

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. email	Personal (Partial) (1 page)	04/27/2000	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Bethany Little
OA/Box Number: 18522

FOLDER TITLE:

Education Tour: St Paul Minnesota [2]

2013-0371-S

ms635

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

CHARTER FRIENDS REPORT

A Periodic update from Charter Friends National Network

First annual National Charter Schools Week set May 1-5

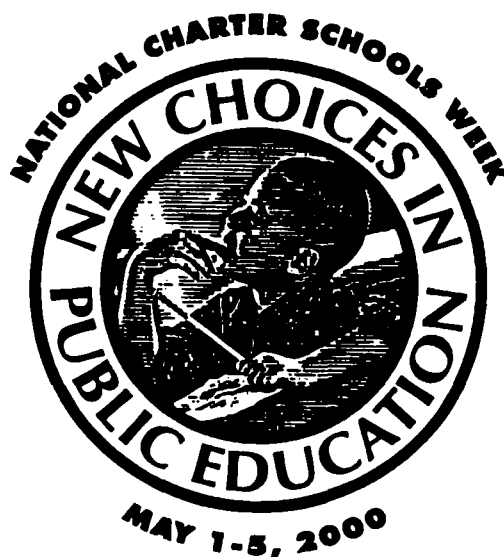
Theme for celebration
is 'New Choices in
Public Education'

Leaders of nearly 60 grassroots charter school organizations in 37 states have announced plans for the first-ever "National Charter Schools Week" to be held May 1-5. Organizers of the week-long celebration are hoping to showcase individual school and student success stories, as well as the growing impact of the charter movement on broader efforts to change and improve all public schools. The theme for the week is "New Choices in Public Education."

The celebration is being coordinated by a steering committee of 14 grassroots charter leaders headed by Sue Bragato, executive director of the California Network of Educational Charters, and Dan Quisenberry, president of the Michigan Association of Public School Academies. (See page 2 for a list of sponsoring organizations and steering committee members). The event is an expansion on previous state-level promotional events for charter schools in California and Michigan.

According to Bragato, National Charter Schools Week 2000 is intended to be "an endorsement of achievement."

"We want this to be a true 'festival of



progress' in a national movement that's not yet a decade old... a celebration of vibrant new choices in public education for all students in America."

Quisenberry said charter schools across the country are planning open houses, tours, cultural events, service learning projects and other special activities during the week-long celebration. *(continued on page 2)*

Federal charter support role discussed during U.S. House hearing

The House Education Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations heard testimony on March 3rd from four charter school leaders on their experiences with the federal charter grant program and other federal education programs. Testifying were: Kathryn Knox, headmaster, Liberty Common Charter School, Ft. Collins, CO; Irasema Salcido, principal, Cesar Chav-

(continued on page 6)

April 2000

**See inside for
more on these
charter school
initiatives**

- CFNN initiative supports new TA resources
- Employer-linked charters
- National conference
- EDVentures in Detroit
- New tools on facilities and business planning
- New sponsor network formed
- Expanded accountability network
- Special education

NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL WEEK

(continued from page 1)

"May 1-5 will be a week of well-deserved recognition," Quisenberry said, "for the dedication of charter school teachers, students, parents, administrators, board members and their communities."

National education, political leaders are being asked to lend their support

Quisenberry said the celebration's organizers are also counting on state and national education and political leaders to become involved.

"President Clinton and Education Secretary Richard Riley -- along with Republican and Democratic members of Congress, Presidential candidates in both parties, governors, legislators and other state and local leaders -- are all being invited to join in a truly bi-partisan national celebration of support for charter schools," Quisenberry said.

Secretary Riley, Quisenberry said, has agreed to host a nationally-televised "Town Meeting on Charter Schools." Grassroots charter support organizations and schools in

a number of states are working with community access cable stations to produce their own "Televised Town Meetings" to coincide with the event featuring Secretary Riley.

Bragato said state charter organizations are being encouraged to seek support resolutions and proclamations from their governors and legislators. And a number of individual charter schools will be inviting local elected officials, legislators, civic and business leaders and others to visit their schools during the week-long celebration.

In addition, Bragato said, a number of national education reform leaders are lending their support to the week's activities, including Jeanne Allen, Center for Education Reform; Chester E. Finn, Jr., Manhattan Institute; Howard Fuller, Institute for the Transformation of Learning; Marquette University, Ted Kolderie, Center for Policy Studies in St. Paul; and Joe Nathan, Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota.

A special Web site has been created to help promote participation in National Charter Schools Week and to report activities being planned by schools and states: <http://www.charterfriends.org/csweek.html>

National Charter Schools Week 2000 Steering Committee

Co-chairs

Sue Bragato, California Network of Educational Charters
Dan Quisenberry, Michigan Association of Public School Academies

Gary Richardson, Arizona Charter School Association
Jim Griffin, Colorado League of Charter Schools

Shirley Monastera, DC Public Charter School Resource Center

Cathy Wooley-Brown, Florida Charter School Resource Center

Steve Dess, Minnesota Association of Charter Schools

Sarah Tantillo, New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association

Gerry Vazquez, New York Charter School Resource Center

Roger Gerber, North Carolina League of Charter Schools

Tom Baker, Ohio Community Schools Center

Chenzie Grignani, Duquesne University Charter School Project, Pittsburgh

Patsy O'Neill, Charter School Resource Center of Texas

Cindy Zautcke, Wisconsin Charter School Resource Center

Coordination and administrative assistance is being provided by Charter Friends National Network

GRASSROOTS CHARTER SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS CO- SPONSORING "NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS WEEK 2000"

Alaska Charter School Association * Arkansas Policy Foundation * Arizona Charter School Association
Arizona Charter School Resource Center * Arizona Regional Resource Center * California Network of Educational Charters * California Charter Schools Development Center * Colorado League of Charter Schools * Connecticut Charter School Association * Delaware Charter School Network * DC Public Charter School Resource Center * Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (DC) * Florida Association of Charter Schools * Florida Charter School Resource Center * South Florida Consortium of Charter Schools * Georgia Charter School Association+ * Hawaii Association of Charter Schools * Hawaii Charter Schools Consortium * Idaho Charter School Association+ * Indiana Charter School Association
Color Education with Common Sense Charter Schools, Cedar Rapids * Leadership for Quality Education, Chicago * Council for a Better Louisiana * Maine Association for Charter Schools * Maryland Coalition for Education Reform * Michigan Association of Public School Academies * Metro Detroit Alliance for Charter Schools * New Twin Cities Charter School Project * Minnesota Association of Charter Schools * Missouri Charter School Information Center * Nebraska Charter School Coalition * Nevada Charter School Project * New Hampshire Charter School Resource Center * New Jersey Charter School Resource Center * New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association * New Mexico League of Charter Schools * New York Charter School Resource Center * New Visions Charter School Assistance Center, New York * Center for Governmental Research, Rochester, NY * North Carolina League of Charter Schools * North Carolina Charter School Resource Center * North Carolina Association of Charter Schools * Lucas County Education Service Center, Toledo * Ohio Community Schools Center * Alliance for Education, Dayton * Oregon Charter School Service Center * Duquesne University Charter School Project, Pittsburgh * Drexel/FOUNDATIONS Technical Assistance Center for Charter Schools, Philadelphia * Pennsylvania Charter School Coalition * South Carolina Charter School Association+ * Charter School Resource Center of Tennessee * Charter School Resource Center of Texas * Washington Educational Excellence Coalition * Wisconsin Charter School Resource Center * Wisconsin Charter School Association * Wyoming Citizens for Educational Choice

+ Informal networks of charter school leaders

CFNN joins employer-linked charter project

Charter Friends National Network has joined two other national organizations in a U.S. Department of Education-sponsored initiative to promote charter schools that involve partnerships with employers. These schools fall into two broad categories:

- * Charters that are established by employers at or near their facilities, easing enrollment and participation in the schools by employees and their children.

- * Charters – usually high schools – that are established around a career theme, often with involvement by employers in setting standards, designing the curriculum, mentoring, job shadowing and internships.

During its first two years, the project has identified more than 100 such charter schools. Case studies of many schools are available, along with best practices and other resources for both employers and charter founders.

Now in its third year, the project has asked CFNN to assist with dissemination of this information among charter supporters and employers around the country. Initially, this will include planning three seminars on employer-linked charters this spring – in Atlanta, Washington, D.C. and Albuquerque.

Other partners in the project are Public Policy Associates, a Lansing-based firm, and the National Alliance of Business.

Charter sponsors launch new network

School districts and other charter granting agencies across the country have launched a new national network to share ideas and strengthen their capacity to both grant charters and provide ongoing oversight to charter schools. CFNN has provided staff support to founders of the new initiative through the National Charter Schools Accountability Network (see page 5).

The new charter authorizers network was conceived in March of 1999 during a pre-conference for authorizers that was scheduled in advance of the National Charter School Conference in Denver. More than 200 school district and state department of education officials, post-secondary institutions and other sponsors were present for that event, which was followed by a smaller organizing meeting for the new authorizers network last September in Chicago.

The new network is now defining its mission and beginning to recruit members. A second national conference for authorizers is also being planned for December 6 in Washington, D.C. in conjunction with the next national charter schools conference.

Helping to lead the early organizing efforts has been Greg Richmond, director of the Chicago Public Schools' office of charter schools. For more information on becoming involved in the authorizers network, contact Richmond at 773-553-1535 or by e-mail at grichmond@csc.cps.k12.il.us

Applicants sought for charter teacher fellowship program

Charter school teachers from across the country are invited to apply for fellowships for self-directed independent study this summer in subjects of their choice.

The Charter School Teacher Fellowship Program is sponsored by the Council for Basic Education (CBE) and is funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

According to CBE, three-member teams from up to 14 charter schools (a total of 42 teachers) will win fellowships of \$2,500 for six weeks of self-directed study, "with time devoted to reading, writing and thinking." Each team will be awarded \$2,500 with \$500 going to the charter school.

Application materials are available on the CBE web site at www.c-b-e.org. Completed applications must be received at CBE in Washington, D.C. by May 8. Winners will be announced May 19. Additional information is also available by calling Elsa Little or Susannah Patton at 202-347-4171.

To learn more about employer-linked charter schools...

Additional information on employer-linked charter schools is available on the project's web site at www.nab.com or by contacting Charter Friends National Network at info@charterfriends.org

Update on charter schools and the Charter Friends National Network

Almost nine years after passage of the nation's first charter law, this important strategy for changing and improving public education is clearly here to stay. Nationally, there are now more than 1,700 charter schools serving some 350,000 students. Charter laws are on the books in 36 states and the District of Columbia and are under serious consideration in a half-dozen additional states.

With strong bi-partisan support, federal start-up aid got another big increase from the 1999 Congress, jumping from \$100.0 million last year to \$145.0 million in 2000. A total of \$400.0 million has now been appropriated for this program since it was first authorized in 1994. An additional \$175.0 million has been proposed for 2001.

While still undergoing rapid growth, the charter school movement is also maturing. Established charter operators are paying more attention to quality and accountability. School districts and other sponsoring agencies are becoming more sophisticated in both approving schools and providing ongoing oversight. And charters are beginning to demonstrate positive impacts -- both on students and on the nature and pace of change in nearby district public schools.

Though diverse many common concerns

At the same time, a number of issues and concerns are evident in virtually all the charter school states. Some critics are pushing legislation to limit growth in the size and number of charters and to reintroduce traditional compliance-oriented regulation. Many charters are struggling to demonstrate their unique value in a sea of standardized tests. Facilities financing, special education and governance all represent serious challenges to individually funded and managed school sites.

In the midst of this dynamic movement, state and sub-state "charter friends groups" are playing an increasingly important role. About half are non-profit resource centers. Some are free-standing, but most are based in academic institutions, think tanks, business groups or other supportive organizations. They focus on providing hands-on technical assistance to charter school founders and operators. A growing number of states are also spawning membership-based operators associations -- many of which focus on advocacy work, acting as a spokesperson for their states' schools to policy makers, the media and the general public.

Now in its fourth year, the Charter Friends National Network

is a unique linchpin in this highly decentralized, independent-minded movement. CFNN continues to be a project, not an organization. It is sponsored by a Minnesota-based non-profit, the Center for Policy Studies, in cooperation with Hamline University, a St. Paul liberal arts institution with a strong commitment to teacher education. Its mission is to connect and support state-level charter school organizations.

