

# Memo

To: Jeanne  
From: Anita  
Cc: Tony and Anna  
Date: 7/2/03  
Re: AZ Action: Results of Discussion with Onnie Shekerjian and Chris Smith (ledx.org)

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**Onnie:**

- She is willing to help in any way she can.
- She is available August 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and morning of the 7<sup>th</sup>. In addition, her schedule is flexible enough that she could move some things around if necessary.
- She will develop an initial list of persons you should meet with; including a meeting with Chris Smith, since he is more familiar with and works well with the AZ Charter School Association;
- She will arrange and attend meetings; and
- She will also explore which minority charter school operators would be interested in this effort.

Onnie did express concerns about the current charter school atmosphere in AZ:

- She advised that you'll need to tread lightly around egos and tensions of the Charter School Association because of the current in-fighting and their distrust of outsiders;
- Less than 50% of charters schools belong to the association, and if they are not the "Big Companies" like Chancellor Beacon etc, then they are independent operators who are protective of their autonomy and not interested in the larger "charter school movement"; and

- Lack of money and time are the two primary reasons the "independent" charter school operators don't get involved with a coordinated charter movement effort. *(Note: recently these operators have been reaching out to the state charter school board's special NCLB sub-committee for further information and assistance).*

**Chris:**

Onnie works with Chris Smith as Iedx's Parent Advocacy Director. Chris called to speak with you after I spoke with Onnie, but you were in a meeting. He views CER as a friend and ally and has extended the following to help you with AZ action:

- To serve as a host team for you by organizing and arranging meetings;
- Provide you with work and meeting space at their offices during your stay; and
- Provide information and pre-meeting briefings to prep you and guide you through the local "issues and tensions".

Please review and advise of the next steps you like to take.

Thanks.

Nita