

Charter schools have positive impacts, two reports find

By Andrea Billups
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The charter school movement is booming nationwide and making significant and positive impacts on public education, two new reports on the movement have found.

A report released yesterday by the White House showed the number of charter schools nationwide increased by 40 percent in the 1998-1999 school year, with 250,000 students enrolled at such schools in 30 states and the District of Columbia.

About 53.2 million students attend public schools nationwide.

"At a time when some educators are saying we really can't do much better with these kids, the charter school movement says: 'Wrong. We can do a lot better and we are putting our jobs on the line to say we can do better,'" said Joe Nathan, a professor at the University of Min-

nesota who helped write the nation's first charter school law, passed in 1991 in Minnesota.

The U.S. Department of Education report found that seven out of 10 charter schools had waiting lists for students. Median enrollment at charter schools was 137 students, compared with 475 students at public schools in the same states. Eighteen percent of all charter schools were public schools that converted to charters.

Charter schools are publicly funded and privately run, and are intended to promote creative approaches to teaching children.

"Neither a Republican nor a Democratic idea," they were founded at the grass-roots level without foundation funding, Mr. Nathan said. The schools have enjoyed remarkable bipartisan support, a feat that "has astonished supporters and stunned opponents," he added.

"It taps into hope, which is one of the central values of the United States," said Mr. Nathan, an inner-city public school teacher and author of a 1999 book on the charter schools. "The charter schools movement says if you've got an idea about how to do it better, here's the chance to try it."

Gail Hawkins-Bush, principal of the Alliance for Progress Charter School, one of 24 charter schools operating in Philadelphia, says the reason they are succeeding is because they are "customer-friendly."

"I think that in inner-city communities, the personalized approach to education is a way to combat some of the inequities that our children have suffered through large class size and all of the injustices society has prevailed on our young people," said Mrs. Hawkins-Bush, whose 208-student school has a waiting list.

"It's not just economics," she says of charter school popularity. "It's specialized care."

A relatively small number of new charter schools have failed, another report published this week by the Center for Education Reform (CER) in Washington found.

Through the end of 1999, 39 charter schools out of more than 1,700 nationwide had closed their doors. Some shut down voluntarily and others ceased operation because of small enrollments, administrative or fiscal problems or because their charters were revoked for mismanagement or misconduct, the CER report said.

"Far from being an indictment of charter schools, these closures are evidence of accountability, one of the great strengths of the charter school movement," said CER President Jeanne Allen. "It is a quality too often missing at many

traditional public schools."

The CER report says charter schools faced mainly facility and operational hurdles initially, but today most are stymied by political opposition from teachers unions and state and local boards.

Some states like Virginia have passed charter school laws, but because they limit the charters to special-need groups, for example, no charter has been approved.

"About a third of the charter laws are actually a cruel joke," Mr. Nathan said. Among the states having the best laws, he said, are Arizona, California, Minnesota, New York, Michigan, North Carolina and the District of Columbia, which boasts the highest percentage of children enrolled in charter schools in the nation.

The CER study also found that of the 37 charter school laws nationwide, 26 states did not provide any start-up funding, making it dif-

ficult for charter founders to open their schools.

The Clinton administration has been a strong proponent of charter schools, but the concept has been opposed by the nation's teachers unions, who charge they will take money away from traditional public schools.

Mrs. Allen, the president of the CER, said that while traditional public schools outnumber charter schools by more than 40 to 1, their "ripple effect" has driven public education reform.

"Wherever large numbers of charters are clustered, traditional schools have begun to behave differently in order to keep up, and in many states their presence is accelerating systemwide school improvement," she said.

President Clinton's 2001 budget includes a \$30 million increase in federal funding for charter schools.

FROM PAGE ONE

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[The Washington Times, February 12, 2000]

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PRESIDENT CLINTON RELEASES NATIONAL STUDY ON CHARTER SCHOOLS AND ANNOUNCES A \$30 MILLION INCREASE IN CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING FOR FY01

February 11, 2000

Today President Clinton will release the U.S. Department of Education's Fourth-Year Report on charter schools analyzing the growth of charter schools across the country. The report provides data on the number of charter schools around the country, their characteristics, and the challenges they are facing. Charter schools are public schools founded by parents and teachers, and are open to all. In exchange for high levels of accountability for student achievement, they are given more autonomy and flexibility than traditional public schools in staffing decisions, curricula design and other areas. The federal government funds charter schools through the United States Department of Education's Public Charter Schools Program. The President's FY 2001 budget includes a \$30 million increase in funding for the program, bringing total funding to \$175 million annually. Local charter schools use federal funding for planning, development, and start-up costs. According to this report and other studies, start-up costs are one of the primary barriers to charter schools.