In 2000, the value of that mission continues to grow within the charter school movement. When CFNN was established in late 1996, there were fewer than a dozen state-level charter support organizations, anchored by the well-established resource centers founded by Linda Brown in Massachusetts and Eric Premack in California. Three years later, CFNN is working with nearly sixty state and sub-state resource centers, operators associations and advocacy groups, including several in states still working to pass a charter school.

A 'virtual platform' for networking and collaboration among charter organizations

As the number of charter states and organizations has grown, so has the challenge of keeping those organizations connected. And, so have the number of issues and concerns these organizations -- and the schools they support -- have in common.

To help meet these challenges, CFNN has a number of initiatives underway that connect and support state-level charter organizations and leaders. Several of those initiatives are described in greater detail elsewhere in this newsletter. In addition, they include:

General networking and communications

CFNN continues to expand its Web site, list-servs and print communications. One key resource is the state-by-state directory of charter support contacts that's maintained on CFNN's Web site. CFNN also convenes meetings of state charter association leaders and its 12-member resource center advisory committee, often around state and national charter conferences. And CFNN helped organize focus groups in nine cities around the country this winter that provided input to the U.S. Department of Education on use of federal funds to help meet the technical assistance needs of charters.

Based on recommendations of its PR/media relations working group, CFNN has played a major role in coordinating this year's first-ever National Charter Schools Week (see page 1). This week-long series of activities offers schools and state and national charter supporters an opportunity for generating focused, consistent and positive messages about the contributions charter are making to their students and to improving all public schools.

New resource center development and outreach to charter leaders in new states

CFNN is working with leaders of a number of newer charter support organizations -- in states like New York, Oregon,

Ohio and Pennsylvania -- to fully integrate them in the charter movement nationally and to draw on their emerging expertise.

CFNN also administers a program that offers modest-sized matching grants to new state-level charter support organizations and connects experienced "mentors" with friends group leaders in states that are passing and strengthening their charter laws. During the past year, these "seeding" and support activities have included working with emerging charter leaders in a number of states including Louisiana, Georgia, New Mexico, Idaho, Hawaii and South Carolina.

National Charter Accountability Network

CFNN provides coordinating staff support and facilitates information-sharing among a growing number of states that are part of the National Charter Schools Accountability Network. Last year, charter support organizations in eight states participated in this network, a number that has more than doubled in 2000 to include 23 organizations in 17 states.

During its first year, the founding state organizations assisted dozens of schools in developing accountability plans to help meet the academic and other goals in their charters. CFNN also played an important role in sharing what is being learned about accountability among the state organizations and with charter school sponsors (see article on the new charter authorizers network on page 3).

New technical assistance materials for charter operators and developers

With support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, CFNN is coordinating the development of new technical assistance materials for charters on governance, employee relations and involving parents and other family members in the design and operation of charter schools.

These and other CFNN materials will be used to help start charters in 22 cities that are part of a larger Casey-funded family/neighborhood support initiative. CFNN is also helping identify experienced charter operators that will be organized in networks to help provide mentoring and other support to new charter developers in "Casey cities."

Special education working group

CFNN has convened an informal special education working group that includes leaders of charter friends groups, school directors, state education agency and advocacy organization leaders from more than a dozen states. The working group is co-chaired by two resource center directors, Chenzie Grignano (PA) and Lynn Lavelly (FL).

The working group has an ambitious work plan for 2000 including documenting innovative technical assistance and support initiatives in various states that are helping school operators meet their legal obligations on federal and state special ed laws. The working group is also developing a

"Special Ed 101" document for charter leaders, doing outreach to parent and other advocacy organizations and serving as a conduit of information on charters to federal and state special education officials.

Facilities financing and business planning

CFNN continues to be regarded as the leading source nationally for information on innovative facilities strategies used by charter schools, as well as federal and state policy options for facilities financing. That leadership will continue this year with a series of print and electronic updates on state and federal policy developments in facilities financing and a survey to document current facilities practices and challenges in representative charter school states.

As an outgrowth of its earlier work, CFNN also has partnered with the National Cooperative Bank Development Corporation (NCBDC) to produce a new resource guide on business and facilities planning and financing. The resource guide – to be available this spring in print and electronic versions – includes practical advice on both business and facilities financing and budgeting. The project has also includes workshop and training materials that were piloted at the annual Colorado charter schools conference in October and that will be available for use by friends groups later this year.

Federal policy development

Historically, CFNN has been the most consistent and reliable source of information on legislative changes and annual appropriations for the federal charter school grant program (see article on page 1). To maintain and build on that record, CFNN established a modest "DC Outpost" during the last year in partnership with the DC Public Charter School Resource Center. Coordinating this initiative is CFNN consultant Margaret Lin, with strategic advice on policy and Congressional contacts provided by Richard Wenning, also a DC charter consultant.

A high priority for CFNN's "DC Outpost" has been monitoring Congressional activity around this year's reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). One issue that's arisen involves a proposed new federal mandate requiring states to increase the percentage of all public school teachers who are certified. A large majority of states offer charters at least some flexibility in setting other qualifications for charter school teachers. To communicate these concerns, CFNN coordinated a letter to President Clinton and key Congressional leaders opposing the new mandate that was signed by leaders of 42 charters school organizations in 29 states. Follow-up contacts on this issue are continuing with key Administration officials and Congressional staff members.

For further information these or other Charter Friends initiatives, contact the CFNN office at 651-649-5479 or visit the CFNN Web site at www.charterfriends.org

FEDERAL ISSUES

(continued from page 1)

ez Charter School, Washington, D.C.; Irene Sumida, director of instruction, Fenton Avenue Charter School, Los Angeles; and CFNN Director Jon Schroeder.

The charter leaders discussed the importance of federal grants for planning and start-up expenses, as well as the need to keep "strings" for receiving those grants at an absolute minimum. They also called for simplified application procedures for federal funding or setting aside a portion of competitive grant funds for consortia of charters – to address the difficulty individual schools often have in completing detailed grant applications and competing with districts.

Irene Sumida from the Fenton Avenue Charter School also urged the Subcommittee to consider block granting certain federal programs as a further way of easing administration and adding flexibility to how the funds are used. The State of California recently did that by combining some thirty different categorical programs into a new per student state block grant to charters.

Activity picking up on ESEA reauthorization, 2001 appropriations

The charter grant program is one of dozens of federal education programs authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ESEA needs to be formally reauthorized by Congress this year. The fact that 2000 is an election year is also putting an additional spotlight on education issues in Washington. Here's a quick run-down on some recent federal policy developments of importance to charters:

* President Clinton's ESEA proposal includes a new federal mandate requiring states to have 90 percent of their teachers certified in four years. This is of concern to the charter community nationally since, in about two-thirds of states with charter laws – states with more than 80 percent of the schools – charters have at least some flexibility in hiring teachers that don't meet traditional certification requirements. While not disagreeing with the need to improve teacher quality, grassroots charter organizations are actively opposing this proposed mandate.

* Not surprisingly, accountability is rising on the Congressional and Administra-

tion radar screens with lots of talk in Washington about ending "social promotion" of students from grade to grade and linking evidence of improving student achievement to funding for Title I and other federal programs. These are laudable goals – adding accountability to all public schools. But, charter advocates are watching these proposals closely to ensure they don't supercede the academic achievement and other goals that charters are held accountable for in charter agreements with their sponsors.

* The President's ESEA reauthorization proposal was unveiled last year and the House has been taking up specific ESEA proposals one at a time. The Senate's version – S.2 – was introduced by Senator James Jeffords (R-VT) during the last week in February. The Senate bill includes an increase in the authorized funding level for the federal charter grant program to \$175.0 million. S.2 was modified by a number of amendments before being passed out of the Labor Committee. An update on the bill and its amendments is available at <http://www.senate.gov/~labor/> The President's ESEA proposal is at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/ESEA/index.html> A third ESEA reauthorization proposal has been introduced by moderate Senate Democrats led by Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-CN). It increases authorized funding levels for the federal charter grant program to \$200.0 million.

* President Clinton's FY2001 budget proposal includes a \$30.0 million increase in funding for the federal charter grant program – from \$145.0 million to \$175.0 million. Charter advocates are weighing strategies for an even larger increase based on continued projected increases in the number of charters, the need to increase the average grant size, a growing number of states offering pre-charter planning grants, an increasing number of more mature charters eligible for dissemination grants and growing interest in using a portion of grants to states and/or schools for pooled technical assistance through state charter support organizations.

Updates on federal policy developments relating to charters are regularly posted on the CFNN Web site – <http://www.charterfriends.org> – and are distributed by mail. To get on the mailing list for CFNN's "Federal Policy Updates," e-mail info@charterfriends.org

Facilities financing gets growing DC policy interest

Charter advocates are watching growing interest in Washington in an expanded federal role in facilities financing.

President Clinton is continuing to push for a new federal program to subsidize interest on debt for new and renovated school facilities, especially in hard-pressed urban areas.

Sensing the priority voters are placing on education in an election year, Congressional Republicans are said to be drafting an affirmative response – rather than continuing their past posture of opposing any new federal role in school facilities financing.

Charter advocates will be watching these developments closely to ensure that charter schools are eligible for whatever federal subsidies or assistance are made available to other public schools.

One specific proposal to respond to the growing Congressional interest in facilities financing has been introduced by Representative Heather Wilson (R-NM). Rep. Wilson's proposal would create a new \$600 million federal loan guarantee program for charter schools administered by the Small Business Administration (SBA). For more information, contact Rep. Wilson's legislative assistant, Clint Williamson, at 202-225-6316.

FAX BACK SURVEY

3rd National Charter Schools Conference

Washington, DC - December 7-9

The U.S. Department of Education recently announced it will host the Third National Conference on Charter Schools December 7-9 in Washington, D.C. The conference will include a variety of speakers and workshops designed for charter school operators, friends group leaders, school district and state department of education officials and others who are part of the charter school movement nationally.

Your input through this survey will help ensure that this year's conference meets the diverse needs of the charter school community. Please fax your response to the CFNN office. We will compile the results and make them available to the Department and others involved in planning charter school workshops and other events at the state level. If you have other comments, please attach additional sheets.

1. Did you attend the last national conference in March, 1999 in Denver? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. How likely is it that you will attend the December, 2000, conference in Washington? ☐ Very likely ☐ Probably ☐ Unlikely
3. The Department is again planning on holding a one-day "preconference" for school districts and other charter authorizing agencies.
☐ I would be interested in attending the pre-conference as a charter granting agency representative
☐ I am interested in becoming involved in a national network of charter granting agencies (please include your name and address and you will be sent information on the new authorizers network).
4. Please mark the possible break-out sessions you would most like to attend:

Federal issues and resources

- ☐ Overview of the U.S. Department of Ed
- ☐ Departmental technical assistance
- ☐ Waivers to federal rules and regulations
- ☐ Charter planning and start-up grants
- ☐ Title I
- ☐ Title I/School-wide programs
- ☐ Special Education
- ☐ The IDEA Act
- ☐ Office of Civil Rights; student admissions and recruitment
- ☐ OCR services to students with disabilities
- ☐ OCR services to students with Limited English Proficiency
- ☐ Bilingual education and language minority students
- ☐ School to work transition
- ☐ Safe and Drug-Free Schools
- ☐ Goals 2000
- ☐ Technology grants; e-rate discounts
- ☐ Comprehensive school reform grants
- ☐ Other federal programs _____
- _____
- _____

Non-federal charter issues

- ☐ Standards, assessment and accountability
- ☐ Facilities and facilities financing
- ☐ General operation finances
- ☐ Managing growth and development
- ☐ Governance; managing conflict
- ☐ Access to credit
- ☐ Entrepreneurial leadership
- ☐ Legal issues
- ☐ Personnel issues
- ☐ Discipline policies
- ☐ Business office operations
- ☐ Relationships with chartering authorities
- ☐ Technology; instructional use
- ☐ Technology; information systems
- ☐ Collective bargaining; union issues
- ☐ Community outreach; partnerships
- ☐ Public and media relations
- ☐ Parental involvement; contracts
- ☐ The charter renewal process
- ☐ Research findings on charter schools
- ☐ Instructional/professional development
- ☐ Converting existing schools to charters
- ☐ Home-based instruction
- ☐ Other _____

