

Riley calls for charter schools, technological links

By Tamara Henry
USA TODAY

Touting innovations in public schools, Education Secretary Richard Riley boasted Tuesday that charter schools "are a promising new vehicle" to raise academic standards, empower educators, involve parents and boost accountability.

Riley says 20 states now allow the creation of these schools, which are strongly supported by the Clinton administration. Most charter schools are funded like any other public schools but operate independently, free from state and district management.

Innovation will be a key theme when Riley gives his State of Education speech in a St. Louis suburb today. He says Americans must "pick up the pace" to improve the nation's schools. In just one year, he predicts a record-breaking 53 million students in elementary and secondary schools nationwide.

But in an interview on the eve of his remarks, Riley charged that budget wrangling in Congress has caused anxiety among educators and parents. The Education Department stands to lose \$2.5 billion if Congress merely extends a stopgap budget bill without any increased funding, he says.

Despite budget frustrations, Riley says he still has "a real excitement about where we can go."

Riley says technology is at the heart of a national effort to bring America's schools up to date. He says only 35% of all of America's public schools were hooked up to the Internet one year ago; today, 50% are on-line.

"Getting computers into America's classrooms has to be seen as just one step in our growing effort to move American education into the future," he says.

Three other steps, which Riley calls "winning examples of American creativity at its best," are the expansion of the charter school movement, public school choice and schools within schools.

The Clinton administration will propose \$40 million in its 1997 budget so more parents, teachers, business leaders and community groups can create schools from scratch, he says. A requested \$10 million funding for charter school demonstration projects was cut to \$6 million by Congress this year.

Charter schools, Riley says,



By Robert Deutsch, USA TODAY

Technology at work: Richard Riley and Carol Lisa, principal of the Academy for the Advancement of Science and Technology in Hoboken, N.J., did a live TV hookup with President Clinton recently.

focus on special needs such as disabled and underachieving children.

More than 200 charter schools have opened nationwide, says the Education Commission of the States in a recent report. Minnesota was one of the first states to adopt the concept, and Massachusetts says it has received 23 charter school applications to add to the 15 charter schools that opened in 1995. Massachusetts has 2,500 students enrolled in the schools.

Under charter school programs, groups contract with a public sponsor, usually the local school board. The contract spells out the performance standards the charter school must reach to continue operating. Enrollment also must reach specific numbers.

Authority rests with the board of directors, made up largely of teachers, and is tempered by several conditions, including meeting state health and safety standards. Also, they cannot charge tuition or discriminate.

The ECS, in its new study, says there is early evidence that charter schools are drawing students from private schools back into the public classrooms.

Riley says charter schools are a more constructive approach to strengthening public schools, unlike giving parents tax-based vouchers to send their children to private and religious schools. Voucher proponents should seek to improve education through charter schools because they

combine the best parts of both public and private systems, he says.

The Clinton administration touts the merits of having parents select their children's public schools. Riley says private and parochial school vouchers are divisive and "a retreat from the democratic purposes of public education,

a way to divert public tax dollars, and they will wind up costing taxpayers a great deal of money."

Riley stresses that "public school choice needs to be seen as an option, and it is clear to me that some of our most successful schools are small schools that create a community of learning."

Riley denies there's an increase in momentum for the tax-backed coupons for private and parochial schools. Opponents are just more vocal, he insists.

"Yes, public education has its problems," Riley admits. But he quickly adds that for every problem, "I have found many more successful school communities that have come together and found common purpose."

"More than a debate, we need action — a lot more of that old-fashioned American 'can do' spirit that brings out the best in the American people," says Riley. "Sometimes, people can get so caught up listening to themselves debate that they live, die and get buried, and then the next crowd gets up and starts debating all over again and nothing gets done."

CAMPAIGN '96

Arizona gives Forbes needed credibility boost

Steve Forbes' best hope and Bob Dole's biggest fear is that many Republicans will begin to see Forbes as the electable alternative to Pat Buchanan.



Forbes: Tax message helped gain votes in Arizona

Forbes did well enough in Tuesday's primaries to claim some of the credibility he needs to continue a campaign he vows to take to the August convention.

Arizona "was a test for Forbes to prove he's still relevant," said Republican pollster Frank Luntz. "He did that."

The key for Forbes was "staying positive," Luntz said. "Voters don't seem to mind someone spending millions on his own behalf, but not to attack someone else." That was the lesson for Forbes in Iowa, where his attack ads backfired and he finished a distant fourth.

Forbes has spent \$25 million, most of it his own money. His \$4 million campaign in Arizona attracted voters. Exit polls showed:

▶ A quarter of Arizona voters named taxes their top issue; Forbes got about half of his support from this group.

▶ Six of 10 Arizona voters said they favored a flat tax over a graduated tax system, where people with higher incomes pay a higher rate. Most of their votes were split between Buchanan and Forbes, who has made a 17% flat tax his top campaign issue.

▶ In contrast, more North Dakota and South Dakota voters favored a graduated tax like the current system. Dole won about half of those voters.

Forbes won Delaware's primary Saturday, although he was the only major candidate to campaign there.

In Arizona, where the stakes were higher, Forbes shifted to targeting Buchanan.

Criticizing Buchanan's trade policies, Forbes said: "He believes we should hide behind walls. ... I see America as a shining city on a hill. He sees it as a fortress."

Forbes is expected to be less of a factor Saturday in South Carolina. His next key test comes March 5 in New England and March 7 in New York.

Forbes has been shooting for New York since spending \$1 million on court challenges and a petition drive to get on the ballot. Arcane ballot rules controlled by party leaders who back Dole has made New York a two-way race between Forbes and Dole. Buchanan, who's filed a court challenge, is on the ballot in only 13 of 31 congressional districts. Lamar Alexander isn't on the New York ballot.

— By Bob Minzesheimer

THE BUSH DYNASTY: The extended Bush Republican family seems certain to play a role in the spirited battle for the presidential nomination, especially when it comes to Pat Buchanan, who challenged President Bush in 1992.

▶ In an interview broadcast Tuesday, Bush told CNN he's staying out of the Republican presidential race. But he did take issue with Buchanan's opposition to the Persian Gulf war in 1991 because he said it was more in Israel's interest than the United States' interest. "I don't mind taking on my critics of the gulf war, including him," Bush said, referring to Buchanan. "Israel is a staunch ally of ours and they conducted themselves with honor."

As for campaign politics, Bush said he will leave that to his two sons, Texas Gov. George W. Bush and Jeb Bush, who lost the Florida governor's race in 1994.

George W. Bush had endorsed fellow Texan and Buchanan conservative rival Phil Gramm. He and brother Jeb are now officially neutral.

But both men have enough clout in their states to keep some party regulars from helping the man who helped defeat their father.

SOUTH CAROLINA DEBATE: Bob Dole, hurt by his decision not to appear at an Arizona debate last week, decided Tuesday to join a debate in South Carolina Thursday afternoon. Dole will join major rivals Pat Buchanan, Lamar Alexander and Steve Forbes. Dole last debated Feb. 15 in Manchester, N.H. On Monday, he said he did not want to do more debates. "We had a debate in New Hampshire. I got bombed 37 times by name. I want them to find a new punching bag," Dole said before his change of heart.

CALIFORNIA NARROWS: The biggest stop in the presidential sweepstakes is California, where 163 delegates are up for grabs on March 26. A Field Poll released Tuesday shows Bob Dole's lead dropping. He has 27% of likely Republican voters, Pat Buchanan 18%, Lamar Alexander 16%, and Steve Forbes 12%.

ANTI-ABORTION DINNER: Pat Buchanan is standing by Mike Farris, a top campaign aide and former GOP candidate for Virginia lieutenant governor, who says he inadvertently attended a dinner that included support for people who shot abortion doctors. Farris said he thought the dinner was an anti-abortion event, but immediately left when he discovered the support of violence.

For the record . . .

Lamar Alexander: "My finish means that I didn't participate. . . . We've got a three-man race that's wide open. It's good for the party. I think the longer the race goes, the better I'll do."

Pat Buchanan: "I've decided an extremist is anyone who beats Bob Dole in New Hampshire. . . . I'm simply the political instrument of a great movement in America. Of Americans who have waited too long, had too much of politicians that say one thing and then do another."

Bob Dole: "My view is I'll be the Republican nominee. It may take a bit longer than we planned."

The candidates today . . .

DEMOCRAT: President Clinton — White House, meets with Kuwaiti Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah.

REPUBLICAN:

▶ Lamar Alexander — "Southern Kickoff" with hometown rally, Maryville, Tenn.; addresses Georgia legislature, Atlanta.

▶ Pat Buchanan — downtown rally, Clearwater, S.C.; speaks at Evangelical Cathedral, Spartanburg, S.C.

▶ Bob Dole — tours BMW plant, Greer, S.C.; Columbia, S.C.

▶ Bob Dornan — No events

▶ Steve Forbes — campaign dinner, Pittsburgh; flies to South Carolina.

▶ Richard Lugar — Maine, speaks to South Portland High School and to South Portland Republican Caucus; Bates College, Lewiston.

▶ Alan Keyes — airport rally, Charleston, S.C.

▶ Morry Taylor — Tampa and Orlando, Fla., and Detroit

Latest primary and delegate totals on USA TODAY
Online: <http://www.usatoday.com>



**U.S. Department of Education
Office of the Deputy Secretary
600 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202**

DATE: 2/29/96

TO: Bruce Reed

ORGANIZATION: WM DPC

PHONE: _____ FAX: 456-5557

FROM: Jon Schnur

PHONE: 401-3598 FAX: 401-3093

Total Pages (including cover): 23

(first 8 are on charter schools;
the rest is the
Secretary's speech.)

MESSAGE :

Bruce -

Here are the materials you asked
for. Enjoyed talking to you today.

Talk to you soon,

Jon Schnur

To: Bruce Reed
From: Jon Schnur
Date: February 29, 1996
Re: Follow-up to our phone conversation today

EDUCATION
CHARTER SCHOOLS

Good talking to you today! Attached is more information than you might care to see on charter schools. But if you want more, let me know. The documents are:

- 1) A one-pager discussing strong and weak laws, and listing all states with charter school laws.
- 2) A simple list of states with charter laws. The two lists are identical, but I thought you might want a sheet you could copy and give to others. The first one-pager contains discussion you probably won't want to circulate widely.
- 3) A three-page background memo on charter schools. This has gone to Secretary Riley, and (I believe) to the President.
- 4) A two page sheet of "tips" on public school choice and charter schools that was given to all who attended downlink sites for the Secretary's "State of American Education" speech. This was part of a larger packet of tips on eight different areas, including technology, standards, and safe schools. Many of these tips were published in a box along yesterday's USA Today article.
- 5) The Secretary's "State of American Education" speech.

A few other quick comments. As you think about sites for an event, I would say the very best states to highlight would be Minnesota, California, or Colorado. Most of the others states wouldn't be bad, but New Hampshire and Michigan probably are too controversial. I'd be happy to give you more info on any of these states.

Also, Frank Holleman suggested that I submit a formal scheduling request for the President to address the California state charter schools conference, being held March 21-23. It is the nation's largest conference on charter schools this year, with 400 people attending, and Pete Wilson will likely address the group on the second day. Conference organizers would make virtually any time on those three days for us; we are also exploring the possibility of Secretary Riley speaking to the conference. This would be a great forum for an announcement of a charter schools initiative, but I realize the President is unlikely to travel to California simply for this event. Unless you think it's totally unnecessary, we'll probably submit a request Monday.

Finally, Secretary Riley will host a satellite town meeting on charter schools on March 19th, at 8:30pm. We will have downlink sites with interested charter school people around the nation, and we will have guests from Minnesota, California, and Colorado. We will adapt a 10-15 minute video on charter schools from this program, combining it with footage of the Secretary in a Minnesota charter school last month. I am assuming that you would not be interested in trying to get the President to participate, but it would be great to get footage of the President in the charter schools video we produce. The best way is probably for us to get footage whenever the President makes the charter schools announcement.

Enjoy the reading, and please let me know if there's anything else I can do to help. My direct line is 401-3598. See you soon.

DISCUSSION ON STRONG AND WEAK CHARTER SCHOOL LAWS

Below is a list of states with charter school laws. Charter school advocates divide laws into "strong" and "weak" laws, and each category is explained briefly below. I have underlined the name of each state with a law that is considered "strong" by charter advocates.

It would be too simplistic to say that all strong charter laws are good laws; for example, New Hampshire probably goes too far, permitting charter schools to be selective based on aptitude, achievement, or other criteria that are not necessarily even made clear to applicants. Because charter schools tend to appear in states with strong laws, however, the creation of a significant number of charter schools probably depends on the enactment of strong laws. But it will be important for these laws to require charter schools to be public -- open to all students, not charging tuition, and non-sectarian. It will also be important that these laws maintain strong mechanisms to hold charter schools accountable to high standards; after all, a major purpose of the charter schools movement is to boost accountability in public schools.

"Strong" laws provide considerable autonomy to charter schools, and allow an institution other than the school board to grant a charter, or at least to hear an appeal of a school board rejection of a charter application. The state board of education usually plays this role, though a few states permit public colleges and universities to play this role (Minnesota, Michigan), one created a new state board for charter schools (Arizona), and another authorizes only the Governor's appointed Secretary of Education to approve charter applications (Massachusetts). Most "strong" laws also provide blanket waivers from most state laws and regulations for approved charter schools.

"Weak" laws provide less autonomy for charter schools, and usually permit only school boards to grant charters. Many groups, including teacher unions and school boards, prefer this kind of law. They -- and others -- worry that "strong" laws will cause charter schools to be too independent of the public school system. Weak laws tend to provide waivers only upon request, and then only of individual provisions that the school would like to see waived. It is conceivable that stronger leadership from school boards and superintendents could lead to more charter schools in weak-law states. Again, states with "strong" laws are underlined.

Alaska

Arizona

Arkansas

California

Colorado

Delaware

Georgia

New Jersey

New Mexico

Rhode Island

Texas

Wisconsin

Wyoming

Hawaii

Kansas

Louisiana

Massachusetts

Michigan (But very controversial)

Minnesota

New Hampshire (But quite problematic. Please see above discussion.)

While New York does not have a charter law, New York City has established "New Visions" schools that resemble charter schools in many ways. Oregon also receives federal charter schools funding, citing authority under their education reform law to establish charter schools.

STATES WITH CHARTER SCHOOL LAWS
(as of 2/96)

Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Delaware
Georgia
Hawaii
Kansas
Louisiana
Massachusetts
Michigan ✓
Minnesota ✓
New Hampshire
New Jersey ✓
New Mexico
Rhode Island
Texas
Wisconsin ✓
Wyoming

BRIEFING MEMO ON CHARTER SCHOOLS

Since 1991, 20 states have enacted laws permitting the establishment of charter, or independent public, schools. About 265 charter schools have opened their doors, and most of these are in six states: California, Minnesota, Michigan, Colorado, Arizona, and Massachusetts. Well over 100 other schools will likely begin operations by next year. State charter laws schools differ significantly from one another, but all charter schools generally share certain defining features -- charters are:

- are created and managed by groups of parents, teachers and/or others. These schools are tailored to meet the needs of the local community. For example, curricula range from back-to basics, to a more inter-disciplinary approach, to a focus on technology or workplace preparation.
- are public schools. They do not charge tuition, they are open to all students (in every state except New Hampshire), and they are accountable to the public. They are non-sectarian, they abide by health, safety, and civil rights laws, and they are accountable to public authorities.
- are free from most education laws and regulations, but are accountable for results. They gain autonomy through a legal contract with a school district or another public agency. Standards for performance are established in the contract.
- continue to operate only if they meet performance standards, and if they can attract students and their families to the school.
- tend to be smaller schools, where students can have sustained relationships with caring adults. The average charter school has fewer than 300 students.

The charter school debate.

Charter school advocates argue that charter schools open up public schooling to needed innovation, choice, flexibility, and accountability for results. Many proponents also view charter schools as a strategy to capture the best substantive and political arguments of private school voucher advocates -- increased choice and competition, more innovation, less regulations -- while making clear that these reforms should be done inside the public school system. They see it as the most dramatic education reform possible while still modifying, rather than dismantling, the public school system.

But charter schools are not free from political controversy or disagreement among educators about their potential benefits. Opponents worry that charter schools will exacerbate inequalities in education, skimming off the most motivated students and families to enroll in charter schools. They also point out that charter schools are untested, and warn against investing substantially in a reform that has not yet been proven.

Because most of the 265 charter schools currently in operation are less than three years old, little evidence exists demonstrating whether or not charter schools improve student achievement: the educational story of charter schools is just beginning. But the debate over charter schools is sharply influenced by longstanding differences in approaches to education reform, partisan politics, and differing attitudes toward teachers' unions.

Politics of charter schools.

The political roots of the charter schools movement are in the Democratic party, but Republicans have appropriated the issue in many states, with several Republican Governors (John Engler, Tommy Thompson, and Bill Weld) now playing the most visible leadership role in promoting charter schools. While some moderate and DLC Democrats are still pushing for charter schools (e.g., California State Senator Gary Hart and Minnesota State Senator Ember Reichgott Junge), the most visible stance from teachers' unions and other Democrats is stiff resistance.