POPULARITY, SMALLER SCHOOL SIZE, AND DIVERSITY AMONG KEY FINDINGS IN THE FOURTH- YEAR REPORT. Among other findings, the report the President will release shows that more than 250,000 students nationwide are now enrolled in charter schools in 30 states and the District of Columbia. Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia have now passed legislation allowing the creation of charter schools. According to this report, seven out of ten charter schools are so popular that they have waiting lists of students wanting to enroll. The report also shows that most charter schools are small schools. In fact, according to the report, the median enrollment of all charter schools is 137 students compared to 475 for all public schools in the same states. Seven of ten charter schools are newly created schools, while 18 percent are pre-existing public schools that convert to charter status and 10 percent are converted private schools. In addition, according to the report, charter schools enroll a slightly higher percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch than other public schools in their states and reflect similar racial diversity.

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S LEADERSHIP KEY TO GROWTH OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

President Clinton has long been a champion of charter schools; his support dates from when the idea was first articulated by Ted Kolderie of the Progressive Policy Institute in 1990. When the President was first elected, there was only one public charter school open in the United States. This year, according to the report the President will release today, 1,605 charter schools were opened by September 1999. This is more than halfway to the President's goal of 3000 charter schools. National leadership and assistance have played a key role in this rapid growth by supporting the development of individual charter schools and helping to disseminate effective practices and strategies among schools. Thirty-six states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia now have laws on the books that enable the creation of charter schools.

CHARTER SCHOOLS: IMPROVING PUBLIC EDUCATION AND EMPOWERING PARENTS

- **Public charter schools exemplify a standards-based approach to education.** Every charter school works with a public authority to establish clear performance standards. A charter school that fails to meet the terms of its charter is closed down. The Public Charter Schools program, which was reauthorized with the President's leadership in 1998, gives priority to states that have strong standards for academic accountability. Charter schools receiving funding from the federal government must also be measured by the same state assessments as any other public school.

Public school choice empowers parents and helps build a public school system that meets the individual needs of every student. States and school districts around the country are using public charter schools, inter-district choice options, and other innovations to offer parents and children high-quality and well-tailored educational options. Surveys find high levels of support and satisfaction among parents of public charter school students. A recent national survey found that 65 percent of parents rated their child's public charter school as better than their former public school (only 6 percent rated them worse). The U.S. Department of Education reports that seven out of ten charter schools have a waiting list of students who want to enroll. Charter schools are playing a key role in a national strategy that employs public school choice as one component to spurring school improvement.

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Smaller ENROLLMENT, SCHOOL SIZE, AND DIVERSITY AMONG KEY FINDINGS IN THE FOURTH-YEAR REPORT. Among other findings, the report the President will release shows that more than 250,000 students nationwide are now enrolled in charter schools in 30 states and the District of Columbia. The report also shows that most charter schools are small schools. In fact, according to the report, the median enrollment of all charter schools is 137 students compared to 475 for all public schools in the same states. Seven of ten charter schools are newly created schools, ~~while 18 percent are pre-existing public schools that convert to charter status and 10 percent are pre-existing private schools that do the same—~~ (this clutters the message on school size and diversity) In addition, according to the report, charter schools enroll a slightly higher percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch than other public schools in their states and reflect ~~but have~~ similar racial diversity.

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key role in a national strategy that employs public school choice as one component to spurring school improvement.

John B. Buxton

12/29/99 12:00:55 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP@EOP
cc:
bcc:
Subject: Re: any thoughts 

The only issue I think we should consider with making charters our first "budget announcement" for education is that is whether it is enough on message with what we have been saying. Charters are definitely the cleanest and safest of what we have. Universal after-school gives the bet's punch, but I guess the numbers/details aren't clear yet.

I think that as long as we stress the high expectations/accountability, smaller environments and choice pieces of charters, it's still on message. We should make sure we get the speech to connect what it is about charter schools that serve as a model of reform. Are we doing a straight leak or is the release of the report going to be a departure statement or something?