5. Please indicate which category best describes you or your interest in charter schools:
☐ Current charter operator ☐ Future charter operator ☐ Resource Center ☐ Charter Assn.
☐ Academic/researcher ☐ Management company ☐ School design group ☐ General supporter ☐ State department/school district ☐ Charter parent/teacher ☐ Other _____

Please fax your response to CFNN at 651-649-5472

CHARTER CALENDAR

April 7-8, 2000 -- Annual Pennsylvania Charter School Conference -- Charter School Project, Duquesne University -- State College, PA -- Contact: 412-396-4492

April 9-11 -- Annual North Carolina Charter Schools Conference -- Department of Public Instruction, NC Charter School Resource Center, NC Association of Charter Schools, NC League of Charter Schools -- Charlotte, NC -- Contact: 919-715-6838 - www.dpi.state.nc.us/conf/charter/

May 1-5 -- National Charter Schools Week -- Events at schools and in states throughout the country and in DC -- See www.charterfriends.org/csweek

June 17-22, 2000 -- Charter School "Boot Camp" -- California Charter Schools Development Center -- Lake Tahoe, NV -- Contact: 916-278-4476 or visit <http://www.cacharterschools.org>

July 27-29, 2000 -- EDVentures 2000 -- Association of Educators in Private Practice and co-sponsored by Charter Friends National Network and others -- Detroit, MI -- Contact: 920-206-1474 or e-mail: cvelich@aepo.org or visit <http://www.aepo.org>

October, 2000 -- Annual Florida Charter Schools Conference -- Florida Charter School Resource Center and other education organizations -- 813-974-8350

October 26-28, 2000 -- Annual Colorado Charter Schools Conference, Denver, CO -- Colorado League of Charter Schools -- 303-989-5356

November, 2000 -- Annual Michigan Charter Schools Conference -- Michigan Association of Public School Academies -- 517-374-9167

December 7-9, 2000 -- National Charter Schools Conference -- Washington, D.C. -- Pre-conference for charter sponsors on December 6-- Watch U.S. Charter Schools Web site for more information as it becomes available -- <http://www.uscharterschools.org>

For updates on these and other charter-related events visit the CFNN web site at www.charterfriends.org/events.html

Charter Friends Publications

The following reports and resource guides are available on the Charter Friends Web site.

Single copies may also be ordered free of charge by e-mailing the project at...
info@charterfriends.org

- *Business planning guide*
- *Accountability planning guide*
- *Guide for partnering with school designs*
- *Facilities financing guide*
- *Guide for contracting for management services*
- *Updates on federal policy issues*

Jon Schroeder, Editor

National conference set for December 7-9 in Washington, D.C.

The U.S. Department of Education has announced that the third National Charter Schools Conference will be held Thursday through Saturday, December 7-9 in Washington, D.C.

The event is intended to showcase charter schools nationally, as well as help link groups planning new charters, charter sponsors, policymakers and others from throughout the country. A one-day pre-conference for chartering entities will also take place on Wednesday, December 6.

The Department of Education's Office of Charter Schools has indicated that grassroots charter leaders will again be asked to submit ideas for workshops and speakers. A fax survey on possible topics and other ideas for the conference is included on page 7 of this issue of the Charter Friends Report.

A number of friends group and other charter school leaders were involved in the design of the last national conference in March, 1999, resulting in a number of sessions that showcased innovative charter schools and helped raise the visibility of grassroots charter concerns.

For more information and to make sure

you're on the mailing list for conference registration materials, call 800-203-5494 and watch for updates on the Department's Web site – <http://www.uscharterschools.org>

10th Annual 'EDVentures' to be held in Detroit

Entrepreneurial educators from throughout the country will gather July 27-29 in Detroit for the 10th annual EDVentures conference sponsored by the Association of Educators in Private Practice (AEPP). For the fourth year, Charter Friends National Network is a co-sponsor of the conference and will help plan a series of workshops on charter schools.

According to AEPP's director Chris Yellich, this year's conference will focus on a variety of topics intended to attract tutors and teachers in private practice, charter school operators and advocates, forward thinking school board members and administrators and others who provide and sell products and services to education.

Regular updates on the EDVentures conference are available on AEPP's Web site at <http://www.aepp.org/edventures.html> or contact Yellich at 800-252-3280.

Center for Policy Studies

CHARTER FRIENDS NATIONAL NETWORK

connecting and supporting state-level charter school initiatives

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
ST. PAUL, MN
PERMIT NO. 5242

1745 University Ave., Suite 110
St. Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-649-5479 • 651-649-5472 (fax)
E-mail - info@charterfriends.org
Web Site - www.charterfriends.org

|||||
*****AUTO**3-DIGIT 554

THE HONORABLE EMBER REICHGOTT JUNG
7701 48TH AVE N
NEW HOPE MN 55428-4515



JNATHAN@hhh.umn.edu
04/28/2000 05:39:29 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: Possible talking points

To: Andy

From: Joe

Re: Possible points for the President's speech

Ted is sending you some ideas, but I wanted to add a few things.

First, I hope you will give some kids from City Academy and perhaps from one or two other charter schools a chance to speak briefly before the President - the President is GREAT at keying off what people say. He'll get energy from them, and will be able to emphasize things in his speech that the kids have said.

Key points for his speech

- * President's own personal commitment to the idea of more autonomy more responsibility - might want to refer back to 1986, hearing from award-winning principals. It would be very good for folks to hear why he supports this idea.

- * The charter movement has attracted a vast range of kids - use Minnesota statistics from RPP report, and use RPP report to show that low income students and students of color are well-represented in Minnesota and nationally.

- * The charter movement is about opportunity and responsibility - the opportunity of people like Milo and Terry to create the kind of public school they believe in, so long as they are willing to be responsible for results

- * The charter movement also is about opportunity for families and for community groups

- * The charter movement is about HOPE - a real belief that we can make progress with students - that demographics are not destiny - that all kids can do well.

- * Some charters are brand new - like city Academy - some are conversions - there are several conversions in Minnesota

- * The President said in San Carlos that he'd like every public school to be a charter, or run like a charter - lots of autonomy and responsibility. This would be a very valuable thing to say

* Results in Minnesota and nationally are encouraging - we can give you examples of charters improving achievement in Minnesota and around the nation, and "ripple effects" in Minnesota and around the nation. Let me know if you want a few of these examples.

* Charter movement started because of people's courage - courage of legislators, courage of people who agreed to start charter schools - it didn't just happen. (Might key off his remarks at Little Rock HS yesterday which were reported here - where President praised the courage of civil rights activists in Little Rock, explaining that people with courage made it happen)

* Charter movement in Minnesota has been supported by people of various parties - good place to mention Ember, Becky, Larry, Alice, and Governor

* Educational reform is a key civil rights issue - worth noting that civil rights legend Rosa Parks is trying to start a charter in Detroit

* St. Paul houses more charter schools than any city in the country - this is a real tribute to the School Board and to local universities which have helped make this happen

* Around the country, some unions have helped create charters. Houston Federation of Teachers, Colorado Springs Education Association - very important for our unions to hear.

* The charter movement is going to continue - the Vice President (and probably next president) is a strong proponent of charters, the First Lady is a strong proponent of charters. This is a very important point.

Hope this helps - I'd be glad to discuss any of this. My home phone # is 651 698-1046 if you want to talk this weekend.

MANY thanks for helping make this happen.



CFO

YOUR ONLINE CFO RESOURCE

CFOs, TREASURERS AND SENIOR FINANCIAL EXECUTIVES

ROLL CALL



Covering Capitol Hill Since 1955

HOME | SITE MAP | ABOUT US | CUSTOMER CARE

SUBSCRIBE | CLASSIFIEDS | ADVERTISE | LINKS

May 1, 2000

NEWS

Daschle Struggles to Keep Democrats United on Education

By [Mark Preston](#)

In the first attempt to flex their muscles since creating the Senate New Democrat Coalition, a group of centrists may weaken Minority Leader Tom Daschle's (S.D.) hand in the battle over education legislation.

Daschle is locked in a procedural showdown with Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) over how to move the Elementary and Secondary Education Reauthorization Act scheduled on the floor this week.

At issue are the number and type of amendments the two warring parties can agree on, with gun control measures taking center stage.

Lott warned that if Democrats try to weigh the bill down with gun and other extraneous amendments, "I will have to look at my options."

"If the Democrats want to kill elementary and secondary education over a gun battle, which we already had, then the blood will be on their hands," Lott snapped.

Democrat sources said that they are gearing up to use the ESEA as vehicle to try and pass many of their proposals that Republicans, so far, successfully have blocked.

But Daschle must first make sure he can line up all his troops behind a Democratic alternative, which some centrists appear weary of supporting.

Daschle met with Sens. Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.) and Evan Bayh (D-Ind.) Thursday to gauge centrist support for the leadership's alternative to the GOP education bill.

Lieberman and Bayh have authored their own education bill, which splits the middle and is supported by most members of the Senate New Democrat Coalition.

A mixed message arose out of the Thursday meeting, with

[Roll Call Edition](#)
[Jim White](#)
[Education REOP](#)
[This Week](#)
[Government](#)
[Lawrence](#)

NEWS

[News on the Hill](#)
[Around the Hill](#)

OPINION

[Robert R. Anderson](#)
[Robert R. Anderson](#)
[Robert R. Anderson](#)
[Robert R. Anderson](#)
[Robert R. Anderson](#)
[Robert R. Anderson](#)
[Robert R. Anderson](#)

POLITICS

[Campaign Issues](#)
[Art and Politics](#)
[Science and Politics](#)
[Specialty List](#)

[Political Events](#)

Daschle believing that Lieberman and other centrist Democrats would support the leadership alternative at least at the outset. But it would not preclude Lieberman and Bayh from offering their bill later in the debate as an amendment.

Daschle spokeswoman Ranit Schmelzer said the Minority Leader walked away from the meeting believing that the Connecticut Democrat "remains committed to supporting the Democratic alternative."

But Lieberman's spokesman denied Friday that an agreement was reached, although he said the Senator is committed to working with the leadership to find a solution.

"At this point negotiations are still ongoing," said Lieberman spokesman Dan Gerstein. "We have not committed to supporting the Democratic alternative as it stands."

A source close to the coalition said that many Senators are concerned that if they vote for the Democratic alternative it will undercut their credibility as a group trying to reform the nation's educational system.

"There are several members of our group that feel very strongly that there hasn't been enough movement to address some of the concerns we have," the source said.

Bayh and Sen. John Breaux (La.), a leading centrist Democratic voice, both said they too have not made up their minds. A meeting of the coalition might take place as early as today for Members to discuss their options and strategy, several sources said.

The Lieberman-Bayh legislation would make school districts accountable for student scores and increases federal education dollars by \$35 billion over five years. Some of the more liberal members of the Democratic Caucus are concerned about the bill's block grant approach, arguing that some school districts might not use the money for what it was originally intended.

If Democrats are able to iron out their differences, then the task at hand will be how to offer what a senior Democratic source described as a "comprehensive Democratic gun amendment package" to the education reauthorization bill.

Schmelzer would not reveal the Democratic strategy, but did say that offering a series of gun and other amendments is "certainly [a] possibility."

And Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) pledged Friday to "force" his amendment to close the gun show loophole "one way or another on the ESEA bill."

"It would be shocking if the Republicans kill the education bill because they don't want to debate measures to keep guns out the hands of children," he said. "The bottom line is that this is my last year in the Senate and my interest is in passing legislation not playing politics."

Lautenberg's amendment passed as part of the comprehensive juvenile justice bill last summer that has been held up in conference because of opposition to Lautenberg's and other controversial gun control measures.

Lott said that Democrats should not be allowed to "empty their outbox on the education bill."

But Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) argues that these gun measures are critical to the debate of education and children's safety.

"It defies common sense to insist that amendments to make schools safer are not relevant to the debate over schools," Kennedy said.

ESEA is a \$15 billion reauthorization bill that outlines federal spending every five years for K-12 public schools. A senior Republican staffer involved in the debate said the GOP strategy next week is to try and make the point that this bill should be about education reform.

"They are going to try [to] solve all of their political problems on this bill," the aide said about Democratic plans to try to use the debate to highlight gun measures.