This is a dramatic change from 1988, when Al Shanker brought one form of the idea of charter schools to Minnesota: three years later, Minnesota became the first state to enact a charter schools law. Indeed, of the first 8 states to enact charter laws, 4 of the Governors were Democrats, and 13 out of the 16 legislative assemblies and senates were controlled by Democrats. What happened? Mostly, opposition to charter schools from teachers' unions has intensified, fueled partly by concerns that charter schools will be "union-busters." Indeed, in many states, charter schools are not subject to collective bargaining, and teachers may choose whether or not to join the local union. Union opposition is by no means universal; for example, the nation's first charter school -- City Academy -- was formed by a member of the Minnesota Education Association, Milo Cutter. Cutter has since been asked by the NEA to help other state and local chapters explore the possible development of their own charter schools.

Indeed, there appear to be growing internal divisions within the unions about charter schools. The national unions are cautiously supporting the charter school effort, advocating a "go-slow" effort, as well as charter laws that provide substantially less autonomy to schools than charter advocates would like. The NEA also plans to launch its own charter schools, is and hoping to persuade state chapters of the need for successful, union-sponsored charter schools. The AFT has been a stronger voice for a cautious approach. Al Shanker has expressed the need for greater caution. Most state teachers' unions remain opposed to the charter school concept, though there appears to be divisions between more supportive union staff working on professional development and educational issues and other more skeptical union staff responsible for collective bargaining. Moreover, recent Republican efforts to push school vouchers have led some unions to endorse charter schools as a better alternative that preserves public schooling.

This administration's role in charter schools.

- Start-up grant program. The Administration requested \$20 million for a program to provide start-up funds for charter schools in FY 1995, and \$6 million was appropriated as part of the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The Administration again requested \$20 million in FY 1996; the House appropriations bill provides \$6 million for charter schools, and the Senate Appropriations committee is recommending \$10 million. Grants were recently awarded to 10 states, and two individual schools, for school design and early implementation activities.

This grant program was carefully designed to meet the most pressing need facing charter schools; indeed, a recent survey of charter schools by ECS and the University of Minnesota shows that the most significant obstacle facing charters is lack of access to start-up funds. The program provides grants to states that will make competitive awards to partnerships of public chartering agencies -- such as a school district or public university -- with individual charter school developers. These developers may include teachers, parents, administrators, non-profit organizations, or for-profit firms, and will receive up to three annual start-up grants of \$30,000 to \$70,000 each.

- Other federal funds, including Goals 2000. Moreover, a wide array of federal funds -- including Goals 2000, School-to-Work, and IASA -- may be used by states and communities to support charter schools. Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Michigan, for example, are already using Goals 2000 funds to support the development of charter schools. Moreover, the Secretary will use broad waiver authority provide maximum broad flexibility for charter schools in the use of federal program funds.

- Long-term evaluation of impact of charter schools in student achievement. A \$2 million 4-year contract was recently awarded by the Department for a long-term evaluation of the impact of charter schools on student achievement, as well as the impact on the school systems in which the charters are located.

- Administration efforts to support development of academic standards and assessments. Charter schools often cite the lack of challenging standards and assessments by which they could be measured as a major obstacle to accountability for results. State and local efforts to develop standards and assessments, supported by Goals 2000 and Title 1 funds, will help address this major issue facing charter schools.

Ways to talk about charter schools -- "Charter schools are a promising new vehicle to raise academic standards, empower educators, involve parents and communities, and expand choice and accountability in public education. They:

- expand choice in education for all families, providing a safety valve for people dissatisfied with public schools. This would help counter calls for private school vouchers, particularly in places like California where Governor Wilson just announced a private school voucher initiative.
- strengthen community and parental involvement in education, as well as supporting public-spirited entrepreneurialism in education. 90% of charter schools report active parental involvement in the design of the school.
- empower teachers and principals, giving them the opportunity to draw on their talents to design strong schools. Indeed, charter schools can help raise the level of professionalization of teaching.
- symbolize a leaner, more responsive government that catalyzes and supports grass-roots, community initiatives. Charter schools epitomize the shift away from a regulatory, command-and-control approach to government.
- support serious accountability for public schools. Charter schools continue to operate only if they meet performance benchmarks established in a contract, and if they attract students and families to the school. Accountability is also strengthened when there are alternatives to schools not meeting parental expectations or student needs.
- reinforce, and even accelerate, our current education reform efforts. Where school districts don't yet meet local demands for safe and disciplined schools, effective use of technology, or simply high academic standards, charter schools can be developed to strive for these popular goals. Moreover, the presence -- or even the possibility -- of charter schools can create competitive pressure on school districts to accelerate their own reform efforts.



TIPS ON MEETING AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES

EXPANDING PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE: STRENGTHENING PUBLIC EDUCATION AS A FOUNDATION OF OUR AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE

This page offers tips on how to expand public school choice and charter schools and improve individual public schools. This is one of the issues that Americans say they want addressed by their schools.

Background: Public charter schools are a promising new vehicle for raising academic standards, empowering educators, involving parents and communities, and expanding choice and accountability in public education. Created and managed by groups of parents, teachers, community groups and others, they can be tailored to meet the needs of a local community. These schools – now permitted in 20 states – are public schools freed from most laws and regulations in exchange for accountability for better performance and results. Charter schools are non-sectarian, may not charge tuition, and should be open to all students. Parents and teachers also have additional options for tailoring educational opportunities for children, including public school choice, magnet schools, schools-within-schools, and redesigning and improving individual public schools.

10 Tips to Help Expand Public School Choice and Accountability in Your Community

1. **Families:** Get involved in your children's schools. Find out whether the school is setting high enough academic standards for your child, and whether the school is offering your child the educational opportunities he or she needs to meet the highest standards available in other schools and states. Get together with other families, teachers, community groups, school district staff, and the school's principal to begin to make improvements in your child's school. Join an existing school improvement committee, or help form a new one.
2. **Families:** One size does not fit all. Consider asking the local school district whether you have the option to send your child to another public school. If you do have this option for "public school choice," request information from the school district about all of your available choices. Ask about deadlines for applying, and begin shopping around early.
3. **Families:** If you are shopping around for a public school, write a list of key elements you desire in your child's education. Develop a set of questions you want to ask about the educational opportunities provided by a school for your child. Visit schools, sit down with the principal, stop in classrooms, and talk to teachers and parents at that school.
4. **Families, teachers, principals, and community organizations:** If existing schools don't meet your expectations, consider applying for a charter to create a new public school or convert an existing public school to "charter" status. Twenty states now permit teachers and others to form public charter schools, providing them with public funds and dramatic flexibility to custom-make a local school, while holding the school accountable for results. For a list of states, and people to contact in your state for further information, call 1-800-USA-LEARN.
5. **Families, teachers, principals, and community organizations:** If charter schools may be established in your state, find out the organizations that are authorized by state law to approve applications for charter schools (e.g., local school districts, state boards of education, a public university). Contact those organizations, ask for information about developing a charter school application, and request recommendations of people who have experience in developing a charter school. Find out whether your state permits only conversions of existing public schools or also permits the creation of new charter schools.
6. **School boards and states:** Review regulations and red tape and eliminate any that get in the way of schools trying to meet the needs of their students and help them meet challenging local and state standards. Provide assistance to all schools to enhance the quality of teaching and raise levels of learning for all students. Help regular public schools and public charter schools to improve and help them develop reliable performance standards by which schools are held accountable.
7. **School districts and states:** Promote public school choice and charter schools in a way that preserves public schooling and raises academic standards for all children. Develop helpful information for teachers, parents, and others who want to custom-make a local public school to better help all students meet high academic standards. Provide relevant and understandable information about all public schools where families may send their children. Develop an effective

FEB 29 '96 10:32PM OFFICE OF DEPUTY SEC
process for reviewing applications for charter schools, and approve those that will have sound fiscal management and real promise to help all children learn. Ensure that transportation is available for students seeking to attend other public or charter schools. Provide adequate autonomy for charter and other public schools. Host conferences or seminars on charter school issues for potential applicants, existing charter schools, and their community partners. Raise awareness and conduct outreach to inform people of opportunities to form charter schools.

8. **Families, teachers, principals, community organizations, colleges and universities:** Recognize the importance of significant advance planning before submitting an application to form a charter school or making fundamental changes in an existing school. This enterprise is not easy; it takes time, energy, commitment, and considerable knowledge about teaching, learning, and management.
9. **Families, teachers, principals, community organizations, colleges, universities, and businesses:** Develop skills in building consensus, developing a shared vision, budgeting, contracting and financial management needed to manage a successful charter school, magnet school, or site-based managed school. Businesses, local colleges and universities, school districts, and others can help identify and develop these skills. Teachers, principals, and parents must work to develop these skills quickly and effectively to manage successful schools.
10. **Families, teachers, principals, community organizations, colleges, and universities:** Think about other critical issues in creating a school that improves teaching and learning for all. These include: decide that you are prepared to invest the time and energy needed; develop a consensus on your goals and vision for the school; decide if you want your school to have a specialized educational focus such as math and science, foreign languages, the arts, or preparation for the workplace; talk to and visit others involved in high-performing schools or who have successfully started a charter or magnet school; discuss what will be the nature of your curriculum, how time within the school day will be organized, how student learning will be assessed, where the school will be located if it is a new school, what will be the governance structure of the school, and by what performance measures the school will be held accountable.

Selected Resources: Contact one of the national organizations listed below for additional information and ideas to consider as you develop a charter school. Or call 1-800-USA-LEARN for a list of states with charter school laws, and contact names and telephone numbers in your state. And contact your local school district or state board of education for additional information.

In the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994, President Clinton proposed and Congress enacted a competition for start-up funds for charter schools through the U.S. Department of Education, typically providing between \$30,000 and \$60,000 of "venture capital" annually for up to three years. The President is proposing substantial increases in this start-up fund. Also, school districts and states may use Goals 2000: Educate America Act funds to support efforts to redesign and improve public schools and to establish charter schools. IASA contains major financial support for efforts to raise the quality of teaching and improve schools across the country.

Center for School Change
Humphrey Institute, University of Minnesota
301 19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Tel: 612-626-1834
E-mail: Natha001@maroon.tc.umn.edu

Charter Schools Strategies, Inc. (CSSI)
210 West Grant Street, Suite 321
Minneapolis, MN 55403-2244
Tel: 612-321-9221
Fax: 612-672-0244
E-mail: Charter SSI@aol.com

RPP International
2200 Powell Street, Suite 250
Emeryville, CA 94608
Tel: 510-450-2550, 510-843-8574
E-mail: Rppintl@aol.com

U.S. Department of Education
Information Resource Center
600 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20202-0498
1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327)
(Or in D.C. call 202-401-2000)

To: Bruce Reed and Don Baer
From: Elaine Kamarck
Re: More on Educational Bureaucracies
Date: March 20, 1996

America's schools have become too bureaucratized and too centralized in organization and control to operate effectively. Bloated bureaucracies exist at the expense of children.

- One widely quoted study by Bruce Cooper of Fordham University working with the accounting firm Coopers and Lybrand finds that in a typical large school district only 52% of every school dollar actually gets into the classroom.

- Bureaucratic bloat is one explanation for the widely cited fact that per pupil expenditures, adjusted for inflation, rose more than 25% in the decade starting in 1982 to 1992 and yet student achievement has stayed stagnant. (Business Week, April 17, 1995)

- Many school districts cannot even answer the most basic question - How much money is actually getting to the classroom?

- Cooper of Fordham University has developed, along with Coopers and Lybrand - "site based reporting" to try and track where the education dollars go.

- Site based reporting produces interesting insights: when applied to New York City it showed that out of total spending of \$8000 per year per pupil only \$44 was budgeted for classroom materials.

- When Governor Christine Todd Whitman of New Jersey instituted a new system to account for costs she discovered that school districts were spending \$3000 to \$8000 per student per year on administration alone. (BusWeek, 4/17/95)

- A Texas Auditors report found \$640 million in inefficiencies in the state's public schools. It cited one Texas county that had 12 school systems - with 12 school boards, 12 superintendents and so on and only 5000 students. (US News 1/11/93)

- Some school districts are finding unexpected funds from looking at their bureaucracies. In 1992 in Ohio the 50,000 student school district of Cincinnati, slashed its administration by 51% and used the \$16 million windfall to invest in instructional projects. (US News and World Report, 1/11/93)

- In Durham County North Carolina schools slashed administrative personnel costs by \$1.7 million by reinventing school food service, school transportation and school facility management. They were able to spare their instructional program and thus scores are up and dropout rates are down significantly. (Education Digest, Feb, 1993)

- Charter schools are also state funded but one of the reasons they typically do better than other public schools is that they have to compete for students and thus have an incentive to spend money in ways that will actually improve education. They also typically are free from the central controls of most education bureaucracies.

NOTE TO BRUCE REED

Bruce—

The first version of this memo just crashed, and so I am now recreating our reactions, with an emphasis on speed rather than polish. We can talk about any of this if you need more clarification. Here goes:

1. p.1: FYI--there will be about 50 ceo's at the summit
2. p.1: 2nd paragraph--the challenges are also to gov's and ceo's.
3. p.2: you overstate the bad news about Goals 2000--there is strong support among Dem. Gov's and many ceo's, though there aren't many Republican governors who will stand up in public and support it. The point about not dwelling on Goals 2000 is absolutely right--I just don't want the President to begin to think there is no support for this program.
4. p.2--in addition to the 2 accountability-oriented challenges under standards, the President ought to clearly echo the Secretary's challenge in the state of Am. Ed. Speech that every child should be able to read independently by the end of 3rd grade. This is clearly understandable to the public--as a precondition for technological literacy and everything else. It is more positive and upbeat than the other two challenges here.
5. p.2: The line about "ending the entitlement mentality" is good, but may need a little balance in order to take some of the sting out. I would add to this section the idea that equity and excellence must go hand in hand; that we won't have equity unless we aim high for all kids.
6. p.3: It is safer for the President to say we have cut regulations in el/sec by more than 50% than by 2/3.
7. p.4: On the Teachers section--you can strengthen the challenge about rewarding teachers by adding the idea that, once tough academic standards are set, we ought to get out of the way and give teachers the power to be good teachers. Empowering teachers and providing them with real flexibility and control is in fact an important reward, and consistent with how the President has talked about Goals 2000 and reform--set the standards and free them up at the bottom to get the job done.
8. p.5 The section on safety, discipline and values is good--but there is no challenge about values. Try this:

Our greatest challenge may be this -- to listen with care and attention to the many, quite positive voices in the ongoing debate about education who are seeking to find common ground. The loudest voices in this debate like so many other debates get the attention, but the real work is being done by others.

 - The President could recognize that even on the most sensitive of issues like

religion, common ground can be found. As a result of the President's religious guidelines, we are seeing a sharp decline in the confusion.

9. There are a few additional challenges that ought to be considered:

- **Higher education:** The President ought to address higher education, because of the important federal role, and because virtually every parent wants their kid to get some postsecondary education. We suggest you pick up the challenge in the Secretary's state of American education speech: If schools set and help kids reach challenging standards, if students work hard to reach them, and if parents get involved in supporting this, then federal, state and business leaders (and the whole country) must do its part, by keeping doors to higher education wide open.
- **School-to-work:** The speech is silent on this area, and I don't think we ever discussed it. The President ought to challenge business leaders, state officials and educators to work together to reinvent the high school so that it help all kids succeed, in terms of gaining the knowledge and skills to find the right path for them to further education and or work.

Mike Cohen

To: Bruce Reed and Don Baer
From: Elaine Kamarck
Re: Some bold ideas on education reform - or reinventing public education
Date: March 19, 1996

America's schools have become too bureaucratized and too centralized in organization and control to operate effectively. School districts have become fewer and larger (less than 16,000 today compared to more than 100,000 in 1945) and administrative costs and administrative employment have risen at many times the rate of student enrollments. (More statistics TK)

Bloated bureaucracies come at the expense of children. In New York City only 30 cents of every education dollar goes to teachers and materials. In Milwaukee only 26 cents goes to teachers and materials.

This is because the number of administrators has grown out of proportion to the number of those involved in teaching. Catholic schools routinely do a better job of teaching hard to teach students than do public schools and they utilize much larger ratios of students to administrators. For instance, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia manages more than 100,000 students with only 25 employees while the Philadelphia school system manages 210,000 students with 600 employees. Even worse is the District of Columbia which seems to need 900 administrators for only 80,000 students. And New York City - which a few years ago had somewhere in the neighborhood of 6000 school administrators - has more school administrators than all of Western Europe!

Thus one effective component of education reform has to be to follow the principles of reinvention -- to cut red tape, cut centralized, headquarters costs and controls and empower front line employees -- in this case teachers and principals. The following should be goals the President establishes for those communities seeking to "reinvent" their public education systems.

- 1) No school district should spend more than 20 cents of every education dollar on administration. Or, 80 cents of every education dollar should be spent directly on teachers and on materials directly related to teaching students.

- 2) Most school districts should seek to achieve a TK %-- exact number to come -- cut in administrative personnel.
- 3) In order to achieve the above, the Federal government and the state governments must embark on a massive regulatory reform effort so that they do not become the reason for excessive spending on school bureaucracy. (Our own Dept. of Education is currently leading the federal government in regulatory reform and reduction.)
- 4) School principals must be empowered to truly run their own schools. They must be given freedom over the school's budget, they must be allowed to manage everything about the school, from the physical plant to the curriculum, to the purchase of supplies. Get rid of tenure for principals. Conduct regular performance audits and regular financial audits and fire anyone who fails either one.
- 5) Get rid of teacher certification requirements. Adopt the minimal requirements for teaching that States have routinely applied to private schools. Require that all teachers past the elementary school level have a Bachelor's degree in the field that they teach.
- 6) Allow principals to reward good teaching and performance and to fire incompetents regardless of seniority.
- 7) Set high standards for all schools. Don't allow schools to "dumb down" curriculum.
- 8) Transform what's left of the school bureaucracy into a reporting and measuring operation so that there is transparency and comparability between schools.
- 9) Once that has happened make sure that public dollars follow students into high performing public schools. Don't be afraid to close schools that fail and to open up new ones.