About the press paper: I would reorganize to better tell the charter story and connect it to our message. The first graf works--although I'd make it more of a summary graf--and then I'd use three headers:

Reports Finds Charters Creating New, Smaller Environments and Serving All Students. This graf would contain info on those points and then bullet out other key findings. I haven't seen the report (can you get me a copy), but if it has good data on the demographics of kids going--race, income (in addition to free and reduced), etc--we ought to include.

Charters Are Models for Accountability and Empowering Parents. Combine your last two bulleted graphs into one on these issues.

President's Leadership and Support Key to Charters' Growth across US. Lead with FY01 request for increase in funding and then get into history as you've written it.

Let me know what the plan is....JB
Andy Rotherham



Andy Rotherham
12/28/99 05:21:45 PM

Record Type: Record

To: John B. Buxton/OPD/EOP@EOP
cc:
Subject: any thoughts

Marti Omas

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"Henschel, Gregory" <Gregory_Henschel@ed.gov>
12/22/99 04:39:18 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: RE: Charter Schools Year Four Report

Andy:

I'll get you some copies tomorrow, but 50 will be quite difficult. I won't have the document until some time tomorrow, myself. Here is my full contact information, although I will be in the office next week.

Gregory Henschel
OERI Suite 627
U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20208-5531

fax: 202-501-3005
phone: 202-219-2082
secretary: 202-219-2207
home: 703-660-6624
email: gregory_henschel@ed.gov

-- Greg

-----Original Message-----

From: Andy_Rotherham@opd.eop.gov [mailto:Andy_Rotherham@opd.eop.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, December 22, 1999 4:27 PM
To: Henschel, Gregory
Subject: Re: Charter Schools Year Four Report

Thanks for the update, will you be able to get me 50 copies tomorrow? Don't ruin your holiday over it but I need copies by Monday. Also, can you give me your home phone number in case I need to reach you next week.

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Charter Schools Movement Growing

By ANJETTA McQUEEN AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON -- The number of charter schools nationwide grew by 40 percent last school year -- representing growing interest in public schools created by parents and teachers and run with exemptions from most state laws and regulations, the Education Department said Friday.

With the increase in the 1998-99 school year, there are nearly 1,700 such schools serving 250,000 children, the department's fourth annual charter school report said.

"We can see that there is a continued need for our support of these schools," Education Secretary Richard Riley said in releasing the report Friday. "Public charter schools are providing parents and students with choice they want and deserve."

Supporters of charter schools, which include President Clinton and Republicans alike, say they give parents in poor communities a much-needed choice over the traditional schools that are failing to help their children.

The administration, though, favors public school choice over conservatives' proposals to use public funds to send children to private or parochial schools. Clinton is seeking a \$30 million increase to a total \$175 million for the federal program that helps states open more of the public charter schools.

Just eight years ago, when Clinton was first elected, there was one such school -- in Minnesota. Today, 1,700 schools operate in 27 states and the District of Columbia, with 37 states and the District have laws supporting their establishment. New York, Oklahoma and Oregon passed the latest measures last year.

Nearly 90,000 children were served by 421 newly opened charter schools in the last school year, the department reported.

A charter school, created by a group of teachers, community members or parents, is free of most state laws and regulations but must be approved by a local chartering authority. A charter outlines its goals, procedures and standards to that authority. Charters that fail to meet them are shut down; 27 schools closed under those

circumstances last year, the report said.

Though charters serve less than 1 percent of all public schoolchildren, the charter school movement remains popular. Seven in 10 schools told department researchers they have waiting lists.

Yet charters have opponents who note that they could drain the most motivated students and families from traditional public schools -- not to mention the public money needed to fix the failing schools in the first place.

Also, charters schools have run into trouble for serving specific populations and about a quarter of them do just that, the report said. By virtue of being based in minority communities where they have been especially popular or opened with specific purposes such as helping troubled children, some schools have ended up being predominantly black.

A growing number of parents are challenging decades-old desegregation orders to protect their charter schools.

But the Justice Department has blocked just three of the nation's 1,700 charters; roughly 50 more could be affected by court-ordered actions to end patterns of racial separation in school districts.

