversary, much of our travel and attention will focus on close-up looks at this and other challenges facing learners of all ages across America.

Mark your Calendar for October 25-26 in Miami, Florida, and plan to join us!

The MEDIA

Reaching out with our message—far and wide, loud and clear, we find as many channels of communication as we can access. As in years past, throughout 2017 and into 2018 we've succeeded in those efforts, through news coverage, op-eds, interviews, comments, and statements: averaging, over the year, **nearly 200 media mentions per month**. Our print and broadcast media impact exceeds **100 million impressions via print, online, and broadcast outlets**.

As for social media, we are having a dramatic impact on the public discourse. Twitter impressions, measuring the total number of views of conversations, topped **3,182,000 in the past 12 months!**

CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM

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We hope you've enjoyed these highlights from our efforts throughout 2017 and into 2018. As you've seen, it was an active and exhilarating year that saw great challenges, great rewards and, most importantly, set the stage for a 2018 that has the potential to bring substantive change to American education and real prospects for delivering a quality education to families and children long-denied that basic need.

In the year ahead, CER will continue to strive to bring opportunity, innovation and hope to learners at all levels in all regions of the country, but we can't do it alone. We need your support. Please take a moment to use the enclosed envelope to send along a contribution. Large or small, any amount is appreciated. Our work—and success—depend on it.

With sincere thanks,





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