Texas: The governor-elect, George Bush, Jr., had a proposal for a "home rule education district" during the campaign and may push that (or perhaps a voucher bill). The charter idea is more likely to emerge from around (Democratic) Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock and the Legislative Budget Board. In Texas the lieutenant governor is more important than the governor on legislation. David Dunn 512/305-9579 is manager of education for the budget board. In Bush's policy office ask Beth Ann Bryan 512/463-2198.

Vermont: A comprehensive reform bill which contained a charter program failed to pass in '94, for reasons having mainly to do with its other provisions. Sen. Jeb Spaulding, chairman of the education committee 802/828-2231, is moving a separate bill for '95; a model in many respects.

Virginia: Gov. Allen's "Champion Schools" bill was a strong charter bill in most respects but like bills in most southern states made available only the local board as the sponsoring body. Delegate Mitchell Van Yahres 804/977-7863, who had a charter bill in '94, was right not to be optimistic. He is thinking more about contract arrangements for existing schools.

Washington: There was a big turnover in the House in the election. If the new Republican majority is interested in vouchers it may fall to the Democratic minority to design the charter alternative. The new chair in the House is a Republican moderate, Rep. Bill Brumsickle 360/786-7990. Mike Henderson 360/786-7215 in House Democratic Research knows this issue. On the Senate side Susan Mielke 360/786-7422 drafted the charter bill in '94 and should know about developments.

2/4/95

Nevada: A charter bill based on recommendations by an interim commission is in hearings in the Senate. It reflects both good and not-so-good features of the Minnesota law. The state's 16 districts could have up to five schools each. Talk to the chairman, Sen. Roy Rawson 702/77-8164.

New Hampshire: Interest seems to be associated mainly with Sen. Jim Rubens 603/271-2735. Rep. Nils Larson 603/271-3334, who chairs the education committee in the House, has spoken in support. Gov. Steve Merrill is quoted as supporting "the concept": His aide is Catherine Van den Heuvel 603/271-2121.

New Jersey: Gov. Whitman has taken the voucher plan (pushed by Jersey City Mayor Brett Schundler) off the table for '95. The charter element of the bill drafted for her by Commissioner Leo Klagolz 609/292-4450 remains. The Democratic majority has been working on its own charter plan: Talk to the former speaker, Joseph V. Doria, Jr. 201/437-5150. A good source is Herb Green at the Public Education Institute 908/463-1603. The charter idea may hold some potential for the districts taken over by the state: Jersey City, Paterson and (prospectively) Newark; an alternative both to state-operation and to contract operation on the Hartford model. In Newark Larry Leverett at New Community Corporation 201/484-0096 works with people thinking about this.

Ohio: A bill had been introduced for discussion in '94 by Sen. Anthony Sinagra at the request of a neighborhood social-action group in Cleveland. In the legislature now the interest is most likely to be with the chairs of the education committees, Sen. Cooper Snyder 614/466-8082 and Rep. Mike Fox 614/644-6721. The state superintendent, Ted Sanders, may well be supportive. In the department talk to Jack Jackson 614/752-7406. Cleveland Mayor Michael White 216/664-2000, like several big-city mayors, has been talking about non-traditional approaches.

Oregon: Rep. Patti Milne 503/378-8854, now chair of the House committee, is author of a charter bill. Dick Meinhard in Portland 503/234-4600 will be close to what's happening. Some Senate Democrats are interested in a charter alternative to voucher in the state. Try Sen. Bill Bradbury 503/986-1724.

Pennsylvania: The new governor, Tom Ridge, has been interested in the charter idea going back to his time in Congress. His policy director is Charles Zogby 717/772-5300. Rep. Ron Cowell, a Democrat, has authored a charter bill in the past. More of the effort now may come on the Senate side where Sen. Jim Rhoades 717/787-2637 is the committee chair. Bill Boyd at Penn State 814/863-3779 and Bob Feir 717/232-8700, now with Pennsylvania 2000, will be well-informed.

South Carolina: A group around Hilton Head has designed a charter bill and has been educating the state about it. Talk to John Rosenberg 803/785-4404. In the department the person thinking about it is Anita Buckley-Commander 803/734-8492, though the state superintendent, Barbara Nielsen, has not been positive.

Delaware: Though starting late, Gov. Carper's Education Improvement Commission will give some attention to the charter idea. Peg Bradley 302/577-3210 handles education policy for the governor; Doug Archbald 302/831-6208 works with the commission.

Florida: Gov. Chiles and Lt. Gov. Buddy McKay may extend their interest in reinventing government to K-12 education. The new (elected) state superintendent, Frank Brogan 904/487-1785, says a charter law is a top priority. In a 60-day session they will have to move quickly. Sen. Donald Sullivan 904/487-5065 now chairs the education committee in the Senate. In the House ask Rep. Allen Boyd Jr. 904/488-7870. Rita Thrasher, long interested in alternative schools, watches the charter issues: 407/395-3063. Carolyn Herrington 904/644-2573 at Florida State University is a well-informed source.

Idaho: Rep. Fred Tillman 208/322-1133 got a bill through the House in '94. He's optimistic about the Senate this year. The bill has fairly strong provisions but the school would get only the state half of the per-pupil revenue: A school would have to raise the other half privately. He says there's interest in starting schools, even so.

Illinois: There'll likely be serious consideration of a (probably strong) bill, given the legislative changes and the dynamics provided by another fiscal crisis in Chicago. Here again charter is in the middle, between status quo and vouchers. Rep. Doug Hoeft 217/782-8020 will carry the bill for the leadership. The House chair is Rep. Mary Lou Cowlshaw 217/782-6507. Fred Hess 312/346-2202 and Diana Nelson 312/427-7800 will be involved in fitting the charter idea to the 1988 school-based reform in Chicago.

Indiana -- The mayor of Indianapolis and CLASS (a business-organization) have merged their ideas into a bill that would let districts, universities and the state grant charters. Talk to Rep. Phil Warner 317/232-9760, chair of the House education committee, or to Sen. Teresa Lubbers 317/232-9400. Gov. Bayh's aide is William Christopher 317/232-3515.

Louisiana: Bills in '93 had to be laid over until '95. Sen. John Hainkel 504/581-8371 is an interested author. So is Sen. Cecil Picard 318/898-4304, chair of the education committee. An important initiative comes from the Council for a Better Louisiana: Harold Suire 504/344-2225. Louann Bierlein will likely be following developments, or involved, after her move from the Morrison Institute to Baton Rouge: 504/769-8191.

Missouri: Sen. Franc Flotron 314/751-2371 has a local-board-only bill. Separately there's a voucher discussion. There seems to be some interest in a charter program in St. Louis and in something in Kansas City, looking toward the end of federal court orders: Toby Paone with the Missouri Federation of Teachers 314/352-3816 is interested.

In the states with laws at the moment not live:

Georgia: Gov. Zell Miller is proposing only minor changes in the (essentially enabling) law that lets districts put existing schools into charter status. (So far none has.) Rep. Kathy Ashe 404/656-0116 has introduced basically the Arizona law. Sen. Sally Newbill 404/656-0036 has a proposal that would broaden the law by letting the state board approve up to 10 'special charter schools'. In the department, John Rhodes 414/657-7637.

Hawaii: Because the state is one district the state board is also (and thinks like) a district board. It has approved no schools under the '93 law. So Sen. Mike McCartney 808/586-6910, Sen. Avery Chumley 808/586-6030 the new committee chair, and others propose to let the legislature charter up to 25 schools (about 10 per cent of Hawaii's present total).

Kansas: Try the commissioner, Lee Droegemueller 913/296-3202. (The law passed in the '94 session.) The author is Sen. Dave Kerr 913/296-7368. There appear to be no proposals so far.

New Mexico: Rep. Bob Perls 505/764-9077 will propose this year to improve the bill he authored as a freshman in '93, to provide for new (as well as existing) schools and to remove the cap (now five). Richard LaPan 505/827-6635 administers the law.

Wisconsin: Gov. Thompson proposes essentially to use the charter program as a contract program for districts: He would not add an alternate sponsor. All districts could grant charters, without limit; and the schools would become discrete, autonomous entities. In Wisconsin, where the school boards association believes in contracting, districts might do something. For Milwaukee Thompson would expand the private-school voucher program enacted earlier by Rep. Polly Williams by including parochial schools and removing (by 1997) the cap on the number of students that may enroll in them. Superintendent Howard Fuller would get the authority he has wanted to close low-performing schools and to buy-in 'school'. Many (even education) issues are handled through an omnibus "Governor's budget bill", heard by the Joint Finance Committee. Thompson's aide is Bill Esbeck 608/266-7680. Fuller's lobbyist is Doug Haselow 414/475-8242. Tom Stefonek 608/266-5728 handles the present charter law in the state department. Senn Brown does legislation for the WASB 608/257-2622. A knowledgeable observer, outside, is Ed Sontag at University of Wisconsin Stevens Point 715/346-4349.

In states considering new laws in 1995:

Connecticut: Four bills have been introduced in the Senate; similiar (perhaps because not yet very specific). One is by Sen. Kevin Sullivan 203/240-8600 who got a charter bill in the Senate in '94. The voucher dynamic is present too. In the House ask Rep. Tim Barth 203/240-8769. The state board is working on a proposal, for state chartering. Ask Carol Rocque 203/566-8888.

Rep. Peggy Kerns 303/866-2919 was House author; Sen. Bill Owens 303/866-4866 carried the bill on the other side. In the department, Bill Windler 303/866-6631. Outside, Barbara O'Brien at the Colorado Childrens Campaign 303/839-1580 or Mary Ellen Sweeney 303/985-7092. The 'association' person is Jim Griffin with the Colorado League of Charter Schools 303/985-7092. At the University of Colorado/Denver Paul Bauman studies the charter schools and law: 303/556-4857. Mary Ann Raywid 516/271-0661 has an article on Colorado charter schools coming soon in The Kappan.

Massachusetts: Fourteen charter schools are moving toward start in September. The main legislative effort in '95 will be to give schools a clean process of state financing. In Gov. Weld's office talk to Martin Linsky 617/727-5787. Piedad Robertson is the Secretary of Education and the state chartering officer. Her counsel (also on charters) is Virginia Greiman. Or talk to Emily Nielsen Jones. All are 617/727-1313. Outside, Jim Peyser or Linda Brown at the Pioneer Institute 617/723-2277. Re: the Boston "in-district" charter program ask Bob Pearlman at the Boston Teachers Union (AFT) 617/288-2000.

Michigan: The '94 amendments give the state superintendent, Robert Schiller 517/373-3354, a larger role in implementing the law: Gov. Engler's Office for Charter Schools is now closed. The Michigan Center for Charter Schools is providing technical help for starting schools: Talk to Barbara Barrett or Bob Wittmann 517/394-5011. So, in Detroit, is Tom Watkins 313/577-5971 at Wayne State University. In the Detroit district Sharon Johnson-Lewis 313/494-1865 handles chartering. David Olmstead 313/996-0900, formerly on the Detroit board, and Larry Patrick 313/961-8280, still on the board, are active. Mike Addonizio has a broad perspective (having been both Engler's advisor and Schiller's deputy). He's now at Wayne State 313/577-1728.

Minnesota: House Research has a new report on the first two years: Call Kathy Novak 612/296-9253. Key legislators, going back to '91, are Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge 612/296-2889 and Rep. Becky Kelso 612/296-1072. Commissioner Linda Powell 612/296-2358 reflects Gov. Carlson's support. In the department ask Bill Allen 612/296-4213 or, for finance, Jeff Briggs 612/282-6668. Outside, Peggy Hunter at Charter School Strategies Inc. 612/321-9221 or Joe Nathan at the Center for School Change 612/626-1834. To contact the 'operators' group call Kristin Stolte at the Metro Deaf School 612/224-3995. Dan Mott 612/291-9310 knows how to set up the cooperative teachers use to own the learning program.

New York has a live 'charter' program even though it does not have (and may never have) a law. Something like 60 new, small high schools have been set up in New York City in the last few years, by people working without any state law and around the city bureaucracy. Talk to Seymour Fliegel, Coleman Genn or Carlos Medina at the Center for Education Innovation in the Manhattan Institute 212/599-7000. And, for another perspective, to Ray Domanico at the Public Education Association 212/868-1640.

General Accounting Office for Congress. At the National Education Association Andrea DiLorenzo 202/822-7334 staffed the review of the charter idea; part of a much larger strategic look at 'new arrangements'. The neighborhood-activist organization ACORN has become active nationally; adding a new and different voice to the discussion. Its national director is a former Chicago teacher, Rose Bottom 312/939-7488.

The Federal Government -- The ESEA reauthorization in '94 appropriated \$6 million to help charter schools start up. The law accepts the state's decision about what public authorities may grant a charter and what organizations may, if approved, run a school. The program provides block grants to states, which will 'subgrant' to schools. Ask John Fiegel 202/260-2671.

In Canada -- The first schools should start in September under Alberta's 1994 charter legislation. The person in charge for the province is Ron Babiuk 403/427-2952. A good source both about Alberta and about the charter movement elsewhere in Canada (who is also partly responsible for the Alberta law) is a medical doctor in Red Deer, Joseph Freedman 403/343-6172.

State-based resources

In most states with a live law we see (a) someone in the state department designated to provide information about the law and the chartering process, and about how schools get financed; (b) one or more organizations outside state government to help applicants get charters and to help schools get going; and, in time, (c) an association of the school operators. Staff are helpful but do talk also to elected officials.

In the states with live laws, then:

Arizona: The new state superintendent is Lisa Graham 602/542-5460. In the department talk to Linda Fuller 542-5837 or, re: finances, to Gene Gardner 542-3652. Sen. Tom Patterson is important: 602/542-5955. Chris Smith on the Senate staff is helpful both about provisions and about the politics of it all: 602/542-5418. Outside, talk to John Kakritz at the Goldwater Institute 602/256-7018 and, in the new association of charter schools, to Jim Alverson 602/497-5337.

California: Gary Hart, who got the law passed while in the state Senate, now heads a new education policy institute for the California State University system. He will base at Cal State Sacramento: 916/278-6578. In the department of education talk to Dave Patterson 916/657-2516. Outside there's a variety of helpful sources: Pam Riley at the Pacific Institute 415/989-0833 and Eric Premack (see above) 510-843-8588. For the association of charter schools call Sue Bragato 415/598-8192.

Colorado Gov. Romer played a key role in the 1993 legislation. His education aide is Bill Porter 303/866-4666. Romer chairs the Education Commission of the States this year.

plans a first issue of the American Journal of Charter Schools early in 1995. It will be available both in print and on CD-ROM. A call is out for papers.

Meetings -- The National Association for Charter Schools organized by Greg Morris 517/772-9115 plans a second national charter school conference April 9-12, 1995 in Milwaukee. Charter strategies will again be discussed at the annual meeting of the American Association of Educators in Private Practice in Minneapolis July 13-15. Call Peggy Hunter 612/321-9221.

Advocates, designers, consultants -- In Minnesota state Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge 612/296-2889, Tom Triplett 612/336-3026 and Peggy Hunter 612/321-9221 have formed Charter School Strategies Inc. (CSSI). They have a national network of associates available for consulting, mostly on charter laws, and will do a newsletter. A second group is built around the NASDC/Community Learning Centers project: Joe Nathan at the Center for School Change in the Humphrey Institute 612/626-1834, John Cairns, a Minneapolis lawyer who negotiates and drafts charter agreements 612/334-8532, Elaine Salinas at the Urban Coalition 612/348-8550, Wayne Jennings at Designs for Learning 612/645-0200 and others. From Michigan Greg Morris (see above) offers similar services.

Two organizations earlier involved with more traditional choice ideas are increasingly interested in charter laws. One is the Center for Education Reform in Washington DC. Talk to Jeanne Allen 202/822-9000. They go into the states to do work and are well-informed about developments. Another is the Hudson Institute in Indianapolis. Ask Carol D'Amico 317/549-4160.

Eric Premack with the Institute for Policy Analysis and Research 510/843-8588 has been helping schools, their sponsoring districts and the state work out this new form of public education in California. He is especially realistic about the operational problems; important to anticipate in drafting a law.

The RAND Corporation is around the edges of the discussion about the charter strategy; not yet quite an advocate or consultant. Dean Millot in the Washington office 202/296-5000 did a full analysis of state charter laws. Paul Hill 206/543-0190 moved to Seattle in 1994 to set up a joint RAND/University of Washington policy center. His interest in the autonomy and accountability of contract arrangements intersects with the charter idea.

Others interested -- At the Education Commission of the States talk to Christine Johnson or Rex Brown (himself starting a charter school) 303/299-3600. In its next-stage effort to get to scale with its designs the New American Schools Development Corporation is requiring an 'operating environment' that is essentially what a strong charter law provides. Elizabeth Berry 703/908-9500 can send the strategy paper. At the National Governors Association talk to Patty Sullivan 202/624-7723. Richard Wenning 202/512-7048 directed the study done by the

PUBLIC SERVICES REDESIGN PROJECT

A GUIDE TO CHARTER ACTIVITY (SECOND EDITION)

Here's a new effort to round up activity (and persons-involved) in the states. Again: Please let us know about the (inevitable) errors and omissions.