Unlike the schools in Lufkin, Texas; Oktibbeha County, Miss.; and Georgetown County, S.C., most charters -- which are small -- usually don't affect racial patterns, Justice Department officials have said.

AP-NY-02-11-00 1416EST

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[Home](#) | [Top of Page](#)



Andy Rotherham
02/07/2000 09:59:51 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Stephanie A. Cutter/WHO/EOP@EOP
cc: Karin Kullman/OPD/EOP@EOP
Subject: validators

Here are three who will be on message for us:

Will Marshall, President, Progressive Policy Institute, 202-547-0001
Joe Nathan, Director, Center for School Change, (612) 625-3506
Bryan Hassel, President, Public Impact Consulting (704) 370-0357

Joe is in MN, Bryan in NC, and Will is here in DC. Bryan and Joe are extensively published on the issue, including books, and Will is president of the think-tank where the charter idea was really developed and where the President became acquainted with it.

AR

Charter Schools Proliferating, Study Finds

District Has Most Rapid Growth; Advocates Say Movement Is Spurring Reform

By VALERIE STRAUSS
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Clinton will release a new study today showing that the number of public charter schools jumped about 40 percent in the 1998-99 school year—with seven out of 10 maintaining waiting lists—and that they now enroll more than a quarter-million students.

Though charter schools still enroll a relatively small percentage of public

school students nationwide, the movement is growing in many areas, most rapidly in the District, which had more than 4 percent of its public school students enrolled in charters. Arizona had 4 percent and Colorado 2 percent, according to the Department of Education report, the most detailed yet on the charter school movement.

Charter schools are operated with public funds—and are tuition free—but are permitted to operate outside

the normal bureaucracy of traditional public school systems. Many of them are designed for a specific mission—for example, helping at-risk urban youths or training students to enter a particular trade.

When Clinton was first elected in 1992, there was a single charter school in the nation.

"I think the charter movement has spread farther and faster than any of the people who were involved in its beginnings ever envisioned," said Joe

Nathan, director of the nonprofit Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota, who helped write the nation's first charter law in Minnesota.

Charter school advocates say they are vital to helping create more choice for parents who have grown dissatisfied with their traditional public school systems. They note that charters force traditional schools to improve to compete for students.

Charter opponents say charters

drain the most motivated students from the traditional schools as well as necessary public funds needed for reform.

Thirty-seven states plus the District have passed charter laws; New York, Oklahoma and Oregon were the latest to do so during their 1999 legislative sessions. However, the data used in the report came from schools in 27 states, meaning the number of charter schools could be even higher.

During the 1998-99 school year, enrollment in charter schools increased in all 27 states, with the number of schools jumping 421, to a total of 1,484 as of September. When multiple branches of a school operating under the same charter were counted,

the total number of charter school sites was 1,605. Twenty-seven charter schools closed during that period.

The study showed that nationwide, nearly 7 out of 10 charter schools have a student racial or ethnic composition similar to that of their surrounding district. However, in some states—including Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts and Texas—these schools enroll a much higher percentage of students of color than other public schools.

"This has been a very successful movement," said a White House source. "There is a lot of good evidence emerging that you see a good, positive, competitive dynamic. Schools are becoming more responsive to parents."

Va. Firm Awarded \$4.8 Million in Contract Suit

By TOM JACKMAN
Washington Post Staff Writer

A Vienna engineering company has been awarded nearly \$4.8 million in a lawsuit against its former partner in a global positioning satellite project for the Federal Aviation Administration.

Overlook Systems Technologies, which specializes in global positioning technology for government agencies, prevailed against D.C.-based Advanced Management Technology Inc. after an 11-day jury trial in Fairfax County Circuit Court.

After Advanced Management was awarded the \$80 million FAA contract in September, it secretly reduced Overlook's role and tried to recruit its employees, Overlook said.

Advanced Management started the legal tussle by suing Overlook in February 1998, alleging that Overlook had backed out of the project. But the jury decided that Advanced Management had breached the contract and conspired to harm Overlook's reputation.

On Wednesday, the jury awarded Overlook \$1.47 million in compensatory damages, which would be tri-

pled because the case involved a conspiracy. The jury also awarded \$2.5 million in punitive damages, which will be reduced to the state cap of \$350,000.

