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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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NEW STUDY SHOWS BENEFITS FOUND IN CHARTER SCHOOLS, VOUCHER PROGRAMS *Going from Rhetoric to Reality Dismisses Popular Myth About Creaming*

(Washington, D.C. 12/7/01) A study confirming that school choice programs serve populations on par with traditional public schools, and produce positive or neutral achievement benefits was released today by the RAND Corporation.

The California-based group found that in charter schools generally:

- Parents are more satisfied.
- Children are well integrated.
- Academic achievement tends to grow after a child's first year.

The report also suggests that to help foster equity for children and ensure an adequate supply of charter schools, policymakers should ensure that multiple chartering authorities exist and "provide generous funding."

"RAND is absolutely right about these two essential components of any charter law," said CER president Jeanne Allen. "Now we have to work to make sure the states adopt such measures to help expand access and quality options to more children."

The think tank's conclusions about vouchers supports the views of proponents' that vouchers can be beneficial. RAND found, for example, that in voucher programs:

- African-American children have better achievement.
- Parent satisfaction levels are high.
- At-risk students are served in higher numbers than traditional public schools.
- Creaming and Balkanization -- two common myths about vouchers -- are not a reality.

(more)

The authors recognize that barriers to reform are breaking down and the public is open to non-traditional approaches to serving the public good.

However, the authors caution that there is little evidence about how these choice programs will perform on a large-scale basis. The authors also examine the effects of choice-based reforms on traditional public education, and argue that only by expanding such reforms can useful conclusions be made

“While the report ends by advocating further study” observed Jeanne Allen, “its call to expand the scope and freedom of choice programs - and in so-doing to create a meaningful choice environment - is a welcome conclusion.”

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The Center for Education Reform is a national, independent, non-profit advocacy organization providing support and guidance to individuals, community and civic groups, policymakers and others who are working to bring fundamental reforms to their schools. For further information, please call (202) 822-9000 or visit our website at <http://edreform.com>.