Democrats charge that Lott has not even reached out to them to try to determine a game plan as to how to proceed with ESEA this week. "Senator Lott has not come to us with a proposal with how he wants to handle the bill," Schmelzer said.

Lott's spokesman brushed off the criticism and said it is not uncommon for the two sides not to meet until right before the debate. "These things will happen when they happen," said John Czwartacki, Lott's spokesman.

Meanwhile, Lott has rankled some of his committee chairmen's feathers by asking them to move non-controversial bills out of their respective committees to the Senate floor for a vote.

The Majority Leader wants to make sure that the GOP can point to some accomplishments in a Congress that to date has been mostly gridlocked, GOP sources said. But in doing so, some chairmen took exception to being told what to do and who to cut deals with, two Republican Senators said.

"I am quite sure some of our committee chairmen are [feeling] angst a bit," said one GOP senator, who applauded Lott for refusing to allow the Senate to "languish this year."

Added another Senator, "I think committee chairman have a certain sense of independence ... and I don't think any of them particularly like being forced or told how to run things and what to do and who to accommodate."

But Armed Services Chairman John Warner (R-Va.) said that he admires Lott for being diplomatic to his chairmen, while making

sure the trains run on time.

"Lott has the remarkable ability to get four or five Senators into an office, even though many of them are senior to him, so that they may reconcile any differences," Warner said.

The political reality that this is an election year is not lost on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Chairman Phil Gramm (R-Texas), who said this is why legislation is being bottlenecked.

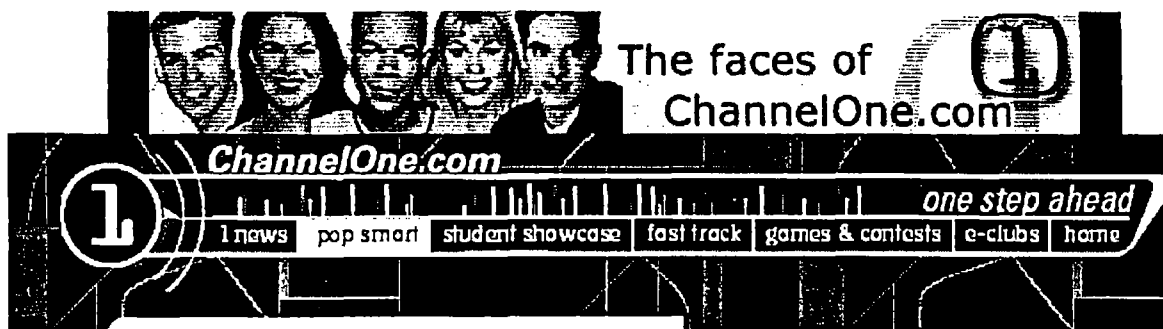
"This is an election year and unless something has bipartisan support or unless it is covered by some procedure like reconciliation ... it is just not going to happen," Gramm said.

[Current News Index](#)

[Back To Top](#)

[Home](#)

Copyright 2000 © [Roll Call Inc.](#) All rights reserved.



Chat live with President Clinton!



Chat Live! with President Clinton on Thursday,
May 4th, 11aET/8aPT

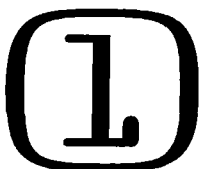
Chat with President Clinton about your school - related concerns in a special live event (chat and Webcast) hosted by ChannelOne.com and moderated by news anchor, Tracy Smith on Thursday, May 4th, 11aET/8aPT. President Clinton will be at a school in St. Paul, Minnesota, talking to students across the nation. The President will answer questions on the following topics:



This special chat event is hosted by
YAHOO!

The webcast event is hosted by
NEXTVENUE

1 news | pop smart | student showcase | fast track | games & contests | e-clubs | home



Channel One Network



Attention: Librarians/Media Specialists

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please copy and distribute to all teachers

**President Clinton will speak directly to students in a live
“Webside Chat” on ChannelOne.com on Thursday, May 4, 2000.**

Webside Chat and Web Cast time schedule:

Eastern: 11am Central: 10am Mountain: 9am Pacific: 8am

Directions: (Also available at ChannelOne.com)

1. During his School Reform Tour, President Clinton will discuss the challenges facing students and schools and answer questions on a variety of topics, including:

- Creating good learning environments
- Making schools an important part of their communities
- College preparation and opportunity
- The role of technology in the classroom
- Improving America's Schools

2. We encourage you to do the following before Thursday:

- Brainstorm with your students about the topics and generate questions for the President. (You can use the worksheet on page 2 to help with this activity.)
- Include the name of the student (FIRST NAME ONLY) or class, your school, city and state with all submissions. (e.g., John, Central HS, Chicago, IL) or the question will not be selected.
- Keep questions concise and focused on the topics. Students' questions will be selected at random.
- To view the web cast, please follow the instructions below. You may not need to download a player but should check before Thursday. The chat will be transcribed for those without the necessary technology.

3. Reminders for the day of the “Webside Chat:”

- Teachers should log onto ChannelOne.com with their classes this Thursday May 4th.
- Questions can be submitted 30 minutes before the “Webside Chat” begins.

4. How to participate:

Software Requirements: Current version (4.0 or higher) of either Netscape Communicator or Microsoft Internet Explorer. RealPlayerG2 (<http://realplayer.com/>) or Windows Media Player 5.0

(<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/mediaplayer/en/default.asp>). If you plan to view the Webcast, you will need to know which player you are using and what your Internet connection bandwidth is (28.8; 56.6; 100k).

1. We suggest that you download a RealPlayer or Windows Media Player prior to the day of the event. The links above take you directly to their sites. It only takes a few minutes!

2. On the event day, to chat with the President, simply go to ChannelOne.com and follow the links for the live chat! There is no registration process.

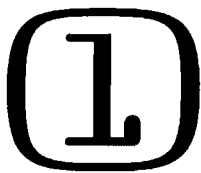
3. The link from ChannelOne.com will bring you directly to the chat auditorium. A link right on the page will launch the Webcast on top of the chat page so that you can view both the Webside Chat and the Web Cast at the same time. You will need to select your bandwidth and video player to launch the Webcast (see requirements above).

4. Now you will be fully prepared to chat, watch the Webcast or view the transcript!

We hope you'll take advantage of this historic event with President Clinton.

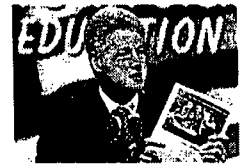
Thank you in advance for your cooperation. *Please contact us at 1-800-693-8164 if you have any questions.*

(Page 1 of 2)



Channel One Network

Student Worksheet



“Webside Chat” with President Clinton on ChannelOne.com

Scheduled time: _____

First Name _____

Class _____

School _____

City _____, State _____

Topics of “Webside Chat:”

- Creating good learning environments
- Making schools an important part of their communities
- College preparation and opportunity
- The role of technology in the classroom
- Improving America’s Schools

“Webside Chat”: A live conversation on the Web using printed text.

Web Cast: Streaming video of the event available on the site.

Sample questions:

1. “President Clinton, “Webside Chats” are just one of many exciting ways to use technology for instruction, but many schools do not have the money for technology. How are you solving that problem?”
2. “Mr. President, a lot of kids in our school are volunteering in our community. Do you have any suggestions for those of us who want to do community service?”
3. “President Clinton, all of us know how important it is to go to college, but many of us can’t afford the tuition. How are you making a college education available to all high school graduates?”
4. “Mr. President, what steps can we take to continue to improve America’s schools?”

Topic:

Statement to place my question in context:

My question for President Clinton:



ChannelOne.com

May 4, 2000

Log on 30 minutes before the “Web Chat” begins to submit your questions!

① $\hat{A}$ - commutator

- citra 1

- we did not do
it at C.A. -

WEEK OF MAY 4 after summary

FISCAL YEAR 2000
Public Charter Schools Program Grantees-New Grants

ARIZONA

Ash Fork	Academy of Hope Contact: Terra Kubalek-Chestnutt (520) 637-0456	\$150,000
Bapchule	Ira H. Hayes Memorial Applied Learning Center Contact: Carol Green (520) 315-3496	\$149,400
Campe Verde	Pace Preparatory Academy Contact: Holly Stiles (520) 394-9530	\$150,000
Chandler	Carmel Community Arts & Technology Contact: Jacci D. Hall (480) 899-6600	\$111,511
Chandler	Classical Kids' Academy Contact: Rachelle Sallee (480) 753-0000	\$150,000
Chandler	Solon Junior Academy/Advanced Education Services Contact: John Neiuber (909) 825-5797	\$99,960
Flagstaff	Painted Desert Demonstration Projects/ The STAR School Contact: Mark W. Sorensen (520) 699-7820	\$125,906
Glendale	International Studies Academy/Center for International Education Contact: Timothy A. Smith (602) 547-8806	\$128,500
Green Valley	Great Expectations Contact: Beth Phillips (520) 625-6638	\$150,000
Lake Havasu City	Desert Technology Public High School Contact: Judith I. Mahler (520) 453-3383	\$150,000
Mesa	Academy with Community Partners, Inc. Contact: Margaret Williamson (480) 833-0068	\$150,000
Patagonia	Patagonia Community Montessori Contact: Patty O'dea (520) 394-9530	\$150,000

Phoenix	AIBT Charter School Contact: Logan Bauer (623) 849-8208	\$150,000
Phoenix	Academy of Excellence Contact: Brenda Nelson (602) 389-4271	\$139,100
Phoenix	Benchmark Elementary Charter Contact: Barbara Darroch (602) 765-3582	\$150,000
Phoenix	Capital Academic Charter School Systems Contact: Cheryl Sodja (602) 200-9800	\$149,389
Phoenix	Career Success Educational Development Contact: Robert L. Duffy (480) 829-1903	\$100,00
Phoenix	CJ Wilson Academy Contact: Charles Wilson (602) 730-0773	\$150,000
Phoenix	Crossroads Middle School Contact: Mercedes Kee (602) 957-1234	\$150,000
Phoenix	Liberty Traditional School Contact: Aaron Robinson (602) 937-5242	\$150,000
Phoenix	Metropolitan Arts Institute Contact: Matt Baker (602) 252-2530	\$150,000
Phoenix	New World Charter Contact: Sharon Lang (602) 238-9577	\$150,000
Phoenix	Omega Academy Charter School District Contact: Dr. Patricia A. Bassett (602) 938-2092	\$150,000
Phoenix	Progressive Leadership Academy Contact: Derrick B. Scott (602) 462-5525	\$150,000
Prescott	Kestrel Schools, Inc. Contact: David Wagner (520) 541-1090	\$111,250
Prescott	Painted Pony Ranch Charter School Contact: Janine Hudson (520) 776-1212	\$150,000
Prescott	Tri-City Prep Contact: Mary Ellen Halvorsom (520) 708-3950	\$150,000

Scottsdale	Milestones Charter School Contact: Tara Cabardo (602) 404-1009	\$150,000
Scottsdale	Scottsdale Educational Enrichment Service Contact: Thea Andrade (480) 481-5051	\$150,000
Sedona	Real Life Charter School Contact: Jim Richard (520) 300-6524	\$150,000
Tempe	James Madison Preparatory School Contact: David Batchelder (480) 730-0641	\$150,000
Tubac	Montessori de Santa Cruz Charter School Contact: Lisa Harrison (520) 398-9284	\$150,000
Tucson	Children's Success Academy Contact: Dr. Nancy Aiken (520) 620-1943	\$150,000
Tucson	Desert Mosiac Contact: Wendy Weeks (520) 822-9809	\$150,000
Tucson	MASA Contact: Sergey Shayevich (520) 795-4505	\$150,000
Tucson	Southgate Charter School Contact: Sheryl Matyjasik (520) 294-4999	\$150,000

KANSAS

Topeka	State Department of Education Contact: Phyllis Kelly (785) 296-3069	\$1,500,000
--------	--	-------------

NEVADA

Las Vegas	Odyssey Charter School Contact: Michelle M. Truman (702) 257-0578	\$150,000
-----------	--	-----------

NEW MEXICO

Santa Fe	State Department of Public Education Contact: Dr. Michael A. Kaplan (505) 827-6576	\$4,450,000
----------	---	-------------

PENNSYLVANIA

Harrisburg	State Department of Education Contact: Dr. Timothy H. Daniels (717) 783-9781	\$4,000,000
------------	---	-------------

SOUTH CAROLINA

Columbia	State Department of Education Contact: Catherine Samulski (803) 734-8277	\$1,102,603
----------	---	-------------

startribune.com

news

freetime

travel

homezone

cars.com

workavenue

shopping

amazon.com

travel guides

Sun
microsystemsWhat can we
.com for you?™**Metro / Region**
[Back](#)
Related item(s)

Charter school scores add momentum to movement

Clinton plans May 4 visit to St. Paul charter school

Look up test scores online

Try a practice test

Charter school must build temporary building at Fort Snelling

State, city results

Testing progress by grade level

State welcomes reading test gains, worries about math

Norman Draper Star Tribune

Thursday, April 27, 2000

Minnesota eighth-graders turned in another year of impressive gains in reading, according to year 2000 test results released today. But math passing rates remained static.