Overlook alleged that it had agreed with Advanced Management and another company to bid on the FAA project, with each doing a third of the work. But when the bid was submitted, Advanced Management reduced Overlook's role from 22 workers to four without telling the company, the suit stated.

Advanced Management won the contract for \$60 million, lost it when

other bidders protested and then won it again, for \$80 million, Overlook said.

"The verdict cannot replace the lost opportunities we have suffered as a result," Overlook President Michael L. Sorrentino said, "but we are gratified by the jury's decision."

John R. Erickson, an attorney for Advanced Management, said the company was disappointed by the verdict. "We didn't think it was supported by the evidence," he said. Advanced Management will file post-trial motions before deciding whether to appeal, he said.

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

Philadelphia City Council Backs Halt of Executions

By WILLIAM CLAIBORNE
Washington Post Staff Writer

CHICAGO, Feb. 10—On the heels of a decision by Illinois Gov. George H. Ryan (R) to halt all executions until the fairness of capital punishment procedures are studied, Philadelphia's City Council today adopted a resolution urging the Pennsylvania legislature to enact a similar moratorium on executing death row inmates.

The council's 12-4 vote makes Philadelphia the eighth—and largest—municipality to urge a halt to executions as part of an anti-death penalty movement that has inspired moratorium legislation in six of the 38 states that have capital punishment. Besides Pennsylvania, death penalty moratoriums are under consideration by legislatures in Maryland, Alabama, New Jersey, Washington state and Oklahoma.

Philadelphia County has sentenced 125 of the 226 people on death row in Penn-

sylvania, ranking it third in the number of condemned prisoners behind Los Angeles County (156) and Harris County, Tex., (140), which includes Houston.

Tony Banout, co-director of the Hyattsville-based Quixote Center, said the Philadelphia council vote "sends a clear message to the state legislature to halt executions until it can be determined if they are being applied fairly."

The nonprofit Quixote Center runs a Moratorium Now project that Banout said has enlisted 700 groups nationally to urge a halt to executions, citing race and class bias and the risk of executing innocent people.

Banout noted that the innocence of condemned prisoners has been the most publicized element of Ryan's decision to halt executions in Illinois, where 13 death row inmates have been cleared of murder charges since capital punishment was reinstated in 1977, compared to 12 who were put to death.

"But nationally, innocence is only one

factor, while race and poverty are very major factors," said Banout. He said that more than two-thirds of Pennsylvania's death row inmates are people of color, and more than 90 percent were too poor to afford their own attorney.

The Quixote Center said that besides Philadelphia, municipalities that have recently urged death penalty moratoriums include Charlottesville; Mount Rainier; New Haven, Conn.; and Chapel Hill, Durham, Carrboro and Orange County, all in North Carolina.

Meanwhile, a senior Justice Department official said today he has been ordered by Attorney General Janet Reno to study whether inappropriate racial dis-

parities exist in the federal death penalty system.

Deputy Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. said that the study was ordered "out of an abundance of caution" and was not necessarily based on a belief that a disparity exists in the system.

"We want to make sure that the system is as fair as it can be, and we are always looking for ways to improve the system," Holder told reporters at the Justice Department. He said the review began several months ago without an announcement.

Of the 21 people awaiting execution in a federal death row prison in Terre Haute, Ind., 14 are black, a ratio that has prompted questions about whether the federal death penalty unfairly discriminates against blacks.

USDA to Resume Testing Meat for Illegal Hormone

By MARC KAUFMAN
Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States will soon resume testing meat for the illegal hormone DES after Swiss health inspectors reported finding traces of it in imported American beef.

"I am very concerned about this," Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said yesterday at a meeting of European and American consumer advocates. "I've asked for an independent review and a full report on this issue."

DES (diethylstilbestrol) was found in July in two of 26 American beef samples tested in Switzerland. Once a commonly used growth stimulant in animals, the hormone was taken off the U.S. market in 1979 as a suspected carcinogen. The USDA regularly tested meat for DES until 1991, when the agency concluded it was no longer being used and posed no danger.

Its reappearance in exported American beef could hardly have come at a worse time. The European Union has banned all hormone-treated beef as a potential health hazard, but American officials have argued successfully before the World Trade Organization that the ban amounts to an unfair trade barrier. The discovery of a hormone banned by both Europe and the United States in exported American beef can only make the debate more contentious.

