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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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SURVEY SHOWS CHARTER SUCCESS: *More Time, More Innovation*

(Washington, D.C. 10/29/02) Not only are the nation's charter schools successfully educating children under-served by traditional public schools, but they are providing more instructional time, innovative curricula, and doing it cost-effectively.

Those are some of the results from the Center for Education Reform's Charter Schools *Annual Survey of America's Charter Schools*, released today in Washington, DC.

"Charter schools continue to defy the odds in educating at-risk children," declared Jeanne Allen, president of The Center for Education Reform. "Despite renewed attacks from the education establishment, both the data and the anecdotal evidence point to the clear conclusion that charters are doing what they set out to do: educate children left behind by a 'one-size-fits-all' education system."

Among the results from the survey of 481 charter school respondents:

- 43 percent of charter schools offer additional instructional time, including an extended school day, extended school year, or a combination of the two.
- Charter schools provide a wide range of curricular options – from "back to basics" to "Expeditionary Learning" – responding to the specific needs of each school's distinct population.
- The average per-pupil cost of survey respondents is \$4,507, significantly less than the \$7,000 average in traditional schools, and charters are forced to use that money to underwrite facilities costs not included in traditional public schools' operating budgets.
- Despite having large numbers of academically challenged students, charter schools reported a range of achievements, including gains in reading and math performances; test scores higher than district, state or comparable school scores; increased parental involvement; higher attendance and fewer discipline problems.
- Parental demand for the services charter schools offer has increased: More than 69 percent of charters have a waiting list and the average waiting list for a charter school has skyrocketed to 68 percent of the average school's enrollment.

“On a dollar-for-dollar basis, successful charter schools are outperforming their traditional public school brethren and doing more for students, and that performance is why parental demand is increasing” Allen noted. “Rather than throw obstacles in the path of charter schools, educators and policy-makers seeking to improve the education of students should be looking for ways to expand the number of charters.”

Other conclusions from the survey indicate that 98 percent of charter schools administer at least one standardized test, including state tests in those states that have them; that charters serve students who are largely underserved, including at-risk and low-income students; and that areas with multiple chartering authorities are more likely to have charter schools.

The Center surveyed more than 2,357 charters operating as of September 2001 in 37 states and the District of Columbia. Responses were received from 481 schools, indicating a response rate of more than 20 percent.

A copy of *Charter Schools 2002: Results from CER's Annual Survey of America's Charter Schools* may be found on-line, at <http://www.edreform.com/>

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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>.