Statewide, 80 percent of the state's eighth-graders passed the reading test and 71 percent passed the math test. Last year's results showed 75 percent of eighth-graders passing the reading test, and 70 percent passing math. In 1998, 68 percent of eighth-graders passed the reading test and 71 passed math.

The good news about reading scores was especially gratifying to districts that find themselves near the bottom of the rankings. Such districts as Minneapolis, St. Paul and Red Lake all noticed improvement. For schools in those districts, Wednesday's news meant that a bigger emphasis on reading at all grade levels was paying off.



In Thomas Beck's reading period, the most advanced at Red Lake Middle School, eighth grader Nakita Barrett, 14, reads from the "Lord of the Flies."

"I think part of it is just a total focus on reading, and another part is the students are taking it seriously, and the parents are, too," said Jill Parson, reading coordinator for Red Lake Middle School.

While the district still made the list of lowest-scoring schools in a Star Tribune analysis, it was no longer dead last. The Red Lake district went from a 28 to 34 percent passing rate in reading. Math was up from 14 to 20 percent. "We certainly expect them to keep improving," Parson said.

Christine Jax, commissioner of the state Department of Children, Families and Learning, termed the reading test-passing rates "fabulous," and said she felt vindicated that her predictions that passing rates would go up had proven true.

"I was labeled early on as a Pollyanna," she said at a Wednesday news conference. "It's really gratifying to be overly optimistic, and to be proved right by the people of Minnesota."

Still, the math results provided a sobering counterpoint.

"I was hopeful that the math would be going up," she said, "but I wasn't

surprised." Jax said she thinks math scores lag behind reading because reading skills often are needed to solve math problems and must be mastered first.

She speculated on several other causes for the lack of progress in math.

"It's easy for social studies teachers to teach reading," she said. "It's a lot easier to do that kind of cross-field teaching than it is in math." Plus, Jax said, more of the teachers who teach math have less experience in the subject. Math tests that compare Minnesota with other states and nations show good results in the fourth grade, she noted, but less impressive results by the eighth grade.

A looming shortage of math teachers could make matters worse.

Urban school gains

Reading score improvements were notable in Minneapolis and St. Paul. In Minneapolis, reading passing rates jumped from last year's 48 percent to 56 percent, while in St. Paul the percentage rose almost identically, from 49 to 56 percent.

"The magnitude of those [Minneapolis] gains is just astounding," said Dave Heistad, Minneapolis schools research director.

Franklin Middle School in north Minneapolis made some of the biggest jumps in passing rates of any school in the state. In reading, the percentages of eighth-graders passing jumped from 33 to 53. In math, the percentages of students passing jumped from 25 to 46.

With a high percentage of poverty and many students moving in and out of the school, getting Franklin's eighth-graders to pass is a challenge. The school has tried everything from cheerleading tactics, such as making buttons that read, "Be a success, pass the test," to reading for the first hour of every day. The school brought in a visiting author, and books on tape are accumulating. Many students now have two math classes, and they can get extra help outside of the classroom.

Principal Kay Bonczek said she tells the students that such gains come from hard work, not luck.

The students were happy to hear the news. As one girl put it, "Franklin's got some *smart* kids." But they were also anxious about their own results.

"I'm nervous. I'm going to be mad if I didn't pass it," said Mia Johnson, 14.

Individual test scores have been shipped to the state's school districts, and they must then be reported to the families of students who took the tests. That could take up to several weeks.

St. Paul's scores followed the statewide trend of sizable gains in reading. There was also a slight improvement in math. "This shows we're on the right track," said an elated Superintendent Patricia Harvey.

"We've been focusing on reading. The community has supported us in unbelievable ways in reading." Last fall, the school district launched a literacy campaign and required all students to read at least 25 books before the end of the school year. Businesses and individuals donated thousands of books and volunteered their time as tutors.

But such improvement is still far below the rates of such west suburban districts as Edina and Wayzata, which posted passing rates in the high 80s and low 90s.

Statewide, low-income students performed better in reading, chalking up a passing rate of 60 percent, seven percentage points higher than last year and a whopping 14 percentage points higher than 1998. Minority and limited-English-speaking students posted impressive reading gains for the second year in a row. The passing rate for black students rose from 31 percent in 1998, to 39 percent last year, to 48 percent this year. For Hispanic students, the passing rate rose from 45 percent last year to 53 percent this year; for Asians, from 54 to 63 percent; and for American Indians, from 48 to 53 percent passing. Math performance remained stable for all categories.

The tests' fifth year

This is the fifth year of the reading and math basic-skills tests. Starting with this year's class of graduating seniors, students must pass these tests to earn their diplomas. The tests are first given to eighth-graders, and they can be taken each year until students pass them. A basic writing test was added to the battery of tests last year, and it is given first to 10th-graders. Next year's graduating senior class is the first one that must pass the writing test to graduate.

Grading of the tests was changed this year from a flat percentage score (the percentage of right answers) to a scaled score, which adjusts the scoring to ensure that this year's test is comparable to previous year's. Scaled scoring is used on the SAT and other high-stakes tests.

The results released Wednesday do not include the results for seniors who retook the tests earlier this month. Those results will be available next month. According to Children, Families and Learning, 2,243 Minnesota seniors still had to pass one or both of these tests in order to graduate. More detailed data released Wednesday show that 1,984 seniors are in danger of not passing the math test because their most recent scores are far below the passing grade. In reading, only 711 seniors are in that category.

In Brooklyn Center, students' passing rates still lag behind state averages on both tests. But the district made large gains in both math and reading, with the proportion of passing students up 15 points in math and up 20 points in reading.

"We're really pleased," said Antoinette Johns, Brooklyn Center's superintendent. "We've invested a lot of time and energy with . . . raising results as the primary goal."

The district made sure every seventh-and eighth-grader on a four-period day had math and English every day, a big change from the past. Four-hour classes on Saturdays were required for failing students, with the threat of mandatory summer school if they didn't attend.

On Friday, the improved scores will be celebrated with pizza for students and a coffee party for teachers. To boost future scores, Johns said the district is considering adding reading specialists in seventh grade and reworking the reading curriculum in grades three to six.

The bad news

Minneapolis' Windom Open Elementary School had little cause for celebration. The school's passing rate for reading dropped 14 percentage points to 40 percent. The passing rate for math dropped 21 percentage points to 36 percent.

"I don't want to make any excuses for this; I really don't," said school principal Donna Grant. "Actually, I'm pulling my middle school team together and we're going to have a discussion about this. We want to examine each student's scores and understand what happened."

There was some prior warning from tests given in lower grades that this year's eighth-graders might fare worse, Grant said. And demographic changes could account for this year's dips: The percentage of eighth-grade limited-English speakers is higher -- 35 percent of the entire class this year, as opposed to 23 percent last year. There are also more special education students.

In St. Anthony-New Brighton, where scores on both tests usually have been above state averages, the pass rate for math dove from 88 to 69 percent. Superintendent Warren Rolek said the drop was a mystery.

"I just don't have an answer right now," he said.

Legislators respond

Legislative leaders said that the continued rise in test scores proved that the state did right by refocusing on the basics.

Rep. Alice Seagren, R-Bloomington, who heads the House K-12 Education Finance Division, said that she was particularly pleased with the gains recorded by minority group members.

"I think [the schools] have pulled out the stops in reading," she said.

Added Sen. Martha Robertson, R-Minnetonka, "I think it's all very positive. One could say with a little tongue-in-cheek that teachers are now teaching to the test."

But Seagren joined the chorus of observers concerned about stagnant math scores, saying that it now was up to the school districts "to find the curriculum they need to improve math scores."

Districts could use additional funding to ensure continued gains, said Rep. Matt Entenza, DFL-St. Paul, who noted the disparity in aid proposals pushed by House Republicans and a more generous DFL-controlled Senate.

Entenza said that the St. Paul School District set aside some of this year's state funding increase to pay for reading tutors and to strengthen programs for students with limited English-speaking skills.

The gains are "fragile" unless further investments are made, he said.

-- Staff writers Duchesne Paul Drew, Anthony Lonetree, Anne O'Connor, Allie Shah and Mary Jane Smetanka contributed to this report.

▲ [Return to top](#)

© [Copyright](#) 2000 Star Tribune. All rights reserved.

To: Jackie Lain
White House

Fax (202) 456-2889

From: Sen. Enbee Reichgott
Junge

Phone: (651) 296-2889
Fax: (651) 296-6511

April 26, 2000

5 pages, including cover

Minnesota in line for Ford Foundation

■ Charter school law, four other programs among semifinalists

DEBRA O'CONNOR STAFF WRITER

Minnesota's landmark charter school law, the first in the nation that permitted public schools to be developed and run by parents and teachers, was named a semifinalist Monday in the 2000 Innovations in American

Government Awards competition.

The awards, sponsored by the Ford Foundation and administered by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, are sometimes referred to as the Oscars or Emmys of public service, said Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge, DFL-New Hope, who in 1991 wrote the law that started charter schools. Other bill sponsors were former Rep. Becky Kelso, DFL-Shakopee, and Sen. Gen Olson, R-Minnetrista.

The law essentially lets Minnesotans create their own schools to respond to the specific needs of a group of students.

"Sometimes elected officials have to step back, remove the barriers and let citizens take the lead — capturing the energy and enthusiasm of parents and teachers in creating new opportunities to learn," Junge said.

Through competition for students and trying new ideas, charter schools also promote innova-

award honoring public service

FP
4-26-00

tion in all public schools, she said.

This fall, Minnesota is expected to have 10,000 students and 450 teachers in 65 charter schools. The population of low-income, special education and minority students in charter schools is at least double that in the general student population.

About two-thirds of the existing 53 charter schools have waiting lists, said Steve Dess, executive director of the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools. Nationally, there are 1,700 charter schools with

a student body of 350,000 students.

Five Minnesota projects are among the 96 semifinalists, including the Minnesota Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation, a state program that aims to cut bureaucracy and increase effectiveness of local government services; the Ramsey County Truancy Intervention Program; the Computer Modeling and Simulation Program, which helps businesses and government improve their efficiency and the Dakota County Citizen Jury Informed

Citizen Participation Program.

They were chosen from more than 1,300 federal, state and local nominations.

In September, the field will be narrowed to 25 finalists, each of which will receive a \$20,000 award, and in October, 10 winners will be announced.

Debra O'Connor covers politics and state government. She can be reached at doconnor@pioneerpress.com and (651)228-5453.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, April 24, 2000
FROM: Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS)
CONTACT: Steve Dess, Executive Director, (651) 649-5470

Minnesota Charter School Law Named Semifinalist in
Government Innovations Award Program

Charter school parents, teachers and students gathered at Community of Peace Charter School in St. Paul to celebrate today's announcement that Minnesota's charter school law was named a semifinalist in the 2000 Innovations in American Government Awards competition. One of the most prestigious public service awards programs in the country, the competition is sponsored by the Ford Foundation and administered by Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

"Charter schools have opened many doors for students and teachers in Minnesota and across the nation," said Steve Dess, Executive Director of the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS). "They serve diverse student populations and provide new public school choices that might not otherwise be available to meet student needs. Not surprisingly, the existence of charter schools has also motivated significant change in the existing public school system," he added.