Switzerland, which is not an EU member, imported more than 1,000 tons of American beef in 1998.

USDA Undersecretary for Food Safety Catherine Woteki said yesterday that the DES testing by the Food Safety and Inspection Service would resume in about a month. She said the decision to resume tests was made jointly by the USDA, the Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agen-

cy, and was based on "not only the Swiss findings, but other information that came to us."

Woteki also said that any possible DES use was limited, and that her agency remained uncertain whether DES was actually even present in the Swiss samples. The Swiss sent their samples to another Dutch lab for confirmation, but that firm never reported back—leaving the "inference" that no DES was found, she said.

The DES issue was brought to public attention earlier this month by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), which came upon a letter on the subject from Glickman to David Byrne, EU commissioner of health and consumer protection. In that letter, Glickman referred to suspicions that DES—which can be legally used to treat pets—may be improperly diverted to some farm animals.

Bruce Silverglade, CSPI's legal affairs director, said he believed the DES discovery will contribute to European uneasiness about American food exports, "adding insult to other injuries." He also criticized the USDA for responding slowly to the DES report. Glickman said yesterday that he, too, was concerned about how long it took for the DES issue to reach his desk.

The FDA has been investigating where and when DES may have been used and "has several leads about where the illegal activity may have occurred," said Linda Tollefson of the agency's Center for Veterinary Medicine.

The growth hormone issue is further complicated by reports last year that some American beef exported to Europe as hormone-free contained residues of banned growth hormones. That led to a voluntary suspension of American exports, and intense negotiations to head off an EU ban on American hormone-free beef.

Andy Rotherham
02/10/2000 07:14:32 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Victoria L. Valentine/WHO/EOP@EOP, tom_lyon@ed.gov @ inet

cc:

Subject: charter release

I think we should do some sort of specific strategy to get press in the markets in these states. I'd be happy to do a second conference call or something, but being in the top-ten ought to be a news hook.

What do you all think?

**Top 10 - Enrollment
Charters**

1. California (73,905)
2. Arizona (32,209)
3. Michigan (25,294)
4. Georgia (18, 611)
5. Texas (18,590)
6. Colorado (13,911)
7. Florida (10, 561)
8. Massachusetts (9, 673)
9. North Carolina (9,513)
10. Pennsylvania (5,474)

Top 10 - Percentages of Public School Students in in Charters

1. District of Columbia (4.4%)
2. Arizona (4.0%)
3. Colorado (2.0 %)
4. Alaska (1.6%)
5. Michigan (1.5%)
6. Georgia AND New Mexico (1.4%)
7. California (1.3%)
8. Delaware (0.9%)
9. North Carolina (0.8%)
10. Minnesota (0.6%)

Pending Legislation:

WA

MAINE

TN

KY

GEORGIA IS IMPROVING

VT

IN

FOR RELEASE
February 11, 2000

Contact:
David Thomas
(202) 401-1579

CHARTER SCHOOLS GET BOOST FROM FEDERAL START-UP FUNDS

Nationwide, more than a quarter-million students are attending some 1,700 charter schools and demand for these schools remains high with seven in 10 charter schools reporting a waiting list.

According to the fourth-year report on *The National Study of Charter Schools*, produced by the department's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, the number of students in charter schools increased in 1999 by nearly 90,000, while an additional 421 charter schools opened during the same period.

"Under President Clinton's leadership, we have provided the federal support needed to meet the goal of 3000 charter schools by 2002," said U.S. Education Secretary Richard W. Riley. "Public charter schools are providing parents and students with the choice they want and deserve."

According to the report, fewer new charter schools report that lack of start-up funding was a major difficulty. And while this problem is still the number one challenge facing charter schools, federal funds are making a difference. For those schools that opened in 1999, 39 percent cited start-up funds as a problem, down from 59 percent in 1996.

Thirty-six states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have legislation permitting charter schools, which are public schools freed from some or all state and local regulations, in exchange for achieving the goals set out in the charter, including greater accountability for student success.

Overall, the study found that these schools are being held accountable and that they have the flexibility to make independent decisions about educational and management issues. For the most part, they also serve a diverse set of students, in relatively small schools, with lower student to teacher ratio and better access to computers compared to the average in all public schools.

The report states that the addition of 421 charter schools in 1999 continues a trend and represents the largest yearly increase.