National Resources

Directories of Schools -- One effort now to keep track of individual charter schools nationally is available free from Greg Morris, 8355 Chippewa Trail, Mount Pleasant MI 48858. You can get another from Alex Medlar at the Education Commission of the States, 707 17th Street #2700, Denver CO 80202-3427. These are good for names and phone numbers; less reliable for information about what the schools are doing. Necessarily they work mainly from what's put on paper, and often what you really want to be sure about isn't written down, or kept current. Talk to folks in the states, who've been in the schools.

State laws -- The Morrison Institute at Arizona State University established itself early as the source for summaries and comparisons of the charter laws. Hopefully this will continue: Ask Lori Mulholland 602/965-4525. At the National Conference of State Legislatures 303/830-2200 Julie Bell and Connie Koprowicz (ext 131) can send copies of the laws; of what's made it through the political process.

Model bills -- Many of the organizations following the charter laws can't be advocates for the idea or particular forms of it. To get a model bill ask Kathy Sylvester or Eliza Culbertson at the Progressive Policy Institute 202/547-0001 for their "Blueprint". Or write the address at the bottom of the cover page of this memo. Also, see below under "advocates".

On-line discussions -- On-line services are giving advocates the capability the major groups have had to share information and ideas about strategy. One organized by Greg Morris is available through 800/833-0620. Another (AOL) has been put together by Frank Dooling, a former naval person in Tacoma WA 216/539-3669. The California department of education has an Internet Gopher with charter information under the 'Restructuring' menu.

An academic journal -- Ed Sontag, dean of the school of education at University of Wisconsin/Stevens Point 715/346-4846,

'exclusive' given the district to offer public education; which removes the district's ability to take the state for granted. This introduces dynamics not present today. And it requires a school's existence to be renewed at regular intervals based on a positive showing of student and fiscal performance. This makes schools accountable in ways that public schools are not, today.

* Despite the conventional political wisdom, strong charter laws do pass. The courage of legislators and governors, and the cooperation across party lines, has been remarkable.

* Where strong charter laws appear systemic effects appear. The education groups would prefer not to have a charter law. But faced with a new reality they change their behavior and their attitudes. (See below, and page 2.)

Changing attitudes within the K-12 groups -- After the initial shock of the new laws, major groups in the K-12 system are beginning to think constructively about how the charter arrangement might benefit them.

Reflecting a few months afterward on his state's new law, the executive director of the Colorado Association of School Boards, Randy Quinn, explained to members how significantly the role of the board would expand if it operated as a buyer rather than (as traditionally) as an owner/operator. The school board in Wilkesburg, PA came to the same conclusion: that it cannot get improvement unless it can hold the school accountable and that it cannot hold the school accountable if it owns and runs the school itself.

Thoughtful superintendents sense how they are strengthened as leaders in a system that lets them say truthfully to their organizations, "We have to".

Teacher unions (in particular, the National Education Association from its look at the idea in early '94) have noticed how the charter idea can be used to give teachers the authority over the learning program, the control of 'professional issues', that they have been unable to win through bargaining.

[The New Country School at LeSueur MN was entirely designed by teachers who wanted to get away from the conventional pattern in which, as one recently said, "kids come to school to watch teachers work". The school has no courses and no classes: The students work on projects designed to develop competencies. The school has no employees. Rather, it has agreements: with the district, for support services; with its landlord, for space; with the EdVisions Cooperative for the learning program. The cooperative is the teachers' separate professional organization, through which they make the decisions about how the learning program runs. The board of the school deals with policy and evaluation, and with property.]

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The were two cases, really, in Michigan. The first challenged Noah Webster Academy. Chartered by a tiny 16-student district (to which it had promised a rebate) the school set up to provide a computerized, distance-learning, home-based program for some 3,000 students. The state refused to release revenues, saying the law required a school chartered by a district to operate within its district. The second, brought in effect by two members of the state board and the Michigan Education Association, charged the law violated the state constitutional requirement for public education. The trial court agreed; leaving eight operating charter schools in limbo and halting the chartering of others. Both cases are being appealed, separately.

In December the Legislature revised the law in light of the judge's objections, to provide financing for the eight schools and to re-start the chartering process. It added a term for a charter school. It limited (to 75) the number of charters that may be issued by state public universities. It gave the state board of education a strong oversight role. Noah Webster tried to get an amendment to provide its revenues, but failed.

The effect has been to reaffirm the public character of the program in a state where private (even religious) involvement had been strong. Without a term a charter school would have been -- like a voucher school -- accountable only to parents and not to public authority for student performance. The new legislature may come back to the law in '95 or '96, after the supreme court has ruled. Meantime, the new restrictions do not seem to have slowed the pace of charter activity.

The spread of awareness and interest -- Through 1994 linkages continued to develop among persons interested in the charter idea in different states. News coverage spread from the educational to the general media; with a cover story in Time magazine October 31. Foundations have begun to be helpful: Gates, in Colorado; Joyce, out of Chicago; Bradley, in Milwaukee; Dow, to Michigan, Scaife, to Wilksburg PA. "Inventors" with an idea about better teaching and learning are beginning to see the charter idea as a bypass around constraints; a way get their ideas into use.

Growing understanding of the policy potential -- For teachers and for parents "charter schools" is about the schools. For governors and for legislators "charter schools" is a strategy for change and improvement in the mainline K-12 system.

* State policy leadership is frustrated. Results from conventional approaches have been disappointing. People are weary of trading money for promises. They are questioning 'strategies' for 'radical' change that never change the basic elements of the present system.

* It's clear by contrast that the charter idea does change basic elements of the present system. It withdraws the

opposed" to "the concept"; hoping that the prospect of avoiding a fight will induce legislators to agree to a law of the second type, a dead law.

There's an additional dynamic in the debate this year. November's elections turned over 20 or more legislative chambers, breaking up old power structures and bringing different people and ideas to the top. In some states this means the debate will move first to the voucher idea: public financing of private education. The charter idea, a new form of public education, is positioned as a middle way between the status quo and vouchers.

The interest this year reflects the progress in 1994.

New legislation -- In a special session in June, after 'vouchers' again failed to pass, Arizona enacted a law that lets both the state board of education and a new State Board for Charter Schools each create up to 25 schools per year; and permits local boards to grant charters without limit. About 20 charters have been issued; almost all by the two state boards. Schools will open in Fall '95. Kansas and Hawaii enacted laws of the local-board-only type, lacking dynamics.

Real experience with the schools -- Something over 100 schools had opened by Fall '94, in Minnesota, California, Colorado and Michigan. This turned a discussion about hopes (and fears) into a realistic discussion about progress and problems. Some schools seemed conventional. Some seemed innovative. Some seemed to work. Some had problems. Where there were problems the board of the school in most cases moved quickly to fix them: Charter schools cannot long tolerate failure. In two cases charters were revoked by their sponsors: Los Angeles pulled the charter of the EduTrain School and in Colorado the Adams 12 district pulled the charter of the Academy school. The revocations made a point about the accountable character of public schools on the charter model.

'Ripple' effects -- More stories were heard about districts moving in response to the appearance of charter schools or just to the appearance of charter laws. In Minnesota and Colorado districts are finding ways to say 'yes' to changes sought by parents and teachers, where before they had been dismissing the proposals as 'not feasible'. In Massachusetts, where the state grants the charters and school committees (districts) have no role, Boston -- largely at the urging of the Boston Teachers Union -- set up its own "in-district" charter program. Best-documented, perhaps, is the upgrading in Minnesota of 11th- and 12th-grade offerings as a result of the state letting colleges and universities offer the top two years of high school; in effect the state's first charter law, in 1985. (An evaluation of these second-order effects seems increasingly important.)

Court tests -- In Colorado the use of the charter law in Pueblo was challenged in federal court. The court dismissed the challenge and plaintiffs did not appeal.

PUBLIC SERVICES REDESIGN PROJECT

Charter Schools

Bruce!

THE CHARTER IDEA IN THE 1995 LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS

More than 15 states are considering adding the charter idea and its dynamics to their system of K-12 public education in the legislative sessions this year. Bills are up for debate in Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont and Washington. The Great Lakes states look to be the center of activity. The idea is getting its first serious discussion this year in the South.

There will also be action in the states that presently have 'charter' laws. In states with successful laws there will be proposals for further improvement. In some states where nothing has happened there will be efforts to bring the laws to life.

Three years' experience make it clear there are two very different different concepts, producing very different results.

Live laws -- Some laws have all or most of these provisions: New schools may be created as well as existing schools converted; applicants may approach some other public authority as well as the local board for their charter; a large (or unlimited) number of schools may be created; the school may be (or must be) a separate entity, with teachers belonging to the school, and existing rules are waived. In these states proposals appear, charters are granted, schools open, students enroll and districts begin to respond with improvements of their own. Minnesota, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan and Arizona have live laws.

Dead laws -- Others have quite different provisions: Only existing public schools may be chartered; only the local board may apply for (or may grant) a charter; only a few schools may be created; the school must be a part of the district and its teachers must belong to the district, the rules are not waived. In these states practically nothing has happened. In Georgia, Hawaii, Kansas, New Mexico and Wisconsin the laws are not live.

The debate this year is again between these two concepts, but now with a difference. Major education groups are trying now to shape rather than to stop the bills; saying they are "not

My brother's right to die

We could make the choice; others deserve that option

Four years ago, my brother lay dying of AIDS in a hospital bed. His long, lean body — curled tightly into the fetal position — was tethered to an intravenous line that fed him a steady flow of pain-numbing morphine.

Life for him was reduced to one near-death medical emergency after another. Each left him more dead than alive, unable to talk or even recognize the family members who gathered at his bedside. Finally, his doctor asked us to make the decision my brother could no longer reach for himself.

"It's only a matter of time..." he said glumly, leaving it to each of us, as best we could, to finish his sentence. "We can't prevent what is going to happen

— and I don't think we should delay it any longer. I need your permission to stop taking extraordinary measures to extend his life."

The next day — after much soul-searching — we gave the doctor the answer he wanted. Two days later, my brother died quietly in his sleep.

There's just a thin line between what my brother's doctor did then and what Jack Kevorkian repeatedly has done since 1990.

Kevorkian, the "suicide doctor," is a retired pathologist. He's helped 27 termi-



By DeWayne Wickham

Like my brother's doctor, Kevorkian says what he does is an act of mercy. The difference is that he helps terminally ill people who are able to decide for themselves to end their lives.

As well he should.



By Jeff Kowalsky, AP

nally ill people end their lives. Twice since 1994 he's been tried under a Michigan law that makes assisted suicide illegal. Both times — most recently last week — juries have acquitted him.

Like my brother's doctor, Kevorkian says what he does is an act of mercy. The difference is that he helps terminally ill people who are able to decide for themselves to end their lives.

As well he should.

People who are dying have a right to do so with whatever dignity they can muster. They have a right to choose the

time and place of their passing — just as the relatives of mentally incompetent, dying patients routinely are given the right to make life-or-death decisions for their kin.

But such logic does not prevail in Michigan, where Kevorkian is scheduled to be tried again next month, this time for his role in helping two dying women end their lives in 1991. That's judicial madness.

The day before Kevorkian's latest acquittal, a federal appeals court in San Francisco struck down a Washington

state law that made assisted suicide a crime. While the decision is binding on only nine Western states, its effect will be felt nationwide as other jurisdictions grapple with the issue.

Already Oregon has passed a law making doctor-assisted suicide legal, and eight other states are moving in that direction. Right-to-die opponents worry aloud that such laws will allow doctors and relatives of dying people to pressure them into cutting short their lives.

That's a legitimate concern. But it shouldn't be used to stop sane, terminally ill people from deciding the manner and time of their demise — or in being assisted by a doctor in carrying out their decision. Instead, states should act to ensure that this ultimate act of personal freedom is neither coerced nor denied by others. More likely, the matter of doctor-assisted suicide will create another fractious division among us, not unlike the current clash of wills between opponents and supporters of abortion.

Ultimately, the legal issue will be resolved by the Supreme Court. The appellate court decision in the Washington state case seems certain to end up on the high court's docket. But the moral and ethical questions raised by doctor-assisted suicide will mire this nation in a swamp of public debate for a long time.

In the meantime, most terminally ill people will be forced to cling painfully to life until they lapse into unconsciousness and their doctors ask family members for the right to pull the plug on their lives.

Charter schools reach kids, reform the system

Educ -
Charter
Schools

OUR VIEW Parents and communities are shaking up the system by taking back schools from the establishment.

Students at Vaughn Street School in East Los Angeles have the best attendance record in the nation's second-largest school district. Their test scores are improving. And school officials say parents, with an average \$15,000 income, are taking a more active interest in their children's education.

Four years ago, 93 of every 100 public school students read better than Vaughn's; 86 were better at math. Now, math scores are above average, and reading scores have hit the 39th percentile. What happened?

The students' achievements are testimony to the value of decentralizing control of public schools. In 1993, Vaughn became California's first charter school, one of the first in the country to be turned over to teachers and parents to run. Free of the district's mandates, Vaughn was able to cut classes from 32 to 26 students and extend the school year while saving enough money to build and equip a computer center.

Charter schools are part of a broader decentralization movement driven by dissatisfaction with unresponsive, tradition-bound education bureaucracies and the lackluster performance of many students. In many ways, they embody reforms recommended repeatedly in studies since the "Nation at Risk" education report jolted the country's education establishment a decade ago: local control, the flexibility to meet community needs, parental involvement, tough standards and accountability.

But the form varies widely. In the extreme, some in Portland, Ore., want to charter all the city's schools. Typically, though, a district will include a few schools with an average enrollment of 300, meeting in makeshift classrooms.

They are authorized under short-term contracts with local or state education agencies and publicly financed at the same rate as other schools. They can be organized by groups of teachers, parents, business or social organizations or universities. Most importantly, unless they achieve academic goals specified in their contracts, the charters are yanked.

Unlike voucher systems, which finance student transfers from public to private schools, thus adding costs and undermining public education, charters keep students within the public school systems.

The first charter school opened five years ago in Minnesota, but the concept spread quickly to 250 schools in 20 states by the beginning of this school year. Sixteen more, including Washington state, are interested.

In some states, charter proposals have fallen victim to education turf wars, particularly from teachers unions fearful because the schools can be exempt from collective bargaining. But none of the fears raised by these opponents have become problems.

The independent schools, for example, do not skim off the best students. In fact,

What others are doing

Charter schools are just one expression of a broad movement that is shifting decision-making from centralized school boards to educators and families in the neighborhoods and communities served by individual schools.

Other examples:

Power to parents. The nation's largest school district, New York City's, is moving in both directions at once; decentralizing and centralizing. For a quarter century, the schools have been governed by a citywide board of education and 32 local boards. A new plan under consideration would strengthen the central board and eliminate the smaller local boards. And it would create 11-member councils of parents and teachers for each elementary and junior high school with power to select principals and to advise them on curriculum issues.

New York also is experimenting with "learning zones," networks of similar schools that work together to help each other meet specific education goals. This project is funded in New York and four other cities by the Annenberg Foundation.

School-based management. Parents, teachers and administrators work together to develop curricula and to allocate school resources. The idea is that schools will do a better job if decisions are made locally rather than across-town.

School choice. Parents can choose the school they believe is best for their children, rather than accept assignments based solely on where they live. Students stay within their public school system.

Vouchers. Milwaukee, the nation's 15th largest school district, began a pilot project in 1990 to provide vouchers for families to choose between public and private schools. Choices have been expanded to include religious schools, but that has been blocked by the courts. Cleveland also is experimenting with vouchers.

more than half teach dropouts and students with special needs. They haven't provided a foothold, either, for groups to finance religious training with public funds. That would be unconstitutional and is not allowed. And they haven't discriminated against minorities. Minority enrollment is higher than in public schools at large.

Instead, there's ample evidence that they're the factories of innovation that their advocates sought. For example, Livingston Academy in Lowell, Mich., offers a school-to-work program for 50 students in 11th and 12th grades. Renaissance Elementary School in Englewood, Colo., emphasizes personalized, multi-aged and multilingual classes. And the City on a Hill Charter School in Boston stresses public service and civic responsibility for ninth- and 10th-graders.

Experience shows that instead of fearing charter schools, traditional schools would do well to welcome the competition and to learn from their successes and failures. And teachers could embrace the unique opportunities for professional growth.

Everybody wins when the only goal is to improve education. But clearly there's more than one way to get there.

Evangelical Group Defends Laws Protecting Endangered Species as a Modern 'Noah's Ark'

By PETER STEINFELS

Congressional conservatives, who have already seen some religious allies on moral and cultural issues attack the overhaul of welfare and Medicaid, will face another such challenge today as a group of evangelical Christians urge support for the Endangered Species Act and the defeat of proposals to weaken it.

Dr. Calvin B. DeWitt, a professor of environmental studies at the University of Wisconsin who helped found the group, the Evangelical Environmental Network, said in an interview yesterday that the Endangered Species Act was "the Noah's ark of our day" and that "Congress and special interests are trying to sink it."

The 1973 Federal legislation is up for review by Congress, and both Republican and Democratic conservatives have proposed loosening provisions for defining endangered species, protecting their habitats and restricting development on private and public land.

Dr. DeWitt and other leaders of the evangelical network, which says it represents more than a thousand local churches, will announce a nationwide drive this morning to create a movement of "Noah" congregations pledged to support the protection of endangered species.

The evangelical leaders have a meeting scheduled with Speaker Newt Gingrich today. "I'll be forthright with him," Dr. DeWitt said.

"Opponents of the act are telling conservative voters, 'Believe in the creator, praise his name and don't give a hang about his works.'"

The network, which is planning print and radio appeals, has already produced a public service television advertisement featuring a Florida panther, one of the threatened species that the act has protected.