The 1991 Minnesota charter school law was the first such law passed in the nation. It was sponsored by Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge (DFL-New Hope), Rep. Becky Kelso (DFL-Shakopee), and Sen. Gen Olson (R-Minnetrista). Today there are over 1700 charter schools in 39 states serving over 350,000 students. Minnesota has 53 operating charter schools, serving about 8300 students.

"This innovation award is a tribute to the Minnesota legislature for their leadership in education reform," said chief author Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge. "More than that, it is recognition of the hard work and vision of charter school educators, families and students. They are the ones who have made charter schools successful in providing new opportunities for learners."

As one of 96 semifinalists selected from a pool of more than 1300 applicants, the Minnesota charter school law will next be considered in the selection of 25 innovations award finalists (receiving a \$20,000 award) and 10 winners (\$100,000 award).

Junge also emphasized the immediate need to pass legislation regarding charter schools currently pending in the K-12 Education Conference Committee. "We need to keep charter schools moving forward in Minnesota," she said. "This legislation will remove barriers to charter schools, provide the same funding as other public schools, and will fully fund charter school building lease aid that the legislature promised last year."

Included in the conference committee are the following provisions:

- * allows nonprofit organizations to sponsor charter schools;
- * increases charter school start-up grants by \$1.2 million to accurately reflect the growth of charter schools in Minnesota;
- * increases charter school building lease aid by approximately \$10 million for the current biennium to fully fund lease aid commitments made by the 1999 legislature;
- * allows charter schools to receive integration revenue if they qualify like other public schools;
- * provides more oversight of charter school sponsors and allows modest payment to sponsors for monitoring and evaluation of the charter school.

Rep. Alice Seagren, author of the House provisions and Co-Chair of the Conference Committee added, "We need to help charter schools with their building lease commitments now and in the future. If the legislature does not keep our promise, some charter schools may be forced to close their doors."



JNATHAN@hhh.umn.edu
04/27/2000 01:08:41 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: Mn. Charter Situation

"Charter school scores add momentum to movement." (Headline on front page of Minneapolis Star Tribune, Minnesota's largest newspaper, today - 4-27-2000)

"Clinton to visit St. Paul." (Headline on front page of St. Paul Pioneer Press, today 4-27-2000) It continues in bold print, "President Clinton will visit St. Paul next week to highlight its role as the birthplace of the charter school movement."

Overview

This memo responds to four critical questions regarding the charter movement: 1) What is the background of the movement (including the critical role Governor and later President Bill Clinton played, 2 what are key milestones in Minnesota, 3 what is the current status of Minnesota's charter movement, and 4) where do things stand with Governor Ventura.

Background

In January, 1986, then Governor Bill Clinton co-chaired an NGA Task Force on School Leadership. He invited national elementary and secondary principals of the year to speak, along with an award-winning principal he'd met on Nightline. These principals told him that they were willing to be held accountable if given greater authority. Governor Clinton turned to the NGA staff member and asked, Be sure to get that in our report. It was. After Governor Clinton discussed this with then Governor Alexander, this idea became one of the central principles of NGA's Report, Time for Results.

Relatively little was done with this idea of increasing site authority in exchange for increasing site responsibility for results until a 1988 Minnesota discussion. The Minneapolis Foundation sponsored a conference at which AFT president Al Shanker described the frustrations of innovative teachers, and Sy Fliegel of the East Harlem program explained how that district had given teachers the opportunity to create new, small schools within schools. Over dinner that evening, then (and now) Minnesota State Senator Ember Reichgott, Ted Kolderie, Urban Coalition education officer Elaine Salinas, Mn. PTA president Barb Zohn and yours truly discussed what needed to come next in Minnesota. We already have cross district public school choice, but everyone agreed we needed more CHOICES.

The conversation turned to the NGA proposal - more site authority in exchange for more responsibility. The group also noted the success of Minnesota's Post-Secondary Options law (passed in 1985) which allowed high school juniors and seniors to attend college full or part time, with tax funds following them. This already had stimulated a number of high schools to improve their programs, adding Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses to retain students. The Post-Secondary Option pioneered the concept that there could be several

providers of public education in a district.

The notion of multiple providers and the NGA proposal came together at the meeting, and the charter idea was born. Ember Reichgott convinced the Minnesota Senate to adopt it in 1989 and 1990, but the House rejected it. In 1991, a very limited law finally was adopted.

Milestones

1991-first charter law adopted, allows only 8 charters, and permits only local school boards to approve them (does not permit public universities, cities, or the state board to approve charters, as the Senate bill allowed).

1992 - Nation's first charter opens - City Academy, started by Milo Cutter and Terry Kraabel in St. Paul, with strong endorsement by St. Paul (Democrat) mayor Jim Scheibel, who served later in the Clinton Administration, and has recently returned to Minnesota. City Academy was sponsored by the St. Paul School Board despite opposition of local teachers union.

1995 - After increasing the number of charters permitted, the state legislature agrees to permit an unlimited number of charters. The legislature also over several years adds the State Board of Education and public post-secondary institutions to the list of potential sponsors.

1996 - The Minnesota Legislature begins offering state charter startup money to compliment federal startup funds.

1997 - The Minnesota legislature begins providing lease aid - about \$400 per pupil to cover cost of buildings which charters lease. Lease aid was increased to \$1500 per pupil in the next session.

Current Status of Minnesota Charter Movement

Fifty-four charters are operating in Minnesota this year, and more than 60 will operate next year. A vast array of organizations have helped start charter schools, including the Teamsters Union, ACORN (an advocacy group), and the Minnesota Business Partnership. Next year more than 10,000 Minnesota students will attend charter schools (out of a k-12 public school population of more than 800,000). Charter schools are found in inner city, suburban and rural areas.

More than 20 Minnesota charters have had their contracts renewed because o demonstrated improvement (examples are available). Three charters have been closed by their sponsors, thus affirming the reality of the charter accountability principle. Recently a review committee recommended that St. Paul renew two charters, put one charter on probation and close a fourth. Key charter leaders endorsed these recommendations.

Minnesota charter schools enroll, on average, a higher percentage of minorities, low income students, limited English speaking students, and students with disabilities. (See Federal Charter report by RPP for details, or I can get them for you.). Advocates for disabled students have helped start several charter schools, including the Metro Deaf Charter School, and New Visions Charter School. Students attending Minnesota charters clearly are the kinds of students district run public schools are not serving.

2/3 of the charter school parents surveyed by University of Minnesota researchers in 1996 say their child's academic performance has improved at a charter school, 79 per cent report their children's self confidence increased, and eighty percent say students' motivation for

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. email	Personal (Partial) (1 page)	04/27/2000	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Bethany Little
OA/Box Number: 18522

FOLDER TITLE:

Education Tour: St Paul Minnesota [2]

2013-0371-S
ms635

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

learning improved since enrolling at a charter.

With foundation support, the Humphrey Institute hired former Urban Coalition Education program officer Nancy Smith (an American Indian) to help inner city parents and teachers create charter schools. Smith has helped more than 20 minority group advocates create charter schools. She was very well received at the federal charter school conference where she urged involving inner city parents and advocates in the charter movement. Nancy feels that the charter movement "is creating unique and effective new schools for kids of color. The larger system can and should learn from them."

Many Minnesota charters are producing improved achievement, some are not. I will fax articles which appeared today (Thursday) about state-wide testing results. Both major newspapers took the approach that charters are making progress. Most charters are improving student achievement. A few are not doing especially well. Our stance has been that the charter movement does not guarantee every school will be effective - the idea is to combine opportunity and responsibility.

Within the last year, 3 existing rural public schools converted to charter status, and other public schools are considering doing this. It would be very helpful for the President to comment on the fact that some of the most successful charters in the nation are converted public schools. City Academy was the nation's first charter to open, and the first to have its charter renewed (by St. Paul Public Schools) Frustrated by the lack of response from St. Paul when it tried to renew its charter for a second time, City Academy staff turned to a local university which has agreed to sponsor it. However, City Academy continues to have a generally positive relationship with St. Paul Public Schools, including hiring an excellent district special education teacher who works at the charter.

Governor Ventura & the Charter Movement

Governor Ventura has not said much about charters, except to say he supports public school choice and strongly opposes vouchers. (Before being elected Governor, Ventura lived in a first ring suburb. He has a child with some disabilities who has received excellent help from public schools. Ventura graduated from Roosevelt High School, an inner city Minneapolis public school and remembers the teachers fondly. He has visited that high school and praised public school teachers.). Ventura's Lt. Governor is a former St. Paul Public School teacher who also says she supports charter schools.

St. Paul's mayor, Norm Coleman, strongly supports charters and vouchers. Coleman was elected as a Democrat, and after one term in office, switched to the Republican party. He ran against Governor Ventura and placed second.

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

The Governor appoints a Commissioner of Education, and has appointed a person with very little experience in public education, who has publicly criticized charter schools because some of them have low test scores, and some are struggling financially. The Commissioner appointed a lobbyist who has been a fierce opponent of public school choice, Post-Secondary Options and charter schools. Before joining the state department of education (called the Minnesota Dept. of Children, Families and Learning) this lobbyist was the lobbyist for the Minnesota Federation of Teachers. She and the Commissioner are very close.

Acting on the Commissioner's recommendation, the Governor suggested cutting lease aid funds for charter schools in half. This deeply frustrates charter school faculty (including Milo at City Academy), who point out that a number of charter schools signed leases on the basis of what the legislature promised last year. Minnesota has more than a billion dollars in

surplus, and a major issue between Democrats (who control the Senate, and Republicans who control the House, is how to use the surplus. The Republicans favor a larger tax return than the Democrats. But the House Republicans favor keeping the charter lease aid at \$1500, while the Senate Democrats want to cut it in half.

A column which will appear in the St. Paul newspaper next Monday says that "using this kind of mentality, why not cut in half the state's commitment to all public schools? Doesn't sound like a very good idea, does it?" (This column also notes the President's support of charter schools).

This Senate position may be a political bargaining chip. The President could recommend that more money be spent thoughtfully on improving education (Senate Democrat position) and that the lease aid provision be fully funded (the House Republican position).

If desired, a series of talking points can be developed which might be considered for inclusion in a Presidential speech. Moreover, a list can be prepared of key points which could be made with the Governor and key legislators, in a private meeting.

Conclusion

Bottom line - there is great appreciation in Minnesota for the President's strong support of charters. He has helped promote support among state Democrats and Republicans for charters, and has encouraged Democrats like State Senator Ember Reichgott Junge, who have shown great political courage in pushing for charters.

FAX TRANSMISSION

SEN. EMBER REICHGOTT JUNGE

MINNESOTA STATE SENATE

Room 205 State Capitol, 75 Constitution Avenue

St. Paul, MN 55155

(651) 296-2889

Fax: (651) 296-6511

To: Andy Rotherham
The White House

Date: April 27, 2000

Fax #: 202/456-5581

Pages: Cover page plus: 4

More information to follow via Federal Express.

EMBER REICHGOTT JUNG
ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

Senator 46th District
Room 205 State Capital
75 Constitution Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
(612) 296-2889
sen.ember.junge@senate.leg.state.mn.us
and
7701 48th Avenue North
New Hope, Minnesota 55428



Senate

State of Minnesota

April 27, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

BY FEDERAL EXPRESS

Dear Mr. President:

It was good to talk with you briefly at the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Leader to Leader Dinner in February. I want to update you on some good news about charter schools.

This week the Ford Foundation named the Minnesota charter school law as one of 96 semifinalists in the 2000 Innovations in American Government Awards competition, administered by Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. I thought you and your staff would like a copy of the semifinalist application, as it references your strong support for charter schools and provides a complete history of the origin and rapid growth of charter schools.

I also learned just today that you may visit Minnesota May 4 to discuss education reform and charter schools. What a perfect coincidence! Can you help us celebrate this recent recognition of Minnesota's pioneering role in public charter schools? I would be pleased to assist your staff in making arrangements to visit a charter school.

Your visit also coincides with the first-ever "National Charter Schools Week" to be held May 1-5. The celebration is coordinated by the leaders of nearly 60 grassroots charter school organizations in 37 states around the theme "New Choices in Public Education." The enclosed "Charter Friends Report" gives more details.

