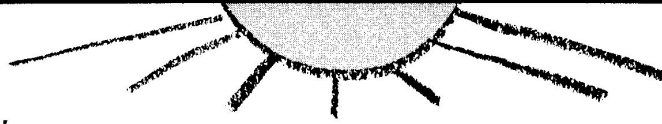


# THE Center for Education Reform



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## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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### **\$10 MILLION FOR DC SCHOOL CHOICE APPROVED BY HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE** *Recent NAEP scores find District public school children continue to rank at bottom*

**(Washington, D.C. 7/16/03)** The full House Appropriations Committee voted out its DC Appropriations bill, with \$10 million to be used for the school choice incentive fund proposed for the District and backed by the Mayor and other city officials.

Currently city leaders have forged an agreement with Congressional leaders to support the development of expanded public and private options for children. The agreement includes the choice incentive fund, additional support for the city's charter school program (in which 15 percent of students in the District are enrolled) and additional public school reforms.

Last week the National Assessment of Educational Progress released its writing report card, showing some national gains in writing but lackluster performance at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade level. Nationally 28 percent of all 4<sup>th</sup> graders are proficient in writing. However, in the District of Columbia, the percent of 4<sup>th</sup> graders that can write proficiently drops to 12.

Reading scores in the District, also released this summer, find that DC school children rank lower than any other state in the nation.

The pilot programs being considered by Congress are considered necessary to improve student achievement. According to studies by researchers at Harvard University, the University of Wisconsin and Georgetown University, children in cities with private school choice programs benefit from the program, and individual children using scholarships perform at higher rates. In a study of scholarship recipients in New York City, Dayton, OH, and Washington, D.C., African American students using scholarships to attend private schools showed significantly greater improvement on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills than did their public school peers. In addition, analyses of choice in Cleveland and Milwaukee have shown that all students have benefited since choice was instituted in their cities.

Polls and surveys show increasing minority support for school choice. Just this May, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies released a poll showing that 57 percent of African Americans support vouchers. Last August the Center for Education Reform found even greater support: 72 percent of African Americans supported school choice.

For more information and research on school choice and national assessments, go to [http://www.edreform.com/school\\_choice](http://www.edreform.com/school_choice). For details about what's going on in DC, visit [http://www.edreform.com/school\\_choice/states/washingtondc.htm](http://www.edreform.com/school_choice/states/washingtondc.htm)

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*The Center for Education Reform is a national voice for more choices in education and more rigor in education programs. CER celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this October.*