"We can see that there is a continued need for our support of these schools, which offer innovative approaches to effective education of our students," Riley said. "That's why the president's FY 2001 budget proposes \$175 million -- a \$30 million increase -- to further support the development of charter schools."

Other findings of the report include:

- Seven of 10 charter schools are newly created, with a median enrollment of 128 students;
- Most charter schools seek an alternative vision of schooling and one-quarter are founded to serve special populations of students;
- The number of students in charter schools increased in the 1998-99 school year by nearly 90,000 to more than 250,000 students, representing 0.8 percent of all public school students in the 27 states with open charter schools during the same period;
- Twenty-seven charter schools closed during the 1998-99 school year. Since the first charter school opened in 1992, a total of 59 - nearly 4 percent of all that have ever opened - have closed;
- More than 9 of 10 charter schools were monitored for accountability in terms of school finance; nearly 9 of 10 for student achievement and for compliance with regulations; more than 8 of 10 for student attendance; and more than 6 of 10 for instructional practices.

The study is the final in a four-year research program designed to document and analyze the charter school movement. Future reports will address broad policy issues regarding the charter school movement, including its potential effects on America's system of public education and student achievement.

The study was conducted for the Education Department by RPP International of Emeryville, Calif. Copies are available by calling 1-877-4ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827) and online at www.uscharterschools.org/.

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▶ **Jordan Tamagni**
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Subject: Revised Final

Draft 8/27/99 3:30pm
Tamagni

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
RADIO ADDRESS ON CHARTER SCHOOLS
MARTHA'S VINEYARD, MASSACHUSETTS
August 28, 1999**

Good morning. This week, students all over the country are getting ready for the first day of school. Like every year, parents will send their children off to school with new backpacks and fresh hopes that they will get the world class education they need and deserve. Today, I want to talk about our continuing efforts to strengthen and renew our nation's public schools – by encouraging more choice, more competition, and more creativity.

For more than six-and-a-half years, my administration has taken action to raise standards, raise expectations, and raise accountability in every public school in America. I have proposed a comprehensive plan to strengthen and renew our nation's public schools – from reducing class size to improving teacher quality ... from modernizing and rebuilding thousands of schools to finishing the job of connecting every library and classroom to the Internet ... from putting an end to social promotion to expanding afterschool programs.

This is an education agenda for the 21st Century. But with school enrollments reaching record levels around the country, we know we must draw on every resource we possess to ensure that all of our children have the chance to reach their highest potential. We must do more to promote the creativity, competition, and accountability that can turn around failing schools, and make good schools even better.

That is why I have been encouraging more states to pass charter school laws – and promoting the idea of charter schools across the country. Charter schools are innovative public schools started by educators, parents, and communities, open to students of every background or ability. In return for greater flexibility, charter schools must set and meet the highest standards – and they stay open only as long as they do. Just as important, charter schools don't divert tax payer dollars from our public school system -- they use those dollars to improve all our public schools.

I am proud of the progress we have made so far. When I was first elected President, there was only one charter school in the entire country. This year, there will be more than 1,700 -- well on our way to meeting my goal of establishing 3,000 charter schools nationwide.

For an increasing number of families, charter schools are the right choice. In fact, there are waiting lists at 7 out of 10 existing charter schools, as more parents realize that more innovation and creativity produce results. Let me give you just one example. When Bowling Green Elementary School in Sacramento ranked third from the bottom in its district, parents and teachers decided to take control. Since becoming a charter school, Bowling Green has seen student performance soar -- with greater gains in test scores than any school in the district.

The charter school movement is a real grass-roots revolution in education -- and we must do everything we can to support it. Today, I am pleased to announce nearly \$100 million in funding for charter schools around the country. These funds will help teachers and parents open new charter schools in 32 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. They will help existing charter schools hire more well-trained teachers, buy more books, computers, and educational software, and ensure that classrooms are safe and accessible for all students. Finally, these funds will help charter schools develop accountability systems to measure whether they are meeting -- or exceeding -- state standards.

Charter schools are living proof of what parents and teachers can do to reinvigorate public education. Investing in them means investing in accountability and excellence. But just as our children are returning to class, the Republican leadership's risky tax plan would undermine these investments and force deep and irresponsible cuts in education and other national priorities. As Congress comes back to Washington, let's remind them what the creators and students of America's charter schools already know: We are all accountable for our children's future.