COMMITTEES: Vice Chair, Election Laws • Vice Chair, Rules & Administration • Chair, Ethical Conduct
Subcommittee • Children, Families and Learning • K-12 Education Budget Division • Crime
Prevention • Crime Prevention and Judiciary Budget Division • State Government Finance Committee • Legislative
Audit Commission • Legislative Commission on Planning & Fiscal Policy • Legislative Coordinating Commission

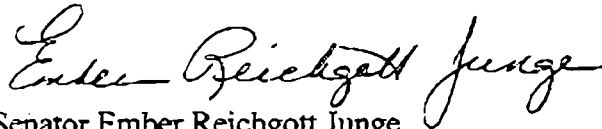


President Bill Clinton
April 27, 2000
Page 2

On a personal note, I am now in the last weeks of my 18th and final session in the Minnesota Senate, as I have decided not to seek re-election. You no doubt have the same mixed feelings about leaving public service. Recently I published my reflections about the "Gift of Public Service" in our Minnesota State Bar Association Magazine. I thought you would relate to these thoughts, as you have led our country with similar principles in mind.

I look forward to seeing you in Minnesota. And once again, thank you for making charter schools a national innovation.

Sincerely,



Senator Ember Reichgott Junge
Assistant Majority Leader

CC: Secretary of Education Hon. Richard Riley
Andy Rotherham, Domestic Policy Advisor, White House
Eric Liu, Domestic Policy Advisor, White House
Jackie Lain, Office of Intergovernmental Relations, White House
Al From, President, DLC
Ted Kolderie, Center for Policy Studies, St. Paul
Steve Dess, Minnesota Association of Charter Schools

EMBER REICHGOTT JUNG
ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

Senator 46th District
 Room 205 State Capitol
 75 Constitution Avenue
 St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
 (612) 296-2889
 sen.ember.junge@senate.leg.state.mn.us
 and
 7701 48th Avenue North
 New Hope, Minnesota 55428

**Senate****State of Minnesota**

April 27, 2000

The Honorable Al Gore
 Vice President of the United States
 Old Executive Office Building
 Washington, DC 20501

BY FEDERAL EXPRESS

Dear Mr. Vice-President:

A few years have passed since we discussed charter public schools at your Family Reunion Conference in Nashville. I've appreciated your continuing support for charter schools as a Presidential candidate and am proud to be an Honorary Co-Chair of your campaign in Minnesota. I want to update you on some good news about charter schools.

This week the Ford Foundation named the Minnesota charter school law as one of 96 semifinalists in the 2000 Innovations in American Government Awards competition, administered by Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. I thought you and your staff would like a copy of the semifinalist application, as it references the Clinton-Gore administration's strong support for charter schools and provides a complete history of the origin and rapid growth of charter schools.

I also learned just today that President Clinton may visit Minnesota May 4 to discuss education reform. What perfect timing! His visit will also coincide with the first-ever "National Charter Schools Week" to be held May 1-5.

On a personal note, I am now in the last weeks of my 18th and final session in the Minnesota Senate, as I have decided not to seek re-election. Recently I published my reflections about the "Gift of Public Service" in our Minnesota State Bar Association Magazine. I thought you would relate to these thoughts, as you and President Clinton have led our country with similar principles in mind.

COMMITTEES: Vice Chair, Election Laws • Vice Chair, Rules & Administration • Chair, Ethical Conduct Subcommittee • Children, Families and Learning • K-12 Education Budget Division • Crime Prevention • Crime Prevention and Judiciary Budget Division • State Government Finance Committee • Legislative Audit Commission • Legislative Commission on Planning & Fiscal Policy • Legislative Coordinating Commission

SERVING: Capitol • New Hope • Duluth • St. Paul • Minneapolis

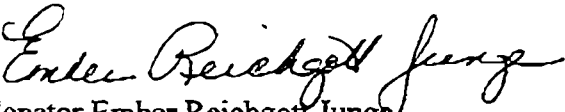


Vice President Al Gore
April 27, 2000
Page 2

As I transition from elected public service, please let me know if I can serve as a resource to you or your staff on education or intergovernmental relations issues. It would be a privilege to do so.

Best wishes to you in the upcoming election. You must win! There is too much at stake.

Sincerely,



Senator Ember Reichgott Junge
Assistant Majority Leader

cc: Jonathan Schnur

For Immediate Release

**PRIMEDIA's ChannelOne.com to Host
Live Presidential "Webside Chat"
with America's Students**

*President Clinton Will Speak Directly To Students on Thursday, May 4, 2000
11a.m.EDT/ 8a.m.PDT*

NEW YORK, May 2, 2000 – PRIMEDIA (NYSE: PRM) announced today that its ChannelOne.com will host a "Webside Chat" with President Clinton on Thursday, May 4, 2000 at 11a.m. EDT (8a.m. PDT). The President will speak directly with the nation's students in the first, live ChannelOne.com Web chat with simultaneous Webcasting, from St. Paul, Minn. The chat can be accessed at ChannelOne.com and takes place during the President's School Reform Tour, two days dedicated to the current challenges facing students and schools in America.

The President will participate in the Web chat from St. Paul's City Academy, the nation's first charter school, created in 1992. It was the only charter school operating when President Clinton was elected to his first term. Today, there are more than 1,700 charter schools nationwide.

Students and teachers from Channel One's 12,000 schools across the country will participate in a direct exchange with President Clinton. Topics will include: creating good learning environments; making schools an important part of their communities; college preparation and opportunity; the role of technology in the classroom; and improving America's schools. Tracy Smith, a veteran Channel One television anchor, will moderate the online discussion.

Yahoo!'s Web guide for kids – Yahoo!igans! – will provide the online chat environment for the event on May 4, and PRIMEDIA Workplace Learning and NextVenue will provide the Webcasting capability.

Jim Ritts, president and CEO, ChannelOne, said, "We are delighted to have the opportunity to make available this important exchange between the President and America's students. This "Webside Chat," or current day version of previous presidential "fireside chats," fully utilizes the Internet, and reflects PRIMEDIA's determination to embrace and integrate the power of traditional and new media. Channel One Network has become a multi-media property by tapping into the power of teens online with ChannelOne.com and reinforcing the effectiveness of its traditional TV media."

The Peabody Award winning Channel One Network, a PRIMEDIA company, is the largest source of news and information for young people. Its award-winning 12-minute news broadcast is seen daily by more than eight million students (40% of all teens in America) and 440,000 educators in more than 12,000 middle and high schools across the country.

ChannelOne.com, an award-winning teen-focused site offers: Channel One daily news and issues content; interactive polls and activities; customized sponsored content, promotions and contests; teen-generated fiction, poetry and art work; and streaming video features and archives. The site is promoted daily on Channel One News and is a featured anchor tenant in America Online's teen channel.

PRIMEDIA Inc. is a targeted media company reaching consumer and business-to-business audiences through print, Internet, live events, video and radio. Some key consumer brands include *Seventeen*, *NEW YORK*, *Chicago*, *Fly Fisherman*, Channel One Network, *Horticulture*, *Modern Bride* and *American Baby* and some key business-to-business brands include *IntelliChoice*, *Telephony*, *Ward's*, *PROMO*, *SIMBA* and *American Demographics*. Some of the Company's more than 200 Internet sites include *Seventeen.com*, *Mediacentral.com*, *Apartmentguide.com* and *Modernbride.com*.

This release contains certain forward-looking statements concerning PRIMEDIA's operations, economic performance and financial condition. These statements are based upon a number of assumptions and estimates, which are inherently subject to uncertainties and contingencies, many of which are beyond the control of the Company, and reflect future business decisions, which are subject to change. Some of these assumptions may not materialize, and unanticipated events will occur which can affect the Company's results.

– 30 –

Contact:

PRIMEDIA/ChannelOne.com: Eileen Murphy, 212.745.1857
Whit Clay, 212.446.1864
Kim Johnson, 323.860.1245

Investors: Warren Bimblick, 212.745.0615



Bruce N. Reed
05/02/2000 11:11:24 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Paul D. Glastris/WHO/EOP@EOP
cc: Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP@EOP, Karin Kullman/OPD/EOP@EOP
Subject: From Tanya Martin re St. Paul

great material here

----- Forwarded by Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP on 05/02/2000 11:11 AM -----



TANYA.PEKEL@spps.org
04/28/2000 01:48:21 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP
cc:
Subject: From Tanya Martin re St. Paul

Bruce,
It has been a longtime since I touched base after moving from DPC to this chief of staff job in the St. Paul public schools. We're very excited about the President's visit.

Its probably more than anyone in DC would want to know, but remembering my days working for you, I jotted below some fodder to forward to speechwriting on how St. Paul is working to implement just about every aspect of the President's education agenda.

Whatever way the President could highlight both the supportive relationship the district as sponsor with the charter school he'll be visiting and the district's broader reform agenda would be helpful. FYI, the Superintendent Pat Harvey, was the chief accountability officer in Chicago during the turnaround there that the President has talked about so often. We'd love to see her included in the charter school event. Her agenda in this urban district includes such Clinton administration greatest hits as choice, charters, accountability, social promotion, class size, teacher quality and after-school.

More details below. Hope all is well.

--Tanya

CHOICE:

(1) Open enrollment -- parents can choose from among any of the public schools in the district, they are not limited by a neighborhood assignment

(2) Charters -- the district sponsors 13, there are 19 in the city in total. The district formed a joint team with charter school staff to review four of the schools that were up for renewal, we made a joint recommendation that one -- possibly two -- be shut down. This tough accountability is key to making the charter schools theory of flexibility in exchange for increased accountability really meaningful.

(3) Magnet schools, suburban-urban magnets and work-site schools. We have work-site schools cosponsored by 3M and US Bank. The district has over 25 magnet elementary schools, 16 magnet secondary schools and 3 urban-suburban interdistrict magnet schools. These have allowed St. Paul to largely avoid having schools that are racially isolated.

(4) Post-secondary options -- While in high school, St. Paul students are allowed to enroll at area colleges and universities to take classes for both high school and college credit. This is an enormously popular option.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Low-performing schools. We review and publicly rate all schools. As a result of those reviews, 11 of 70 schools have been identified as being on academic probation. The schools are required to adopt a comprehensive school reform model, are given additional teacher training and help from district assistance teams to make other changes in order to increase student achievement. Schools that fail to improve will be subject to additional sanctions, including removal of staff or reconstitution.

School report cards: At the end of this summer the district will issue school-by-school report cards with disaggregated achievement data, school discipline and safety data, and other school quality measures.

Site-based management: By next fall, every school will have a site council that has authority to set the school budget, recommend principal and teacher hires, and set local school policies.

ENDING SOCIAL PROMOTION: This year, the District adopted a new promotion policy. Students who are not performing at grade level will be required to attend summer school and will receive additional academic interventions during the following school year. Starting in Spring 2001, students may be retained.

CLASS SIZE: We have combined federal and state class size funds to reduce class sizes in grades K-3. In our last round of standardized testing, reading scores went up significantly in grades 2 and 3 (no testing at K-1).

NATIONAL BOARD: The district has been a heavy promoter of national board certification. Until recently, when we were overtaken by Los Angeles, we had

the most of any city.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: Starting this spring, in order to be a principal, candidates must compete for a limited numbers of spots in a rigorous six week summer leadership institute. After that summer training, candidates will interview with school site councils for principal positions. These new principals will be mentored by experienced principals and business partners to help them continue to develop strong leadership skills.

OTHER INITIATIVES: St. Paul also has a 21st century after-school grant and is working to extend the after-school programming in all schools. We also have a \$1.6 million Safe Schools-Healthy Communities grant for middle schools. The district is implementing initiatives to close the digital divide, provide better teacher training, and strengthen discipline codes in all schools.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

*Twin Cities Campus**Center for School Change**Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of
Public Affairs**234 Humphrey Center
301-19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55455**612-626-1834**Fax: 612-625-0104*

FAX COVER SHEET

Center for School Change

Phone: 612-626-1834

FAX: 612 625-0104

DATE: 4-27-00TO: Andy RotherhamFAX: 202-456-5581

PHONE: _____

FROM: Joe NathanNumber of pages including this cover sheet: 6

COMMENTS:

ADVERTISEMENT



- [PioneerPlanet: front](#)
- [News](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Entertainment/Just Go](#)
- [Living](#)
- [Tech](#)
- [Water Cooler](#)
- [Special Reports](#)
- [Classified Ads](#)
- [Site index](#)

President Clinton will be in St. Paul next week

TOM WEBB STAFF WRITER

President Clinton will visit St. Paul next week to highlight its role as the birthplace of the charter school movement, the White House will announce today.