The Evangelical Environmental Network, founded in 1993, is an arm of Evangelicals for Social Action and has affiliates that include a group of 88 evangelical colleges and the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, with a membership of 27,000 students on nearly 600 campuses and several other Christian groups for young people.

The environmental initiative is a new departure for evangelical Christians, who have generally shied away from environmentalism as an issue reflecting New Age and pantheistic currents. Many environmentalists "are people looking for spiritual answers, and we believe those answers can be found in the Scriptures," said Cliff Benzel, the executive vice president of Evangelicals for Social Action, a theologically conservative but politically liberal group that has been addressing social questions since the 1970's.

"The key distinction," Mr. Benzel said, "is that we worship the creator, not the creation, and creation is something we are to live with and care for. Some New Age groups got

around to almost worshipping the tree itself."

The evangelical environmental group is part of a larger effort spearheaded by the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, joining different religious traditions with secular environmentalists.

"There has been a huge cultural gap between the religious community and the secular environmental movement," said Paul Gorman, the executive director of the partnership. "Unlike in other social struggles, there have been suspicions on both sides." Religious leaders, Mr. Gorman said, have questioned whether environmentalists care more about wildlife than humans, while environmentalists have long

suspected that Western religion has justified the exploitation of nature.

Mr. Gorman pointed to the evangelicals' endangered species campaign as an example of the new ties between religious groups and secular environmentalists: Providing the financial backing, he said, is the Environmental Information Center, a Washington-based nonprofit group formed a year ago to work on environmental issues with religious, scientific, consumer and health groups that are not primarily part of the environmental movement.

Mr. Benzel said that evangelicals were "not scientists and we don't pretend to be" but could "make the case" for the endangered species act on biblical and theological grounds.

Boston School Shows Cities Another Way

Charter Concept Puts Teachers in Control

By DAVID M. HERSZENHORN

BOSTON, Jan. 24. — When President Clinton spoke in his State of the Union Message about teachers forming their own schools, he was talking about people like Sarah Kass, the principal of the City on a Hill charter school here.

Disheartened by the conditions in public schools where she had taught, Ms. Kass set out two years ago, at age 27, to build her dream school. She and Ann Connolly Tolkoff, a fellow English teacher, wanted an intimate urban school with a focus on civic awareness, a place that would forge links with the best of the city rather than barricading itself in fear of the worst.

The result was City on a Hill, which opened in September as one of the state's first 15 public charter schools. Chartered directly by state governments, schools like the ones in Massachusetts receive tax dollars and are public schools but operate independent of local school districts.

In the past five years, 246 such schools have opened nationwide, and another 100 alternative schools operate with similar independence in New York City. About half the states have authorized them, and this month Gov. Christine Todd Whitman of New Jersey signed a law permitting 135 charter schools to open in that state.

The President supported the movement in his State of the Union Message last week, challenging every state "to let teachers form new schools with a charter they can keep only if they do a good job."

While some educators are troubled by the growth, saying it has the potential to destabilize school systems and undercut teachers unions, Ms. Kass says that shaking up a troubled system by giving more control to teachers and parents is exactly the point. "It starts with the premise that those closest to kids can determine what the mission of the school is," she said.

Helene Dewey, a single mother living on welfare, wanted her son, David Rofitfarb, to attend City on a Hill because his alternative was Madison Park High School in Roxbury, a 1,500-student school in one of Boston's toughest neighborhoods. "I

An educational ideal cited by President Clinton gets a test in Massachusetts.

didn't want him going to Madison because I didn't like the area," Ms. Dewey said.

At City on a Hill, David, 14, is one of nine students in an advanced algebra and geometry class. "My teachers are not just teachers, they are friends," he said. "They stay after school with me. When I was in public school, they never looked at me."

For the most part, it is too early to evaluate whether charter schools are better than regular public schools. But judging from attendance, one early measure educators point to, City on a Hill's first three months were a success — 98 percent attendance compared with slightly more than 86 percent in the city's high schools.

Housed in a wing of the Y.M.C.A. building at 320 Huntington Avenue, City on a Hill is a short walk from the Boston Symphony and other city institutions. Some aspects of the school are traditional: the curriculum includes the basics required by the state, and each class meets for an hour, four times a week.

But there are unusual differences, from the lurid yellow wall paint that Jesse Solomon picked to keep his math students awake to how the

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 1996

school spends its money. City on a Hill gets its financing — more than \$7,000 for each of its 65 students — from the state, amounting to about \$500,000 that otherwise would have gone to the Boston school system.

Because it is a public school, students are eligible for district bus transportation, or the school can choose to receive an annual payment for each student's transportation instead. Given the choice, the school took the money — about \$590 per student a year. The school bought subway passes, which cost only about \$100 a year, for each student. That left \$30,000, which the school uses for other expenses, like supplies and books.

Instead of hiring specialized teachers, the school provides physical education, Spanish, art and counseling through contracts or partnerships with local agencies. Gym class is in the Y.M.C.A., where the school is located, and each student gets a yearlong Y.M.C.A. membership.

"All our kids are learning how to swim," said Ledyard McFadden, the school's business manager. "They are like members of a health club. We're doing all that for \$31,000. You couldn't wax the floor in a gym for that."

Charter schools "are going to teach the public schools some things about management and innovation," said Charlie Rose, the chairman of City on a Hill's board. "It's almost like a free market in education."

Ms. Kass and Ms. Tolkoff decided to draft a proposal for the school in 1993, when the Massachusetts Legis-

lature passed a bill authorizing 25 charter schools. They decided to focus lessons on a broad theme of civics. Hence the name, from the words of John Winthrop, the first Governor of Massachusetts, who rallied Bostonians in 1630 to become a model for democracy, saying, "We shall be as a city upon a hill."

Ms. Kass attended Chicago public schools, studied history at Yale University, was a Rhodes Scholar and taught in Chicago, New Haven and Chelsea, Mass. She is on leave from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where she is pursuing a Ph.D. Mrs. Tolkoff, a fellow Chelsea teacher, had attended Boston schools and Wellesley College and received a master's degree in education from Boston College.

They hand-picked three teachers from the nearly 400 who applied, and a judge overseeing the admissions lottery picked the students, 50 ninth graders and 15 10th graders, out of 240 who applied. The school expects to reach full capacity, 225 students in grades 7 through 12, within five years.

For the family of Marie McGillicuddy, a 14-year-old ninth grader who had planned to go to parochial school, City on a Hill means a savings of \$5,000 in tuition a year.

"This was a big change for this family to send Marie to a public charter school," said Bernadette McGillicuddy, a nurse's aide who has four children besides Marie. "The teachers are brilliant over there. I think we made the right decision."

Educ - Charter Schools

Embracing New Schools of Thought

States Charter Independent Institutions to Improve Public Education

EDUC -
Charter
Schools

A1 By Rene Sanchez
Washington Post Staff Writer

When its doors opened three years ago, the nation's first "charter" school was hailed by its founders as an idea bound to succeed. They just got proof that it has. In a landmark victory for charter school advocates around the country, the school board in St. Paul, Minn., last month extended the school's contract for three more years.

"This is great news for our students," said Milo Cutter, a director at the St. Paul charter school, called City Academy, which serves teenage dropouts. "And it's an important milestone for this movement."

Few ideas in American education today are building as much momentum as charter schools. The experiment that began quietly in Minneso-

ta has taken root in 19 states and the District and has spawned about 250 new schools. Scores of the schools, from California to Massachusetts, opened this fall.

Charter schools are a relatively new approach to public schooling. They are funded with public money, usually the same amount that a state or school district spends per student. But they operate independently of traditional public schools.

Charter schools are free to set many of their own teaching and management rules, and student admission is determined by lottery. The work of the schools is evaluated each time their charters from state or local officials expire.

Around the nation, parents, civic groups, universities and nonprofit foundations are forming charter schools.

Charter schools are emerging as other provocative ideas to revamp public schooling—such as giving students tuition vouchers for private schools or hiring private companies to teach them—are mired in political battles and have yet to have widespread impact on students. Only one city, Milwaukee, has a voucher program and only a few others have turned over some of their existing schools to private management companies. In only one instance has a private company set up a charter

See CHARTER, A8, Col. 1

CHARTER, From A1

school. Just last month, Baltimore ended one of the nation's most prominent experiments in school privatization.

The laws governing charter schools vary by jurisdiction. Essentially, though, any credible group or organization can develop a plan to set up a new school and seek a charter. In some cases the school board does the chartering; in some instances a university.

The gospel of charter schools is being embraced by a broad range of parents and lawmakers across the country who say they consider it a reasonable alternative to the problems that plague public schools—without giving up on them entirely. Still, skeptics worry that the movement could ultimately damage public schools by shifting too much

money away from the poor schools and students who need it most.

There are now nearly 80 charter schools operating in California. In Arizona, nearly 50 opened this fall. In many other states, a growing number of principals, teachers and civic groups are bolting from traditional public schools to create their own schools, hire their own staffs and set their own curricula and class schedules.

Most schools are too new to assess. The City Academy in St. Paul is the first one to have its contract with a public school district renewed. But that has not diminished interest in the idea.

The schools are cropping up in wealthy and poor communities. Some emphasize one academic theme, such as science, or are designed to work especially with certain kinds of students, such as potential dropouts. Others use a standard public school curriculum—but teach it on their own terms.

Six other states are considering charter school laws. Virginia has debated the idea, but to this point neither it nor Maryland has adopted charter schools. The Clinton administration, which opposes school vouchers, announced recently that it is sending \$5 million to several states with charter school laws to help develop new schools there.

D.C. Council members and a congressional panel are studying charter schools. The Bilingual/International School, a charter school started from scratch this fall in the District, has 140 students enrolled. Unlike most charter schools, however, it still has to conform to most of the school system's regulations, and that already has led to disputes over money and supplies.

"Unquestionably, there is more acceptance for this idea than almost any other kind of reform you hear," said Joe Nathan, executive director of the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota, which is tracking the charter school movement. "One of the greatest desires parents have is for schools to be accountable for their results. That's what you appear to be getting with this. If the school doesn't work, it will not last."

Already, a few of the new schools have had their charters revoked because of alleged financial improprieties. Others still are squabbling with states or school districts about how much public money they should receive. But many schools that opened without problems have been overwhelmed by interest from parents and teachers and have long waiting lists of job applicants and prospective students.

Charter schools' independence from public school systems varies greatly. Some are supervised tightly by school boards and must subscribe to union agreements that cover teacher work rules and class schedules. Others are virtually free to craft the kinds of class days they want, as long as students receive

the basic academic requirements set by a state.

Educators studying the emergence of charter schools say the concept is winning more public support than other budding school reform movements for several reasons. Because in most cases they are home-grown, grass-roots programs, charter schools are not stirring the same suspicions that private, for-profit companies trying to win contracts in many cities often do. Also, with few exceptions, charter schools do not present ideological or constitutional questions—like tuition vouchers for private or parochial schools do.

"The charter school idea seems to be bringing in people from every end of the political spectrum in education," said Jeanne Allen, president of the Washington-based Center for Education Reform.

Many charter schools are gearing their academic programs to troubled students and putting great emphasis on involving parents. As a condition for enrolling a student, some even require parents to sign contracts that outline their roles at the schools.

Some critics say that those kinds of pacts could become a subtle barrier to parents who are unable to become involved with the schools because of their work schedules or who have disengaged from their children's schooling by choice. Critics also worry that too many schools will cater to upper-class parents. And while many charter schools are entirely new, what concerns other critics is that some are former private schools that had been struggling financially and now stand to reap a gold mine in public money—without doing anything to help public schools.

That worries Sarah Kass, too. A former public school teacher, she's a founder of City on a Hill, a new charter school in Boston whose primary mission is to teach citizenship and community service to junior high students. Every student there is required to do community work.

Kass said she believes the greatest risk charter schools pose is that they will be a complete retreat from public schools, not educational experiments that help point to ways for public schools to improve.

"We can't just be excellent little boutiques of education," Kass said. "We have to try to work with public schools, not just be passive models of reform. That's the only way we'll get rid of the notion in public education that one kind of school fits all."

Kass also said that the new schools must be held strictly accountable. If states or school districts do not terminate the contracts of charter schools that are not performing, "We'll just wind up with exactly what we have now; public schools that don't work but never change," she said.

Teachers at St. Paul's City Academy have begun sharing with the public school system the secrets of their success with at-risk students. The academy is boasting high graduation rates, strong class attendance, has a lengthy waiting list and now has three more years to continue its work.

"It's too early to know whether the broad mass of charter schools are all going to be able to do that," Nathan said. "But the public desperately wants these alternatives."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To read about a national study which says charter schools are not just for the privileged few, see *Digital Ink*, The Post's on-line service. To learn about *Digital Ink*, call 202-334-4740.

THE WASHINGTON POST
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1995

Budget Difference Is a Pittance

But Fiscal Bottom Line Is Not Just Dollars

By Dan Morgan
Washington Post Staff Writer

A1

For a few hours last week, White House and GOP congressional negotiators attempting to head off a second government shutdown on Dec. 15 found themselves separated by a mere \$2.7 billion: two-tenths of 1 percent of the federal budget, and a pittance in fiscal terms.

The flurry of offers and counteroffers underlined a point that has often been overlooked in the heated political rhetoric over the budget. While the two sides are far apart over such issues as welfare reform, Medicaid and Medicare, the dollar differences over the 13 annual appropriations bills that fund the federal government through next September have narrowed.

But that is small consolation to government employees hoping for an end to uncertainty over their fiscal future.

Republican leaders have made clear that the \$6.5 billion or so that Clinton wants restored to pending appropriations bills will have to come from a separate seven-year budget deal, encompassing health, farm and other social legislation. Negotiations on that broke up in acrimony last week, and the likelihood of an agreement appeared more remote than ever yesterday. [Story, Page A4.]

The appropriations bills still in dispute between the White House and Congress also include a whole series of GOP-backed legislative provisions that are unacceptable to the president, including curbs on enforcement of labor and environmental

See BUDGET, A4, Col. 1

BUDGET, From A1

laws, language sought by antiabortion forces and concessions to western mining and logging interests.

"To say we're an eyelash of getting '96 appropriations solved based solely on dollars ignores the difficult if not intractable differences on legislative provisions," said a congressional source. "The difference in terms of dollars is pretty small, but that doesn't guarantee we can finish the process. You can't divorce appropriations from the big budget deal."

In the absence of enacted bills, Congress could offer to extend the short-term spending authority that expires Dec. 15. But new temporary legislation could further tighten the squeeze on departments and agencies, some of which already are being held to spending at three-quarters of the last fiscal year's rate. If Clinton vetoes a new interim bill because it tightens the screws too hard, parts of the government would again shut down. In that case, Republicans say, Clinton would bear the onus.

And that is why Republicans, who now have tied the spending bills to the long-term budget negotiations, believe Clinton will be forced to come to the table.

Nevertheless, more progress has been made in enacting the measures that finance day-to-day government than partisan rhetoric sometimes suggests.

Seven of the 13 bills, including a \$243 billion Pentagon spending measure signed last week by the president, are now law. Most employees of the Treasury, Transportation, Agriculture, Defense and Energy departments are covered by these full-year bills, and therefore would be unaffected by any new shutdown.

Two pending bills funding the foreign aid program and the District of Columbia are hung up largely over abortion issues, rather than money, and assuming those problems can be resolved, the president could sign them, sources indicated yesterday.

That leaves the four major bills that are at the heart of the battle between the White House and Congress. They fund nine government departments, NASA and the Environmental Protection Agency, along with dozens of smaller agencies. Those bills are the vehicles for funding numerous presidential priorities, including his Goals 2000 education reform program, the Americorps national service program, EPA's Environmental Technology Initiative, and the Advanced Technology Program in the Commerce Department.

Republicans have eliminated or deeply slashed all of those. For example, only \$10 million was left in the Environmental Technology Initiative out of the \$126.5 million requested by Clinton. In addition, Republicans have proposed reducing EPA's overall budget by nearly \$1 billion from 1995, and sharply curtailing funds for enforcing clean air and water laws.

Yet sources in Congress and the

"The difference in terms of dollars is pretty small, but that doesn't guarantee we can finish the process."

— congressional source

administration said yesterday that those are not large amounts of money in the overall framework of the federal budget and it should not be that difficult to resolve the differences. Many expect some or all of Clinton's high-priority programs to be restored as part of a final budget settlement.

The White House indicated last week that the president could sign

the four bills if Congress restores \$6.7 billion to them, with most going to job training, education and the environment.

The GOP offered to restore \$4 billion, and the differences have since narrowed by several hundred million dollars, sources said.

Unlike the testy negotiations over the broad seven-year budget reconciliation deal, negotiations over appropriations last week produced "good meetings, free of acrimony, with a willingness to keep talking," said one source.

In effect, the White House has indicated its willingness to accept most of the cuts made by Republicans this year in the size and structure of the federal establishment. For example, in its offer last week, the Clinton administration accepted most of \$24 billion that the GOP cuts from the president's request in the four bills that are at heart of the dispute.

Republicans have proposed reducing the Departments of Labor, Education and Housing and Urban Development alone by nearly \$14 billion. The administration has conceded that most of those cuts will eventually go into effect. Some, in fact, build on cuts proposed in Clinton's own Reinventing Government program, while others mirror reductions proposed by the administration.

"The administration recognizes that in the current climate substantial cuts in the real level of discretionary spending is inevitable. So they are following a policy of wanting to keep them substantial rather than horrendous" while trying to save programs for which Clinton campaigned in 1992, said Richard Kogan, senior fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To stay updated throughout the day on the latest budget battles, see Digital Ink, The Post's on-line service. To learn about Digital Ink, call 202-334-4740.

