



Charter Schools Today: New CER Report Gives Evidence of Charters' Impact

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A new report, released just in time for National Charter Schools Week, from the Center for Education Reform (CER) offers the most complete and in-depth picture of the charter school movement to date. *Charter Schools Today: Changing the Face of American Education; Statistics, Stories and Insights* provides up-to-date information on charter schools' impact on American education. "Charters remain one of the most significant reforms in modern education," stated Jeanne Allen, president of CER. "No other reform has achieved results faster, or grown at the explosive rate that charters have seen over the past 12 years -- expanding from just one school in 1992 to the 2,996 in operation today." CER's *Charter Schools Today: Changing the Face of American Education: Statistics, Stories and Insights* chronicles the impact of charters, compiling four separate reports that deal with different aspects of charter operations in the United States. These reports track the growth of schools and enrollment, look at how schools operate, examine the successes and obstacles schools face, and, finally, demonstrate how charters are examples of the most accountable schools in all of public education. The "Annual Survey of Charter Schools" section of the report offers a comprehensive picture of charter school operations, focus and populations. The survey includes data compiled from the 2002-2003 school year provided by nearly a third (795) of the then operating charters -- an unprecedented response for a voluntary survey. The results reinforce previous findings that charters are accountable, educate under-served students, and provide innovative opportunities children and parents are unable to receive in their local traditional public schools. The section entitled "Achievement Against All Odds" provides a rich perspective of charters by looking at their successes, obstacles and the "ripple" effect the schools have had on their surrounding communities. These stories prove what no other body of data can by putting a human face on the movement -- one that is far more compelling than what is often portrayed by critics. In many cases, the stories illustrate that, in spite of often daunting limitations, charters are not only serving students but serving them with distinction. There are many examples of charters outperforming their district peers and even rivaling other top-performing schools. Also included in the stories are examples of roadblocks, obstacles set up by those opposed to the reform, intended to quash schools' growth or force their closure. In the report's final piece "Charter Schools Closure Data," CER updates a key accountability piece that examines the numbers and reasons for charter school closures. As of January 2004, 311 charter schools have closed, representing 9 percent of all charters ever opened. Since their inception, charter schools have closed for a variety of reasons, many stemming from difficulties in securing and maintaining a suitable facility. However, this year's report found that in a growing number of cases, schools have lost their charters due to direct action by districts and other groups such as school boards and teachers unions. "In the past twelve years, charter schools have created a sea change in the ways of public education," Allen concluded. "Because of charter schools, we are seeing increasing examples of achievement from children who were not previously successful. And by creating alternatives for parents who've had none, the schools have forced traditional systems to respond and in many cases adapt. This report brings some substance and insight to those accomplishments." Call today to order your copy of *Charter Schools Today: Changing the Face of American Education: Statistics, Stories and Insights*. Contact us at (202) 822-9000 or [order here online](#). The cost of the report is \$49.95 plus shipping and handling.

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The Center for Education Reform is the leading authority for information on innovative reforms in education and works in states and communities across the country to advance the cause of educational excellence. October 2003 marked CER's [10th Anniversary](#) in working to make schools better for all children. For more information, contact CER at (202) 822-9000 or [send us email](#).