Clinton's visit next Thursday is part of a four-state "School Reform Tour" to showcase different types of local success stories. It's not clear which St. Paul school the president intends to visit, but he'll have 19 charter schools within the city limits from which to choose.

Charter schools are publicly funded schools designed to be largely free from district regulations, and chartered with specific goals they must meet. The nation's first charter school, City Academy, opened in St. Paul in 1992. Now there are more than 1,700 charter schools in 36 states. Clinton, an enthusiastic supporter, hopes to see 3,000 charter schools by the year 2002.

Eric Liu, a White House deputy domestic policy adviser, said the president Wednesday will visit Owensboro, Ky., and Davenport, Iowa, on Wednesday, then on Thursday go to St. Paul and Columbus, Ohio. "He'll visit four places, each to highlight a different kind of local success and local initiative," Liu said. "The stop in St. Paul, the focus is going to be on charter schools, which is appropriate given that Minnesota passed the first charter school law in the country."

Liu said Clinton regards charter schools as "one of the most effective ways available to make accountability meaningful." He said the president endorses the "real competition, real choice" that charter schools can offer, while bypassing "what voucher schemes don't offer, which is public accountability for public dollars."

In Iowa, Clinton will stress school construction. In Kentucky, he'll talk about improving low-performing schools. In Ohio, it's teacher quality.

The president's complete schedule has not yet been announced, so it's not known whether any events will be open to the public, or if he'll stay overnight Wednesday in the Twin Cities.

- [Help](#)
- [News Archives](#)
- [Feedback](#)

Tom Webb can be reached at twebb@krwashington.com or (202) 292-6040

Charter-school scores add momentum to movement

Charters have fared poorly on past state tests. But this year, several schools show double-digit gains.

By Alle Shah
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Charter school supporters basked Wednesday in the success of several schools, as demonstrated by their gains on the eighth-grade basic-skills tests.

In years past, those schools have not fared well on the state reading and math tests, raising questions about whether or not they're making good on their promises to provide an innovative and solid education.

The latest results, which show double-digit gains for several schools, bolstered the claims of charter school supporters that these independent and unusual schools can and will change the educational landscape for the better.

"What you're beginning to see now is some schools rising above the rest," said Steve Dess, executive director of the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools.

"We'll continue to see schools . . . that get it together to provide outstanding learning options. Ones that don't do the job won't be around."

The movement began in Minnesota in 1991 with the creation of the country's first charter school law, which allowed parents and teachers to establish state-funded schools that would be free of many of the restrictions public school districts face. That law recently was named a semifinalist for a prestigious innovation award.

Last fall, a record number of new charter schools opened their doors — bringing the state's total to 53. Many of the new ones cater to mainstream students instead of the at-risk population traditionally served by the first Minne-

sota charter schools. Among them was the Math & Science Academy in Woodbury, a school that registered high passing rates in both reading and math. Curiously, though, the reading scores were higher.

Dess wasn't surprised by the list of schools that posted gains and the ones that slid. Schools with well-organized staffs and clear missions tend to improve quickly, he said.

Because charter schools typically have small class sizes, their passing rates are likely to fluctuate more dramatically.

Integrating math

One of the schools that improved its scores was Odyssey Charter School in Brooklyn Park, a school in its second year of

operation. Last year, only 43 percent passed the math and only half passed the reading exam. But only eight kids were tested. This year, 19 eighth-graders took the reading test and 84 percent of them passed; of the 18 students who took the math test, 67 percent cleared the bar.

Bob Subiaga, who teaches both math and science at the school, said the gains reflect the school's emphasis on teaching math concepts integrated with other subjects. "In a big way, that's how we approach things here. Math has to mean something," he said.

In his classroom Wednesday, he led his students in an exercise on "vector force" that involved a pole, bungee cords and a stuffed bear.

Charter schools, like all schools, should be held accountable, said Odyssey's executive director Anne Lindgren. At the same time, "I feel that charter schools are being scrutinized to an extreme that the school next-door is not," she said.

If you're going to be an innovator, expect some scrutiny. That was the message from Joe Nathan, another charter school supporter and head of the Center for School Change. Test scores are just one measure, but they're an important measure of how a school is performing, he said.

"I think the results are encouraging. I think it's going to be important for the schools where improvement is not taking place to either get their act together or be closed down."

New Heights Charter School in Stillwater, Pact Charter School in Anoka and Minnesota New Country School in Henderson were some of the schools that lost ground this year. Of the 15 students tested at New Heights, only 7 percent passed the math exam compared with 46 percent in 1999; the reading results

were't much better, with just 47 percent of students passing this time compared to 54 percent last year.

Dee Thomas, an administrator at Minnesota New Country, was not surprised by her school's drop from 64 percent to 52 percent in math. The reading pass rate went up. Students this year are not as prepared in math, she said. "We're trying to put into place some new math programs. We'll work on these scores for next year."

Just because there are low-performing charter schools doesn't mean the movement's flawed, Nathan and other backers said.

"The charter idea does not guarantee that every individual school is going to be a good school. The idea is that we're better off allowing people to carry out their dreams as long as they're held accountable for the results," Nathan said.

Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge, DFL-New Hope, one of the authors of the landmark charter school law, said she was encouraged by the latest charter school test results.

Still, she said that standardized tests are probably not the best quality measure for charter schools because they vary so much in the kinds of students they serve and their missions.

"It is difficult to assess by test scores. What I think is really an achievement measure is the fact that seven out of 10 of them have waiting lists," the senator said. "A high level of satisfaction by parents, teachers and students — certainly that's an important measure of their success and probably contributes to the higher test scores."

— Staff writer Allie Shah can be reached at ashah@startribune.com.

Charter schools

This table shows basic-skills test results for state charter schools. Charter schools are state-funded schools run by teachers and parents rather than by public school districts. Results can appear to change dramatically from year to year because of the small number of students tested.

School district/School name	Math % passed			Avg. score '00	Reading % passed			Avg. score '00	Demographics % of students			
	'98	'99	'00		'98	'99	'00		Pov.	Spec. ed.	LEP	Mob.
Bluffview Montessori	—	—	75	82	—	—	88	88	11	9	0	6
Cedar Riverside Community	33	—	50	68	10	—	67	75	92	8	46	37
Community Of Peace Academy	—	56	58	72	—	44	63	75	85	7	40	18
Cyber Village Academy	—	—	67	75	—	—	71	83	30	0	0	38
E.C.H.O. Charter School	—	—	100	88	—	—	80	83	44	14	0	20
Ecl' Nompá Woonspe	—	—	17	53	—	—	—	—	33	47	0	100
Edison Charter School	—	—	49	72	—	—	71	80	38	21	0	22
Heart Of The Earth Charter	—	—	24	56	—	—	19	57	96	4	0	0
Higher Ground Academy	—	—	71	76	—	—	38	60	35	5	0	0
Learning Adventures Charter	—	—	44	60	—	—	60	73	55	29	5	42
Martin Hughes Charter	—	—	14	43	—	—	14	55	100	74	0	0
Math & Science Academy	—	—	79	84	—	—	90	88	5	0	0	0
Minnesota New Country	71	64	52	74	71	60	68	78	24	10	0	32
Minnesota Transitions Charter	50	—	53	65	42	—	69	75	89	9	0	77
New Heights Charter	33	46	7	54	25	54	47	68	39	32	0	70
North Lakes Charter School	—	—	54	72	—	—	62	75	21	6	0	0
Odyssey Charter	—	—	67	78	—	—	84	83	14	7	0	34
Pact Charter	77	70	53	74	77	80	69	78	14	18	0	17
Right Step Academy	0	—	10	50	17	—	26	53	91	11	0	100
Skills for Tomorrow Junior High	—	25	—	—	—	27	15	60	73	20	5	100
Toivola-Meadowlands Charter	57	—	63	78	57	—	88	85	44	8	0	25
Village School of Northfield	33	—	88	81	50	—	88	88	21	11	0	22

Charter schools seek year-to-year gains

KRISTINA TORRES STAFF WRITER

Community of Peace Academy, with its 383 students, looks every bit the urban public school: 90 percent of the students are minorities, 90 percent are from low-income families and 58 percent speak a language other than English at home. But the 5-year-old charter school has more to show than that.

"If you can create a school community that is peaceful and respectful of all, and supportive of all, and where you hold all up to high expectations, they will do well," said Principal Karen Rusthoven, who had more eighth-graders pass the state's basic skills tests this year than last.

Advocates say that's the kind of improvement charter schools should score, even as what counts as improvement for one school will be different for another.

Eighth-graders from 22 of the state's charter schools posted results in the state's basic skills test as varied as the deliberately individual schools.

That prompted the usual warnings about comparing one school's scores with another. It also brought reminders that a basic idea behind charter schools is improved student performance from year to year.

"What you look at is, is there improvement from year to year, and if not, the school ought to be closed," said Joe Nathan, senior

fellow and director of the University of Minnesota's Center for School Change.

Four of the 22 schools, including Community of Peace, had a higher percentage of students passing both tests this year. Two had higher percentages in one or the other test. Two declined in both tests. Fourteen others either had first-year results or didn't test last year.

The basic skill tests are mandatory for charter schools, even though the schools operate independently and are largely free of statutes and rules governing local school districts.

In exchange for that independence, they must demonstrate improvement in student achievement or risk closure. And their students, too, must pass the basic skills tests to get a diploma.

But as a demonstration of achievement, test scores are only one of a number of measures charter schools use. Community of Peace uses nine measures — from standardized test scores to community involvement — that include a goal to have native English speakers demonstrate at least a year's academic gain per year.

"I think the charter schools themselves have to look at (test results) and begin to see how their program designs reflect growth and knowledge levels," said Steve Dess, executive director of the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools. "At the same time . . .

Charter school scores

School	City	Math	Reading	Math # tested	Reading # tested
Bluffview Montessori	Winona	75	88	38	38
Cedar Riverside Com. Schools	Minneapolis	60	67	36	36
Community of Peace Aca.	St. Paul	58	63	24	24
Cyber Village Academy	Minneapolis	67	71	24	24
E.C.H.O. Charter School	Echo	100	80	5	5
Eci' Nampa Woonsee	Morton	17	NA	6	NA
Heart of the Earth Charter	Minneapolis	24	19	17	16
Higher Ground Academy	Minneapolis	71	38	14	16
Learn. Adventures Charter	St. Paul	44	60	16	15
Martin Hughes Charter School	Buhl	14	14	7	7
Math & Science Academy	St. Paul	70	80	30	41
Minnesota New Country School	Henderson	52	68	23	22
Minh Transitions Charter Sch.	Minneapolis	53	69	15	16
New Heights Charter School	Stillwater	77	47	16	13
North Lakes Charter Middle	Forest Lake	54	67	26	26
Odyssey Charter School	Brooklyn Park	67	84	18	19
Pact Charter El	Anoka	53	69	36	35
Right Step Academy Sec.	St. Paul	10	26	29	31
Skills For Tomorrow Junior High	St. Paul	NA	15	NA	13
Toivola-Meadowlands Charter	Meadowlands	63	88	8	8
Village School of Northfield	Northfield	88	88	8	8
Washburn Jr. Academy	Duluth	49	71	65	63

they're not willing to put all their eggs in one basket."

Many also are not comparable.

All five eighth-graders tested at ECHO Charter School passed the math test, giving it a nice-looking 100 percent passing average. One of seven tested at Martin Hughes Charter School passed the same test, giving it a 14 percent passing average.

ECHO is a K-8, 56-student rural school that emphasizes reading, writing and math. Martin Hughes is operated in conjunction with a licensed juvenile correctional facility and serves about 20 students, ages 12 and up.

"It's not even apples and oranges," Nathan said. "It's a totally different situation. That's

why we ought to be looking for improvement."

By their very nature, charter schools are meant to be alternatives to regular public education.

"Because there is a larger percentage of students coming to them for alternative learning measures, they have to look at (test scores) differently," Dess said.

"I think it is true you want to look at trends," Nathan said. But, he added, "I do think it is an important test. I wouldn't say it's the only measure, but it's an important measure."

Kristina Torres, who covers education and school choice issues, can be reached at ktorres@pioneerpress.com or (651) 228-2120.