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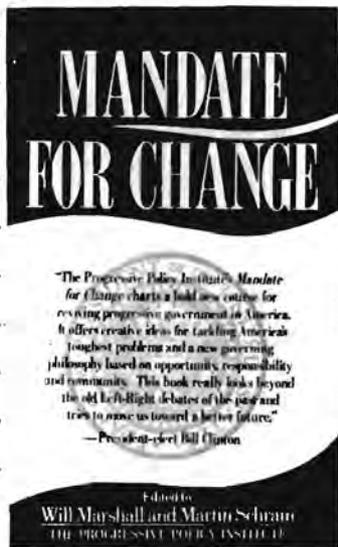
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Charter Schools



BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

Charter Schools

A Handbook for Action



BY KEITH A. HALPERN AND
ELIZA R. CULBERTSON

THIS HANDBOOK WAS WRITTEN WITH GUIDANCE
from Chuck Alston and Kathleen Sylvester. Julie
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The Democratic Leadership Council and Charter Schools

THE DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL IS an idea center, catalyst and national voice for a reform movement that is reshaping American politics and setting the agenda for progressive government in the United States. The DLC, with its affiliated think tank, the Progressive Policy Institute, seeks to define and galvanize popular support for a new public philosophy built on progressive ideals, mainstream values and innovative, non-bureaucratic solutions that move the nation beyond the obsolete left-right debate.

The DLC is a source of ideas and an issues forum for elected Democrats and activists. The DLC is putting its ideas into action at the local, state and national levels, working through a national network of reformers and practitioners. The DLC and PPI laid out a plan for action in the book "Mandate for Change" (published in December 1992, with more than 137,000 copies in print), offering an approach to governing that is distinctly different from traditional liberalism and conservatism. At its heart are three principles: promoting *opportunity* for all, demanding *responsibility* from everyone and fostering a new sense of *community*. But as proponents of activist government, we also want to reinvent government so that it is more responsive to its customers and taxpayers.

As this *Blueprint for Change* illustrates, charter schools embrace many of these tenets. These schools remain within the public school system but without much of the bureaucracy. They encourage teachers to use innovative instruction methods and make them accountable for the results. And they ensure that parents and the sur-

rounding community are involved in each school's success. Finally, charter schools force other public schools to compete for students and on quality, compelling them to improve their facilities and curriculum or face lower enrollments. This is why we believe that charter schools are an important step toward revitalizing the public school system.

THE DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL was founded in 1985 and publishes *The New Democrat*, a bimonthly magazine. The chairman of the DLC is Rep. Dave McCurdy of Oklahoma. The president is Al From. The past chairmen include Senator John Breaux of Louisiana, President Bill Clinton, Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, Senator Charles S. Robb of Virginia and House Majority Leader Richard A. Gephardt of Missouri.

For more information about joining the DLC or ordering any of its other publications, including *The New Democrat* magazine, call or write us at 518 C Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20002; (202) 546-0007.

Blueprint for Change: Charter Schools is the first in a series of *Blueprints* to be published by the Democratic Leadership Council. These are to be used as resources and guides for *action*. Words and ideas mean little if people don't have the technical know-how to implement them. We hope that these *Blueprints* will provide activists with a starting place.

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I. Introduction

A CHARTER SCHOOL IS A PUBLIC SCHOOL under contract or charter to a public agency, governed by a combination of administrators, teachers, parents and others. These schools offer a way to make public schools innovative, flexible and responsive to the needs of students and parents.

The charter school movement is based on a set of simple principles. Public education must be expanded to offer more choices for students and parents. To create these choices, innovators must be freed from the bureaucratic restrictions of traditional schools. In return, these innovators must be held accountable for results and required to measure up to the standards they set for themselves.

These new schools will be schools of choice; they must attract and hold students or go out of business. No longer will schools be able to take parents and students for granted. Success for the school will depend on success for the students. At last the reward system in public education will be aligned with the mission its institutions have been given to perform.

The appeal of those basic principles has provided momentum for one of the fastest growing education reform movements in the country, a reform effort designed to strengthen public education at a time when some critics are urging its abandonment.

"Charter schools are good for education," says Colorado Governor Roy Romer. "These are not 'breakaway' schools. They are 'break-the-mold' schools—an opportunity for people who want to carve a different path. It gets away from one-size-fits-all."

■ Charter schools are...

... **An option to encourage innovation in teaching and learning.** Depending on the state, charter schools may be established by teachers, administrators, parents or any other entities who want an alternative to the existing public school education. Charter authors generally have new, innovative ideas for educating children and seek charters to pursue these ideas. Teachers are generally given complete control of their schools' budgets, staffing, teaching methods and curriculum. Schools are freed from many of the education-related regulations and restrictions of state and local school boards in exchange for performance reviews. However, they must comply with certain basic exceptions such as civil rights, desegregation and special education laws.

... **Public schools.** Charter schools may not charge tuition or fees or have any religious affiliation, and they may not limit student admissions based on measures of achievement or aptitude. Charter schools are open to all students, limited only by the size of their facilities. Charter schools are publicly financed. In general, the per-pupil allotment for each student follows that student to the charter school. Often, charter schools need start-up money from the private sector in the form of grants, but after an initial period, they should be able to operate on public funds.

... **Accountable institutions.** A charter school must adhere to the outcome-based performance model delineated in its charter. Performance measurements may include standardized test

scores, attendance rates and graduation rates, as well as attitudinal and other subjective measurements. If the school cannot prove that its students are learning and benefiting from its programs, the school will not have its charter renewed. As Minnesota state Senator Ember Reichgott Junge explained in a speech to the National Conference of State Legislatures, "It's simple. . . . No results, no charter. Teachers trade away regulation for results and bureaucracy for accountability."

. . . A lever for higher standards in the public school system. Increasing choice in the public system by allowing students to choose charters over conventional public schools creates positive competition that benefits all students. Traditional public schools that do not improve may lose students—and tax dollars—to charter schools.

■ Charter schools are not...

. . . Precursors to private school vouchers. While vouchers are an incentive to abandon the public schools, charter schools are an incentive to embrace them. By providing alternative innovative education, charter schools create competition and put pressure on public schools to improve. But this competition within the public system keeps students and tax dollars in the system.

. . . An abandonment of public education. Charter school organizers realize that the public school system is the only path to effectively educating all children and providing our country's citizens with a common core of learning. But these advocates recognize that there are problems with the system, and they promote many practices, such as site-based management, that help public schools reform themselves.

LIKE OTHER CHARTER SCHOOL PROponents, Romer suggests that the effect of the charter movement is twofold. It creates better schools. And the existence of those schools, in turn, puts pressure on traditional schools to improve in order to compete for students.

For these effects to occur, however, there is one threshold decision that must be made, according to charter school advocate Ted Kolderie of Minnesota's Center for Policy Studies. The state must agree that it is acceptable for more than one organization in a community to offer public education. It must withdraw the local school district's exclusive franchise on public education.

More and more states are making that decision. Since Minnesota passed the first charter school legislation in 1991, the movement has bloomed. In 1992, California's legislature approved 100 charter schools. By late 1993, charter bills had passed in six more states: Colorado, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico and Wisconsin. In early 1994, charter proposals were under active consideration in Arizona, Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Virginia and Washington state.

The charter laws that have passed and that are being considered vary widely, however. The basic idea has been subject to inevitable political compromise and extensive refinement. And as educators and policy-makers struggle to define the idea and make it work, it takes many forms.

"There are so many definitions of charter schools that it's hard to convince people what it means," notes Gary K. Hart, the state senator who sponsored California's legislation. And Minnesota's Reichgott Junge, author of the first state charter bill, suggests that even four years into the movement "there really isn't a model, true law which has passed."

Variations from state to state are possible, probably desirable and certainly inevitable. At the heart of the charter idea, however, is a set of core, defining concepts with which anyone thinking about a charter program should begin.

II. Designing and Implementing a Successful Charter Program

TO BE EFFECTIVE, CHARTER LEGISLATION and charter schools themselves must be designed carefully. This section provides basic recommendations that organizers should address throughout the process.

A MODEL FOR SUCCESS

While no *ideal* legislation yet exists that could be called a “pure charter school law,” there are elements that organizers should strive to include in their schools and legislation. A number of school organizers agreed that a model law and school would contain the following:

1. Site-based management is essential. Decisions concerning the school must be made by the people who run it and teach there on a day-to-day basis. They must control everything from curriculum and school hours to budgets and salaries.
2. Legislation should ensure that charter schools receive the full per-pupil allotment (PPA) given to regular schools so that sufficient funds are available for a charter school to operate.
3. The legislation should offer those wanting to start or convert a school choice among potential sponsors. The list should include the local board, but must include at least one other responsible public body able to grant a charter. Without the “somebody else,” the program will have no dynamics—will generate no pressure on the local board to change and improve.
4. A charter school should obtain a waiver from most local and state board rules. Local regulation can upset the unique design of a charter school’s curriculum and should be minimized. Schools should not be exempt from rules concerning the health, safety or civil rights of both students and school staff.
5. Charters should require parental and family involvement. The schools are too small and underfunded to overlook these valuable resources. Furthermore, charter schools are an excellent vehicle to promote community cohesion and involvement.
6. The school is a public school—chartered by public law to carry out a public purpose under contract to public authority. There can be no religious character to the instruction, no charging tuition, no selective admissions, no discrimination.
7. The school is chartered for a limited term. Renewal depends on performance; the contract may be terminated for cause. The school is thus directly accountable to public authority as well as to its parent/student community. This “contract” arrangement distinguishes the charter idea sharply from the voucher idea.
8. Charter schools are schools of choice for students and teachers. No one is assigned. This provides the stability necessary both in the student body and in the faculty for the school to create and to maintain a distinctive educational program.
9. Teachers may take leave from a district to teach in a charter school, and while on leave they will retain their rights of seniority and benefits. Teachers may choose either to be employees or to organize a professional group through which they own and operate the school or the instructional program under an agreement with the school.

■ Steps to a Charter School

PHASE ONE: GETTING THE LEGISLATION

The federal government's role in elementary and secondary education is limited. Most public schools answer to a local school board, which must comply with state regulations. The ultimate state authority for education regulations is the state legislature.

Charter schools depend upon state legislation; if none exists, the first step to a charter school is getting the state legislature to pass a charter law. Step Two is getting a school up and running.

What follows is a step-by-step guide to each phase. The steps, however, are not necessarily sequential. They should be planned well in advance and sometimes implemented simultaneously. Experienced charter school organizers say it is essential to come up with a complete, comprehensive plan before taking the first step.

STEP ONE **Get Sponsors in State Legislatures.**

A good way to start is to hook up with state representatives and senators who have shown strong interest in education reform. They may already be familiar with the charter school concept or even have drafted legislation. In fact, legislators may want advocates' help gaining public support for it. But if no legislation exists, advocates may have to get involved in the drafting process.

STEP TWO Develop a Bill. If it is necessary to write legislation, there is no need to start from scratch. Developing charter school legislation isn't as daunting as it sounds and doesn't require a lawyer to draft it. Existing charter bills are the best place to begin a draft. The Michigan and Massachusetts laws are considered to be strongest in terms of the "purity" of charter schools that they allow. Following "Phase Two" is "A Framework for a Bill."

PHASE TWO: CREATING THE SCHOOLS

STEP ONE Develop a Charter Proposal. The first step in developing a charter school is to gather enough teachers, parents and other school district personnel who want to establish a school and are willing to take on the responsibility involved. In some states, charter advocates will need a group of certified teachers to petition for a school, while in others, a group of parents will suffice. If there is an indication that the district is hostile toward a group of parents as school founders, then certified teachers should act as the establishing organization.

Once the charter members are established, they can draw up their petition. It should certify that the new school will meet the basic requirements of the state's charter law.

In many instances, the petition must also include such specifics as:

1. a mission statement detailing the program;
2. age/grade level and length of the school year;
3. overview of expected outcomes and how they will be measured;
4. classroom organization and instructional approach;
5. the school's management and administrative plan;
6. a comprehensive budget for the first operating year;
7. a plan outlining financial accounting; and
8. insurance agreements.

STEP TWO **Submit Charter Proposal to Appropriate Sponsor.**

Next, petitioners must submit their proposal to the appropriate sponsor, as defined in the state's legislation, or to the state agency in charge of granting charters. Some states require public hearings on charter proposals.

STEP THREE Plan Start-up. The organizers, now chartered, need to find space to locate the school, hire teachers and obtain support services such as lunch providers and janitorial help. (See "A Framework for a Bill" in this section.)

STEP FOUR Provide Notice to Appropriate Agencies. Once the charter has been granted, the petitioners may need to notify the state board of education or other organizations specified in the charter school legislation.

■ A Framework for a Charter School Bill

As interest in the charter school idea grows, there is one essential set of questions being asked in each state: What public authorities may grant charters? Is the school part of the local school district? Who is eligible to run the school? Who do the teachers work for? Are there waivers from state laws and regulations? What's the level of financing? What is the term of the contract?

The following is an outline of a model charter schools bill that answers those questions.

A. PURPOSES

1. Improve pupil learning
2. Increase learning opportunities for pupils
3. Create new professional opportunities for teachers
4. Establish a new form of accountability for schools
5. Require the measurement of learning outcomes and create innovative ways of measurement
6. Encourage the use of different and innovative learning methods
7. Make the school the unit for improvement

B. NEW SCHOOLS, EXISTING SCHOOLS

Charter schools may be formed in either of two ways:

1. By creating a new school
2. By converting an existing school to charter status

C. ORGANIZER/OPERATOR

A proposal for a new charter school may be made by an individual or an organization.

A proposal to convert an existing school to charter status may be made by the teachers and the parents at the school.

D. SPONSOR

A new charter school may be sponsored by:

1. The board of a school district
2. The state board of education or state superintendent
3. The board of a public, post-secondary institution
4. The board of a unit of general local government; the city or county

An existing school converted to charter status will be sponsored by the board of its district.

E. APPROVAL

A proposal to create a charter school may be approved by majority vote of the sponsoring board to which the application is made.

A proposal to convert an existing school may be approved by majority vote of the district board.

F. THE SCHOOL: A LEGAL ENTITY

The charter school, new or existing, will be a discrete legal entity. Its organizers may use any of the forms of organization available under the laws of the state.

G. REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

The school may not:

1. Teach religion
2. Charge tuition

3. Discriminate
4. Be selective in its admissions in such a way as to favor students on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude or athletic ability

The school must:

1. Follow health/safety requirements
2. Be non-sectarian in its programs and admission
3. Be subject to audit in the manner of the district

H. ACCOUNTABILITY

Except for the requirements imposed in Section G, the school will be exempt from all statutes and rules applicable to a school board or school district, although it may elect to comply with one or more provisions of statutes or rules.

The school is obliged to meet the outcomes agreed to with its sponsor, and state-mandated outcomes if they exist. If the school does not meet these outcomes it is subject to the non-renewal or termination described in Section N.

Reports of performance will be made to the sponsor as provided in the agreement but at least annually. These reports are public documents.

I. THE AGREEMENT

The school and its sponsor must come to a written agreement about the school. A good approach is for the law to be quite open: to list certain questions that must be answered but to leave it to the parties to decide what those answers will be. The agreement might have to cover:

1. The educational program: the students to be served, the ages/grades to be included, the focus of the curriculum
2. The outcomes to be achieved and the method of measurement that will be used, including how the school will meet any state-required outcomes
3. The governance structure of the school and the

- arrangements for management
4. The facilities to be used and their location
5. The qualifications of the teachers
6. The arrangements for covering teachers and other staff for health, retirement and other benefits
7. The student admissions procedures and dismissal procedures under the state law
8. The ways by which the school will achieve a racial/ethnic balance reflective of the community it serves
9. The manner in which the program and the fiscal audit will be conducted
10. How the school will be insured
11. The term of the agreement

And, in the case of an existing school being converted to charter status:

12. Alternative arrangements for students who choose not to attend the school and for teachers who choose not to teach in the school after the conversion

J. TEACHERS

Teachers who decide to teach in a charter school may choose to continue as employees of the school district or as independent teachers. If they remain employees of the school district, they shall have the existing rights of teachers in the state education system to organize and to bargain collectively. Bargaining units at the school will be separate from other units.

Teachers may, alternatively, elect to operate the instructional program under an agreement with the school. In this case the teachers would form a partnership or producer cooperative. They would be members of a professional group that they collectively owned.

Teachers leaving a current position in a public school district to teach (on either basis) in a charter school could take leave to teach. While on leave, they would retain their seniority and continue to be covered by the benefit programs of the district in which they had been working.

While on leave, they could continue to make any employee contribution required to these programs and could make the employer's contribution as well, if they wished.

K. REVENUE

This will vary with different education-finance systems in different states. The general principle is that the school receives the same amount available for a student in a regular school. In most states, of course, there is a mixture of local and state financing. This is not a complication. Some students in the district could be considered fully locally paid and others, fully state-paid.

When a student moved, there would be an accounting transfer on the books of the state education department; this would deduct revenue from the district in which the student had been enrolled and credit the charter school in which the student would now be enrolled.

For a new charter school, the amount credited would be the average amount spent statewide for operating purposes.

An existing school converted to charter status would be funded by its district. The amount would be the per-student revenue attributable to the student in that district.

A charter school, new or converted, could receive aids, grants and revenue as though it were a district.