Thanks for listening.

Message Sent To:

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WHITE HOUSE RELEASES STUDY SHOWING BOOM IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND ANNOUNCES \$30 MILLION INCREASE IN CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING

February 11, 2000

The White House today will release a new report detailing the growth of charter schools across the country, and will announce that the President's FY 2001 budget includes a \$30 million increase in charter school funding. Charter schools are independent public schools founded by parents and teachers, and open to all students. In exchange for high levels of accountability for student achievement, they are given more autonomy and flexibility than traditional public schools in staffing, curriculum and other areas. Today's report, produced by the Department of Education, reveals that charter schools are growing more widespread each year, and sheds light on the benefits they bring through smaller size and diversity. The President's FY 2001 budget includes a \$30 million increase for charter schools, bringing total funding to \$175 million annually.

NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS POPULARITY, SMALLER SCHOOL SIZE, AND DIVERSITY OF CHARTER SCHOOLS. Today's report shows that more than 250,000 students nationwide are now enrolled in charter schools in 30 states and the District of Columbia. (Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia have now passed legislation allowing the creation of charter schools). According to the report, seven out of ten charter schools are so popular that they have waiting lists for students. The report also shows that most charter schools are small schools. In fact, the median enrollment of all charter schools is 137 students, compared to 475 for all public schools in the same states. Seven of ten charter schools are also newly created schools. Eighteen percent are pre-existing public schools that convert to charter status, while 10 percent are converted private schools. The report also reveals that charter schools enroll a slightly higher percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch than other public schools in their states and reflect similar racial diversity.

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S LEADERSHIP KEY TO GROWTH OF CHARTER SCHOOLS. President Clinton has long been a champion of charter schools. When the President was first elected, there was only one public charter school open in the United States. This year, according to today's report, 1,605 charter schools were in operation as of September 1999 – more than halfway to the President's goal of 3,000 charter schools. National leadership has played a key role in this rapid growth: federal funds have supported the creation of individual charter schools and helped disseminate best practices and strategies among these schools. Today the White House will announce that the President's FY 2001 budget includes \$175 million for the Education Department's Public Charter Schools Program – a \$30 million increase over last year's levels. Local charter schools use federal funds for planning and development, as well as for start-up costs, which are a major barrier to the creation of such schools.

CHARTER SCHOOLS: IMPROVING PUBLIC EDUCATION AND EMPOWERING PARENTS.

- **Public charter schools exemplify a standards-based approach to education.** Every charter school works with a public authority to establish clear performance standards. A charter school that fails to meet the terms of its charter is closed down. The Public Charter Schools program, which was reauthorized with the President's leadership in 1998, gives priority to states that have strong standards for academic accountability. Charter schools receiving federal funding must be measured by the same state assessments as any other public school.
- **Charter schools empower parents through public school choice.** States and districts around the country are using public charter schools, inter-district choice, and other innovations to offer students high-quality, well-tailored educational options. Public school choice can spur school improvement, and charter schools are key to an effective public school choice strategy. Surveys find high levels of support and satisfaction among parents of public charter school students. A recent national survey found that 65 percent of parents rated their child's public charter school as better than their former public school (and only 6 percent rated them worse).

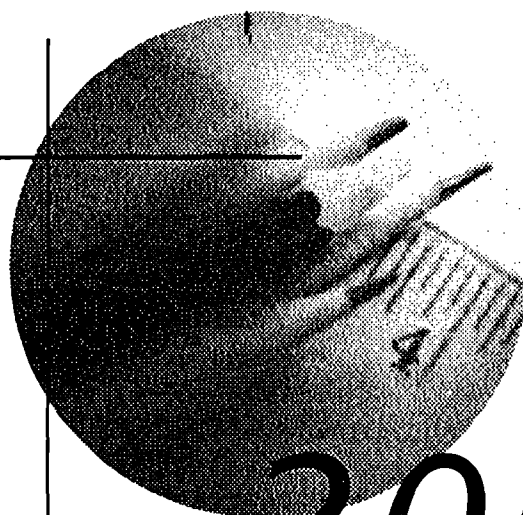
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The
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2000

NATIONAL
STUDY OF
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FOURTH - YEAR REPORT

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