

JEANNE ALLEN

Founder & CEO

Jeanne Allen is the Founder and CEO of the Center for Education Reform (CER), the pioneering organization leading the charge to expand innovation and opportunity in education since 1993.



In 2021, Jeanne co-created and launched the Yass Prize for Sustainable, Transformational, Outstanding, and Permissionless Education, a prestigious initiative that identifies and rewards education providers delivering extraordinary outcomes for underserved students. Now in its fifth year, the Yass Prize has awarded over \$50 million, resulting in more than 14 million new and diverse learning opportunities for students across the nation.

A frequent media contributor and sought-after speaker, Jeanne serves as a contributor for **Merit TV**, writes regularly for **Forbes**, and publishes **Forza**, a weekly Substack newsletter focused on education, innovation, and policy. She is the author of *An Unfinished Journey: Education & the*

American Dream (2020) and has been widely recognized for her leadership and impact, including being named one of **Working Mother's Most Powerful Moms in Education**, receiving the **Champion Award** from the Black Alliance for Educational Options, and most recently being honored with the **Power of Women Award** at the 2025 ASU+GSV Summit.

Jeanne began her career in education and policy on Capitol Hill before serving from 1983 to 1987 as a senior official at the U.S. Department of Education under President Ronald Reagan. She went on to establish the first education policy office at The Heritage Foundation, helping shape the national conversation on education reform. Throughout her career, she has advised and collaborated with education entrepreneurs and Silicon Valley innovators, championing the use of technology to expand access, personalize learning, and scale high-quality educational opportunities.

These early experiences laid the foundation for her leadership at the Center for Education Reform and the Yass Prize, where she continues to drive bold, innovative change on behalf of students and families nationwide.

She holds a bachelor's degree from Dickinson College and a master's degree in Education Entrepreneurship from the University of Pennsylvania, where she helped develop the program. She has also served in advisory roles with the StartED Accelerator and the ASU+GSV Summit, and currently sits on the advisory board of the University of Austin's Center for Education and Public Service.

Jeanne is married to Dr. Kevin Strother, a classically trained musician, teacher, and charter boat captain. Together, they enjoy time with their family—where education is always at the center of the conversation.

ABOUT CER

Founded in 1993, [the Center for Education Reform](#) (CER) aims 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. CER is home to the [Yass Prize](#) for Sustainable, Transformational, Outstanding and Permissionless education.