Special education would be an obligation of the district of residence. The school would have to comply with the requirements of the law with respect to disabled pupils as if it were a district.

L. MISCELLANEOUS

School Year. The charter school shall provide instruction for at least the number of days required by state law. It may provide instruction for more days if not prohibited by state law.

Space. A district may lease space to a charter school. A school may lease space from another public body or in the general community market.

Transportation. Transportation for pupils enrolled at a school shall be provided by the district in which the school is located for a student residing in the district.

Initial Costs. A sponsor may authorize a school before an applicant has secured space, equipment and personnel if the applicant indicates the authorization is necessary to raise working capital.

Information. The state department of education must disseminate information to the public, directly and through sponsors, both on ways to form and operate a charter school and on ways for students or parents to use the offering of a charter school once created.

General Authority. A charter school may not levy taxes or issue bonds.

M. IMMUNITY

The sponsor of a charter school, members of the board of the sponsoring organization in their official capacity and employees of a sponsor are immune from civil or criminal liability with respect to all activities related to a charter school that they approve or sponsor. However, a particular school may sue and be sued.

The charter school shall obtain at least the amount and types of insurance required by its contract with its sponsor.

N. RENEWAL OR TERMINATION

At the end of the term, the sponsor may choose not to renew the agreement on any of the following grounds:

1. Failure to meet the requirements for student performance stated in the agreement
2. Failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management
3. Violation of law
4. Other good cause shown

During the term of the agreement, the sponsor may act to terminate the agreement on the same grounds. The following process will apply: Notice shall be given 60 days in advance of the proposed effective date; the notice shall state the grounds; the school may request a hearing. A termination shall be effective only at the conclusion of a school year.

As protection against arbitrary termination during the life of the agreement, the school will have the ability to appeal an action of its sponsor to the state board of education.

If an agreement is not renewed or is terminated, a student who attended the school may apply to and shall be enrolled in another public school.

III. Advice from Leaders in the Charter School Movement

BUILD CREDIBILITY: BE READY FOR TOUGH QUESTIONS

John Mikulas, recipient of Colorado's first charter, stressed the importance of proving one's credibility when undertaking an effort as immense as opening a school. Whether the effort is won or lost can well depend on how prepared activists are when presenting their charter locally or on a state level.

Mikulas and his small group of organizers worked for nearly two years developing a charter that would get approved. This process began long before Colorado passed its charter school legislation; when that happened, the Connect School's charter was ready only one month later. Mikulas and his wife spent nearly \$5,000 of their own funds for a public relations campaign that probed the community on its views about education reform and publicized the charter school idea. This helped assure that the charter would include aspects that were important to the parents of Pueblo and hence gain approval. The ability to discuss extensively the school's focus and development is a desirable aim for organizers. If organizers cannot articulate the ideas that the school is striving to develop and implement, their credibility will be diminished.

Yvonne Chan's charter school in California evolved over the course of three years. In this time, she refined the charter and its underlying concepts continuously. Eventually, she was able to allay fears by answering all of the public's questions. Chan cites this as an important threshold test for anyone trying to charter.

WORK WITH THE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Local boards frequently present the biggest obstacles to charter schools. Yet local school board involvement is important—both in designing charter schools to assure that community needs are addressed and in providing support for charter schools in their early stages.

There are strategies that encourage such collaborative relationships. John Mikulas credits two tactics for his school's success at getting a charter. First, his proposal was comprehensive when it was introduced. The ideas and implementation plans for the school were thoroughly researched before they were presented. Second, Mikulas says, "We spoke education with the parents and business with the school board." The parents needed to be convinced that the teachers were qualified, while the school board needed to be convinced that the plan would work financially. It was important, he says, to convince the local board that the Connect School would not be a drain on its students, teachers or other resources.

USE THE DISTRICT'S SERVICES

Yvonne Chan struck a deal with the Los Angeles Unified School District. In their new relationship, the school district is a "broker of services" for her charter program, the Vaughn School. The school contracts out to the district for various services that it can't efficiently provide for itself. These services include police and security, school mail and central data processing. This arrangement not only frees Vaughn's teachers to teach, it

not only frees Vaughn's teachers to teach, it points out the important benefits of collaborating with a school district.

PLAN AHEAD FOR START-UP MONEY

Start-up money to pay for the costs involved in opening new schools is virtually nonexistent. While some states specify the amount to be provided, others leave the amount to be negotiated. These obstacles have prohibited a number of schools from opening.

There are three options to addressing the money problem. Charter school organizers should seriously consider the advantages of converting an existing school rather than starting a new one.

Two other options are drafting legislation that allows either state or private funding of start-up costs.

Yvonne Chan was lucky enough to get both. The California legislature appropriated some start-up funding for charter schools, and RJR Nabisco Corp. provided funding as well. The RJR Nabisco grant was extended to help subsidize the school's operating costs.

The City Academy of St. Paul, the nation's first charter school, was able to secure grants from the local Northern States Power Co. for start-up funds. The company expanded these grants to help the school with its operating costs.

CONSIDER ADOPTING THE "SUCK IT UP" ATTITUDE

John Mikulas and the faculty at the Connect School were determined to run the school without any supplemental contributions from the private sector. Under Colorado's charter law, this means that their institution must operate on 80 percent of what regular public schools receive. The Pueblo school district provides some assistance with overhead costs, including liability insurance; however, Mikulas says that it is not a crucial amount. As Mikulas puts it, "Plenty of private schools in Pueblo are able to run on the

same amount of money [about \$3,500 per student], so there's no reason that we shouldn't be able to."

Mikulas doesn't want critics to be able to say, "But look, they're being privately funded," and suggests it is worth penny pinching to prove that charter schools can be effective and efficient.

ENLIST PARENTS AS ALLIES

Charter schools are always schools of choice. So charter organizers should take advantage of the fact that parents chose their schools and are usually willing to contribute to ensure the school's success.

Yvonne Chan realized in advance the importance of contributions that parents would be able to make in the Vaughn School's development. While still designing the school's focus and curriculum, she made sure to involve the local community and parents. Community meetings provided the forums for parent participation. Once the school opened, the parents were willing to help out.

The organization of parental services evolved into a "parental services exchange bank." Through this bank, parents "reciprocate for services consumed, by valuable in-kind contributions of time and skills." These contributions include: language translation, committee work, information dissemination, data entry, transportation, gardening, child care, reading aloud to children and coaching recreational activities. Parents bolster the school's resources.

■ The Do's and Don'ts From People Who Have Been There

Do

- Plan adequately and thoroughly and start as early as possible
- Try to bring unions and school districts into the discussions as soon as possible to head off conflicts
- Consider converting schools rather than starting new schools
- Work through parents and use families as resources
- Provide child care during parent involvement activities
- Provide strong site-based management training
- Establish clearly defined roles yet permit role changes as relationships develop
- Establish a mechanism for conflict resolution.
- Develop a time/task calendar with long-range plans broken into small, manageable steps
- Work toward full-funding legislation
- Use private sources of funding when possible, especially for planning and start-up funds
- Try to get some pro-bono accounting and legal help
- Try to work out an understanding of cases in which schools may employ teachers with alternative certification
- Set up a network similar to Colorado's "League of Charter Schools," which allows charter schools to share information and some services
- Measure overall student outcomes

Don't

- Act without adequate planning
- Accept quick programs that may undermine future success
- Create quotas and bureaucracies
- Make promises to parents that can't be kept
- Give parents the impression that there will be paid employment for them
- Plan services beyond space availability

IV. Existing Charter School Legislation

THE LEGISLATION THAT PASSED IN THE following states varies significantly. In some states, charter schools are automatically fully funded, while in others, the funding is negotiated. Some states have better waiver provisions than others. Such differences arose from varying political environments, making it easier or more difficult to pass the legislation. However, similarities constant throughout the legislation include: standards the schools must follow, school governance, funding provisions and causes for charter revocation.

Variations on the Theme

The most important variation in the state models involves chartering authority. Georgia, for example, passed extremely restrictive charter legislation. The law allows only existing schools to convert to charter schools after a majority of the faculty, staff and parents approve the idea, and it requires action by both the local school board and the state. By contrast, Massachusetts gives the state's secretary of education authority to approve charter applications from business, parents, teachers and institutions of higher education, bypassing local school boards entirely.

While most states assign local school boards a role in granting charters, charter advocates have quickly discovered that without an alternative chartering authority or an appeals process, school boards can—and will—permanently veto charter proposals.

States also have chosen to allow charter schools varying degrees of autonomy. In Minnesota, Massachusetts and Michigan, for exam-

ple, charter schools are legally autonomous entities. In Georgia and New Mexico, however, only existing district schools may be chartered. And in California, the law is simply open; the school has the choice to be part of the district or to become a separate entity.

Ted Kolderie of Minnesota's Center for Policy Studies believes the essence of the charter idea is the legislature's saying that some public body other than the local board of education may offer public school education in the community. In most cases the state board of education or the board of a public university will not want to own and operate a school. So the law must provide for the school itself to be a legal entity.

Other proponents, however, suggest that while complete autonomy is desirable, it can create burdens difficult for struggling charter schools to manage. Says Eric Premack, a consultant to California's charter schools, "What these schools are about is teaching and learning; let the school district fix the roof." One alternative: Allowing the charter schools to be legally autonomous but letting them contract with the school district for some centralized services.

The Trends

Specific charter school proposals also follow several different patterns. In Massachusetts, the majority of first-round charter proposals called for "from scratch" schools. In California, most early applicants chose to convert existing schools. Each approach has inherent problems. Converting an existing school means winning over most of its teachers and staff. But creating a

new school means raising money for capital costs.

A number of states also target at-risk children—students with low achievement levels who are likely to drop out of school or have already dropped out. As one advocate bluntly explained: There is less resistance to experimenting with students already doing poorly in school. In Minnesota, a number of the state's first eight charter schools were designed to serve at-risk populations; laws in California and Colorado give preference to such schools.

Charter school developers have expressed concern that the schools may not operate as effectively or efficiently as large institutions. This has limited the size of many schools to under 100 students. Until charter schools are time-tested and debugged, lower enrollments will likely prevail.

Subjects of Compromise

Charter school advocates frequently find they must advance their idea incrementally. Most states, says Minnesota's state Senator Reichgott Junge, will pass legislation only if there is a cap on the number of charters granted. She advises that it may be necessary to win over opponents by suggesting, "Let's try to have eight schools; let's see how they work." That is not always the case, however. Michigan and Georgia passed bills with no limits on the number of schools that could be chartered in their states. The Michigan law applies to new schools, while Georgia's is geared toward existing schools.

Another compromise, says Barbara O'Brien of the Colorado Children's Campaign, is conceding on the issue of the "superwaiver." In Colorado, charter proponents wanted a blanket waiver from all rules and regulations such as class size, school hours and curriculum. Instead, they compromised by agreeing to list in their charter petitions the specific state and local rules they wanted waived. Wisconsin and Minnesota, however, are among the states that grant superwaivers, requiring charters to abide by only a handful of specifically defined local regulations.

These laws are more desirable than Colorado's.

The Unresolved Issues

As the charter school movement spreads, one unresolved—and very critical—issue is the relationship of charter schools to teachers' unions. Most proponents agree with Kolderie, who asserts, "A distinctive school needs to be able to maintain the integrity of its program and to have stability in its teaching group. If the teachers are employees, they will be employees of the school." They will have the right to organize and bargain collectively, but their bargaining unit will be separate from the district's bargaining unit. The relationships of unions and those separate bargaining units are still being resolved on a case-by-case basis as charters are written.

Another emerging issue is the role of "for-profit" organizations in the charter school movement. While some experts worry that these organizations will put their responsibilities to investors ahead of student performance, others counter that as long as these organizations meet performance standards, such concerns are moot.

Indeed, the most critical issue relating to charter schools is the question of measuring results. The initial charter schools will be judged by the parents and students and communities they serve. If they serve students well, their charters are not likely to be revoked. But as the movement progresses, charter advocates must verify their results by objective standards to build the political will to foster more innovation.

And finally, as these good schools prove their worth, reformers must learn how to encourage replication. Howard Fuller, superintendent of the Milwaukee schools, notes that the charter movement will fall short of its mission if reforms are limited to a handful of good schools in each state. "We know how to create individual schools that are good," says Fuller, "but how do you reform a whole district?"

■ Minnesota

MINNESOTA BEGAN ITS EVOLUTION toward charter schools in 1985 when its legislature created the post-secondary enrollment option. This allowed colleges and universities in effect to offer the last two years of high school. In 1988, with open enrollment, the legislature expanded the available choices to include schools in other districts. But district programs do not always differ significantly. So in 1991, in an effort to produce more good schools for students to choose among, the legislature offered the option for teachers to create charter schools.

The 1991 bill called for creating as many as eight teacher-created and -operated, outcome-based charter schools in the state. That limit was later raised to 20. The City Academy of St. Paul, the nation's first charter school opened in September 1992.

One or more teachers may propose a charter school, which the local school board then approves or rejects. If an existing public school is chosen for conversion to a charter school, 90 percent of the teachers at the school must approve the conversion. If the charter is denied locally, organizers may appeal to the state board of education if two members of the local school board voted to support it. On appeal, the state board of education may authorize the school. The maximum contract is for three years or less.

Standards

Minnesota's charter schools are public, non-sectarian, non-profit corporations or cooperatives. They may limit enrollment to specific grade levels or ages but not with regard to academic or athletic ability. While generally exempt from rules and regulations that apply to public schools, there are laws, such as civil rights codes, to which they must adhere. They are outcome-based and have open enrollment like other public schools.

Governing Body

A temporary board is responsible for developing a comprehensive plan for the school and working with the sponsoring school board to write the charter. Once the sponsor approves the charter, this board hires the staff and tends to all the details of opening the school. A permanent board, consisting of teachers, staff and parents, of which teachers must make up a majority, is then elected by the teachers and parents of that school.

Funding

As with other public schools, students bring to the charter school the same amount of government dollars that would normally be allotted to them, also known as the "per-pupil allotment" or PPA. They may accept private donations and grants for capital and for start-up costs. They may not charge tuition.

Revocation

Whichever public body granted the charter may choose not to renew it if the school fails to meet its performance measures, violates the law or mismanages finances.

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■ California

CALIFORNIA'S CHARTER SCHOOL ACT OF 1992 permits individuals or groups, such as teachers and parents, to open charter schools. The law allows chartering of both existing public schools and new schools established for this purpose. For a public school to adopt a charter, 50 percent of the current teachers in an existing school must approve the transition. A new charter school may be established within a school district if 10 percent of the teachers approve. Both procedures are accomplished through petitions. California law has capped the number of charter schools at 100 and allows for only 10 per district.

The charter is authorized by the local school board for a maximum term of five years, at which point it may be renewed for additional five-year periods. If the board denies an initial charter proposal, the charter sponsors may appeal to the county superintendent, who appoints a review panel composed of teachers and school board members from other districts. The panel can request a re-examination of the proposal, and if it is still denied, the organization can request a public hearing to determine the strength of parent and teacher support. If the community shows clear support, the county board may then serve as the sponsor.

Standards

California's charter schools must be non-sectarian and may not discriminate in admission or employment practices on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender or disability. They are outcome-based, and there is a preference for programs that are aimed at low-achieving students. For the purposes of state funding, a charter school is considered to be its own separate district.

Governing Body

While other states have chosen to set up guide-

lines on how to govern the charter schools, California has opted to allow individual schools to set up their own governing bodies. However, those guidelines must be clearly defined in the charter.

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Funding

While the schools are considered separate districts, they are not separate fiscal agents. Funding is distributed through the district in the same way it is for typical schools. The amount of funding for the schools is the same as for public schools. Students bring the per-pupil allotment (PPA) that they would bring to a public school. Charter schools may accept donations and grants but may not charge tuition.

Revocation

The local school board may revoke the charter if the school violates conditions of the charter, fails to meet pupil outcomes, mismanages finances or violates the law.

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■ Georgia

GEORGIA PASSED ITS CHARTER SCHOOLS law in March 1993. A charter school must be initiated by a Georgia public school with a two-thirds plus majority vote of both the school's faculty and instructional staff and the parents of students attending the school at a specific meeting for that purpose. Once this percentage has been reached, the local school board and state board of education must approve the charter. Charters can be granted for a period of three years initially and renewed for one to three years. Once the charter is approved it may then be forwarded to the state board of education for review. If there are recommendations, the board may then send it back to the local board for a second review. The state board may not overturn a local board's final decision, thus leaving the power of sponsorship in the hands of each district.

Standards

The schools are outcome-based and are exempt from local school board rules, state statutes, and state board of education policies, rules and regulations. The charter must specify the exemptions.

Governing Body

The charter legislation does not set forth specific guidelines for a governing body. These bodies are to be specified within each charter.

Funding

Funding is developed on a school-by-school basis, according to individual charters. The plan must show the basis for its calculations, describe in broad categories how the funds will be spent and specify accounting and auditing procedures. Once the school's charter has been approved, a comprehensive budget must be submitted to the local school board for approval.

Revocation

Charter schools must submit annual reports to the state board of education. These reports must evaluate schools' progress toward meeting prescribed goals and list possible modifications to school programs based on performance. Schools will be reviewed by a School Renewal Committee (SRC) that can approve a charter for future action. The SRC is composed of local educators, local school board members and other knowledgeable individuals. These may include college and university faculty.

If the committee decides that a school's operation has been inconsistent with its charter, the state board may terminate the charter and require the school to return to its traditional public school status.

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■ Colorado

COLORADO PASSED ITS CHARTER SCHOOL bill in June 1993. No more than 50 charter schools may be established prior to July 1, 1997. At least 13 of the 50 schools must focus on at-risk children and their special educational needs.

A group of parents, teachers and/or community members may establish a charter school. There must be a "sufficient" number of parents, teachers, community members or students who support the charter. Charters are sponsored by the local school board. If a group is denied a charter, it may appeal to the state board of education, which can either order the local board to reconsider the proposal or, upon a second appeal, approve the charter. The maximum charter lasts five years, after which it can be renewed for another five years.

Standards

The schools must be non-sectarian, non-religious and not home-based. The schools are responsible to the local school board, which ensures compliance with local and state laws. They must also follow the guidelines set forth in federal laws pertaining to civil rights and non-discriminatory practices. While 13 schools are specifically set aside for at-risk children, preference is given to charters that target those populations.

Governing Body

Colorado allows each applicant to come to an agreement with the local board of education on the school's governance. The resulting agreement is part of the charter.

Funding

Each student is counted as part of the enrollment for the district where the charter school is located. The charter school and the local board will negotiate for services, including food and custo-

dial services. Charter schools will receive at least 80 percent of the district's per-pupil allotment. The schools are allowed to accept donations and gifts to be used in accordance with donors' wishes. Schools may not charge tuition.

Revocation

The local school board may revoke a charter if a school fails to meet the standards, conditions and procedures set forth in its charter; fails to meet the outcome or pupil performance standards as identified in its charter; fails to meet the generally accepted standards of good fiscal management; or violates laws from which it is not specifically exempt in its charter.

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■ Massachusetts

MASSACHUSETTS PASSED ITS CHARTER school law in June 1993. Those eligible to apply for a charter are businesses, two or more certified teachers or 10 or more parents. Applications also may be backed by colleges or universities, museums or other similar educational institutions. The sponsoring authority is the state secretary of education. There is a maximum limit of 25 schools that can be established at any time within the state of Massachusetts, and each school is legally autonomous from the school district in which it resides.

Standards

The schools are to be public, they must comply with civil rights laws and must meet state education performance standards. The schools may limit enrollment to specific ages or grade levels and may focus their curricula in particular areas.

Governing Body

As charter schools are legally autonomous from local school districts, they are not supervised by local school boards but are governed by boards of trustees. Applicants specify the constitution of their boards and delineate these plans within the charters, which are approved by the state secretary of education. It is the responsibility of the secretary to oversee the performance of the schools.

Funding

While most states allow the students to take the per-pupil allotment (PPA) from the students' residing districts to the new school districts, Massachusetts has unique rules and regulations. Students take the average PPA to the charter school. If there is a difference between the PPA in the district where the charter school is located and the district where the student resides, the

student will take the lesser of the two districts' allotments. Charter schools are allowed to accept grants, gifts and donations to help pay for school programs.

Revocation

The state secretary of education has the authority to either place a school on probation or revoke the charter if a school is not meeting the standards set forth in its charter. A charter must be renewed every five years and must be approved by the secretary each time. The charter school law provides the secretary with the authority to issue regulations regarding the policies and procedures for revoking a school's charter.

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■ New Mexico

NEW MEXICO PASSED ITS CHARTER school legislation in 1993, allowing no more than five charter schools in the state. These charters are authorized for five years and may be renewed for five additional years. Schools wishing to gain charter school status must apply to the state board of education through their local school boards. The local board may add a letter of recommendation for the school when relaying the application to the state.

For New Mexico's Board of Education to approve a charter school:

1. At least 65 percent of the teachers within a public school must approve its conversion to charter status.
2. There must be substantial support and involvement on the part of the parents.
3. The school must submit a comprehensive plan describing its alternative educational program.
4. Charter applicants must submit a detailed budget of anticipated educational and administrative costs.

Unlike other states, New Mexico is funding 10 schools with \$5,000 grants each, to explore the viability of charter schools. The program is also helping the state board of education develop regulations for charter schools.

Standards

Schools must be located within school districts and comply with all public school codes. They may apply for waivers, however, regarding certain aspects of the public school code such as class size, alternative curriculum opportunities and alternative budgeting.

Governing Body

Schools will be governed by the terms set forth in their individual charters. Their budgets must be

approved by the local school board.

Funding

Each school must submit a budget for the following school year to the local school board by April 15. The local board will either approve or amend the budget and then submit it to the state department of education for final approval. Once the state board approves the budget, the local school board will allocate the funds to each school. The local school board is also responsible for establishing individual charter accounts to receive public fund allocations.

Roughly \$60,000 for start-up costs will be divided among the first five charter schools. The money is part of the funds from the grant that is supporting the \$5,000 exploratory money.

Revocation

In early 1994, regulations regarding the revocation of charters were still being considered.

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■ Wisconsin

WISCONSIN PASSED ITS CHARTER school bill in August 1993. The law allows charter schools to be established in no more than 10 school districts, and each district is limited to two charter schools. Therefore, a maximum of 20 charter schools can be established statewide. There are two methods for creating a charter school, and both involve the local school board. First, a school board may, on its own initiative, request approval of the state superintendent to establish a charter school. Second, a school board may request approval from the state superintendent upon receipt of a petition requesting the board to establish a charter school. The petition must be signed by at least 10 percent of the teachers employed by the school district or by at least 50 percent of the teachers employed at one school in the district. The state superintendent must approve the first 10 requests from school boards to establish charter schools. All requests to date have been initiated by the first method: school board-initiated requests without teacher petitions.

Standards

Charter schools must be non-sectarian and may not discriminate in admission or employment practices. They are performance-based and must meet general state educational goals for student achievement and skill levels. A charter school is an instrumentality of the school district in which it is located and the school board of that school district shall employ all personnel for the charter school. Charter schools are granted a superwaiver from most state regulations on public schools except for requirements to (a) participate in the state's pupil assessment program, (b) ensure that instructional staff hold a license and (c) be included in the district's annual school performance report. The contract between the school board and charter school shall set forth the description of the educational program and

methods by which pupil progress is measured, qualifications of employees, procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils, and other requirements.

Governing Body

Charters will describe the governance structure of the school, the name of the person in charge and the manner in which administrative services will be provided, and the manner in which annual audits of financial and programmatic operations will be performed.

Funding

The school board may not spend on average more per pupil enrolled in the charter school than the board spends on average per pupil enrolled in the public schools. The number of pupils enrolled in the charter school and the costs are included in the district's calculation of general state aid entitlement.

Revocation

Charters will be approved for up to five school years. They may be renewed for one or more terms not exceeding five years. A school board may revoke a contract if the board finds that any of the following occurred: (a) The charter school violated the contract; (b) the pupils failed to make sufficient progress toward attaining the state's educational goals; (c) the school failed to comply with generally accepted accounting standards; or (d) the school violated the charter school law.

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■ Michigan

MICHIGAN PASSED ITS CHARTER SCHOOL bill in December 1993. There is no limit to the number of charter schools in Michigan. Four groups may grant school charters: the boards of local districts, the boards of intermediate districts, the boards of community colleges and the boards of state universities. School districts or community colleges may only grant charters within their boundaries.

Michigan charter schools are called Public School Academies. An academy may be proposed and, if approved, operated by "any person or entity." Michigan's law differs from other states in allowing applicants to apply for charters through state universities.

Standards

The academies are public schools; they may limit the school to specific ages or grade levels and may require parents to volunteer as a condition for admission of their children. They may not discriminate based on intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or on the basis of a disability. Enrollment is open to all students who live in the state. If a school has too many applicants, students must be chosen through random selection. While exempt from some state laws such as health and physical education requirements and parental notification for teaching reproductive health, charter schools are not exempt from civil rights laws.

Governing Body

Public school academies must be organized under the state's Nonprofit Corporation Act and will be governed by a board of directors.

Funding

Each school is considered its own district and therefore receives the same per-pupil funding

that other school districts receive. Schools may apply for both federal and private support.

Revocation

The board of a sponsoring school district, an intermediate school board, the board of a community college or the governing board of a state public university may choose to revoke a charter if the academy fails to substantially meet the goals and outcomes as set forth in its charter, fails to maintain health and safety standards or fails to meet acceptable accounting procedures.

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V. How Some Charter Schools Work

■ City Academy of St. Paul, Minnesota

THE CITY ACADEMY OF ST. PAUL WAS THE nation's first charter school, opening its doors Sept. 7, 1992. It uses creative teaching methods to reach students who have not succeeded in traditional public schools. Its students, ages 13-21, are considered "at risk;" they have a history as dropouts or drug abusers, and some have spent time in jail.

City Academy has approximately 35 students and offers a curriculum that gets them out of the classroom, into the community, and into courses at local colleges and universities. Two things that set the school apart, but may be difficult to replicate on a larger scale, are a 5-1 student-teacher ratio and financial support from the Northern States Power Co.

The school, sponsored by the St. Paul school board, is located in a parks and recreation building in a low-income neighborhood of the city. Students, who attend classes year-round, participated in drafting the charter, ensuring that it met their needs.

■ The Connect School, Pueblo, Colorado

JOHAN AND JUDY MIKULAS RECEIVED COLORADO'S first school charter on Aug. 3, 1993, and the doors opened a month later. The school began with 70 students, and plans to expand to 160. They are taught by five teachers, including the Mikulases.

The greatest challenge to opening the school came from the city of Pueblo. The Connect School is funded by and legally part of a nearby rural school district. However, it is located in the Pueblo school district's boundaries where it can take advantage of the Pueblo district's library and athletic facilities.

The school maintains a high-tech and scientific focus, stressing computer-aided education and using a neighboring university's laboratory facilities. The first half of the day centers on the typical junior high school curriculum of reading, writing and arithmetic. Yet the instruction is atypical. Instead of lecturing students, teachers give them extensive freedom to direct their own educations and actively learn. For example, students choose what books they read and conduct biology experiments in natural environments. John Mikulas also states that the teachers "use the community as a learning lab," sending students into various parts of the city as part of an average school day. These practical experiences, which constitute a substantial portion of a day, are an important aspect of the education Connect provides.

The Connect School's success has increased the Pueblo school district's interest in charter

schools; it announced plans in early 1994 to open its own.

Though the Connect School receives only 80 percent of the state's per-pupil allotment of funding (along with some money from the Pueblo school district for overhead costs, including liability insurance), the school has pledged to operate without additional private funds. In the school's first year, its supporters pledged to watch every dollar and "run the school like a business."

John Mikulas also praises the students' parents for their physical, mental and moral support of the school. Without such backing, he suggests, the school would have failed in its first year. The parents contribute to all aspects of the school's operation, from administrative office work to janitorial services, creating a strong sense of community for all those involved with the school.

■ Vaughn Next Century Learning Center, Pacoima, California

WHEN YVONNE CHAN TOOK CONTROL of the Los Angeles Unified School District's Vaughn Street School in 1990, it was on a perilous slide: Faculty and administrators were quitting, the facilities were crumbling and students weren't learning. Chan immediately instituted a series of changes that increased the faculty's control over the school's management and evolved into site-based management. These changes naturally led Chan to embrace the charter school idea, which was gaining popularity in California.

The Vaughn Next Century Learning Center is a model of what a charter school can accomplish. This pre-kindergarten through sixth grade, 1,200-student, urban school is over 90 percent Latino and roughly 7 percent African-American. The original school was deficient in so many areas that Chan realized only a completely different approach to managing the school would produce the necessary changes. She easily generated strong support from Vaughn's parents, who realized that "the students had nothing to lose" from modifying the school.

Working with grant money donated by RJR Nabisco Corp., Chan, the school's faculty and its parents implemented a 13-point plan that culminated in writing a charter for the school.

A novel aspect of the Vaughn school is its focus on "out-of-school barriers." The school concentrates on shielding students from the negative effects of their community and responding to the influences on their lives of an urban center. Vaughn has hired full-time security guards, a student counselor, a part-time school psychologist and a full-time nurse. This means not only better school facilities and improved security around school grounds, but also more attention to the emotional and mental problems of students.

VI. Other Education Reform Movements

THE CHARTER SCHOOL MOVEMENT IS NOT the only current school reform movement. Three other concepts presently being advanced are open enrollment, school vouchers and contract management.

I. OPEN ENROLLMENT

Open enrollment could be described as a public school voucher. In a state with open enrollment, students are able to choose whatever public school they would like to attend without paying any extra fees. The money that would normally be spent on the student at his or her local school would "follow the student" to the public school of choice. There are two variations on this type of school choice: intra-district and inter-district. Some states allow students to choose any public school within the local district.

The second form of open enrollment is statewide. Where this is an option, students can choose to enroll in any public school in a state. As in the intra-district option, the money allotted to educate the student in his or her local district generally follows the student.

Support of the open enrollment concept is based upon the following competitive dynamic: Public schools will increase the quality of their curricula and services in order to avoid losing students to other institutions. Administrators are expected to improve their schools by implementing some of the following changes:

- Cutting school bureaucracies
- Trimming budgets

- Adopting more efficient management techniques
- Increasing pay and promoting teachers who demonstrate results
- Responding more quickly to technological changes and other forces that affect the curriculum

However, in order for open enrollment to work, one must assume that there are *differences* among the public schools within the system. Because there is usually little variation in the quality of education offered by schools within a district or state, open enrollment alone does not effectively increase the choice of education for students. The system must encourage innovation along with expanded choices. There must be changes in *how* students are educated, not simply *where* they are educated.

2. PRIVATE SCHOOL VOUCHERS

Private school vouchers allow students the freedom to attend *any* school that they choose, taking the funds that would normally be spent on them at their local public school to *private* schools. As of early 1994, the only private school voucher program in the country was operating in Milwaukee, where a small number of disadvantaged urban students were being allowed to use their per-pupil allotments to attend private schools. Private school voucher initiatives on a number of state ballots—including California's and Colorado's—have been defeated by voters.

In a January 1992 report by The Education Commission of the States, *Essential Questions on*

Public-School Choice and Voucher Systems, the following concerns were raised regarding private school vouchers:

Undermining of Public Schools. Shifting funds from public to private and parochial schools may undermine the nation's system of public schools. Therefore, vouchers may be counterproductive to long-term public school reform. Charter schools are public schools and retain education dollars in the public domain.

Decreased Accountability. Private schools are not accountable to the public for student outcomes. Charter schools must prove to state and local governments that their children are learning at least an adequate amount.

Selective Enrollment. Public schools must enroll all children while private schools can selectively choose the students who attend. Allowing families to use their tax dollars to send children to private schools will not ensure that they will be accepted by their school of choice.

Linking of Church and State. Vouchers may violate separation of church and state if private schools with religious foundations are funded with public money.

3. CONTRACTING OUT

A number of mayors, notably Chicago's Richard Daley and Philadelphia's Ed Rendell, have successfully "contracted out" some city functions, such as handling parking violations and collecting garbage, to private companies, saving their cities large amounts of money.

So why shouldn't it work for our schools? The idea is that private firms could come into a school system and provide a variety of the non-instructional services more efficiently than do the schools or districts. Some of these tasks would include janitorial services, security and maintenance.

The more extreme version of contracting out

would involve the management of entire schools. The district would hire a private, professional management company to come into the school and completely take over its administration and instructional functions. The firm would keep the same teachers and principals at a school, as well as the district's curriculum, while enhancing other areas of its operations such as food service and transportation.

Enhancing school technology has been a major emphasis of one school management company, Education Alternatives Inc. By early 1994, this Minneapolis-based firm was running public schools in Miami and Baltimore. The Baltimore program, with nine schools, was the largest of its kind in the country. While there were no comprehensive assessments at the time, some informal indicators such as physical conditions, student attendance and student attitudes all suggested progress.

CHARTERS: THE BEST OF ALL THREE

Charter schools incorporate the best aspects of these three proposals for education reform. They offer the *choice* of open enrollment, the *access* to different choices, the *quality* education that voucher advocates claim vouchers would provide and the *administrative freedom and efficiency* available through contracting.

Appendix

Charter School Resources

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Useful Publications

*Beyond Choice to New Public Schools:
Withdrawing the Exclusive Franchise in Public Education*
Ted Kolderie
The Democratic Leadership Council
518 C St. NE
Washington, DC 20002
P: (202) 546-0007 F: (202) 544-5002
Cost: \$2.50

Charter School Update
Morrison Institute for Public Policy
School of Public Affairs
Arizona State University
Tempe, AZ 85287-4405
P: (602) 965-4525 F: (602) 965-9219

A First Year Look at California's Magnet Schools
Marcie R. Dianda, Roland G. Corwin
c/o Publicity Office
Southwest Regional Laboratory
4665 Lampson Ave.
Los Alamitos, CA 90720
P: (310) 598-7661 F: (310) 985-9635

GAO Charter Schools Report
Publication date: Summer 1994
Richard Wenning and Beatrice F. Birman
General Accounting Office
441 G St. NW #7049
Washington, DC 20548
P: (202) 512-7008

How to Start a Charter School Guidebook
Publication date: Summer 1994
Charter School Resource Center
Pioneer Institute
85 Devonshire St. Eighth Floor
Boston, MA 02109-3504
P: (617) 723-2277 F: (617) 723-1880

Making Charters Work
Eric Premack and Linda Diamond
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Berkeley, CA 94710
P: (510) 843-8574 F: (510) 843-2436

Massachusetts Joins the Charter School Parade
Laurie Gardner
Miller Road
New Vernon, NJ 07976
P: (201) 765-0080
Cost: Postage and handling

*Planning a Charter School: One Colorado
Group's Experience*
Mary Ellen Sweeney
Angel Press
534 Detroit Street
Denver, CO 80206
Cost: \$9 plus postage and handling

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