



Making Schools Work Better for all Children

Newsire - December 19, 2000

December 19, 2000

**CER Newsire Vol. 2, No. 45
December 19, 2000**

PROMISES FROM WASHINGTON:

"There is a unanimous ... view in this country that the school system is broken, that millions of kids are left behind, that it does need work, and we need to address that." So said Vice President-elect Richard Cheney on ABC's "This Week" last Sunday.

That's encouraging news for grassroots reformers who have wondered when there would be recognition in Washington of the real tragedy in American education: That kids are left behind. Cheney indicated that President-elect Bush's first priority would be education, and his proposal would include a provision to give public schools with large numbers of low-income children three years to improve student test scores or provide those students with the opportunity to attend the school of their choice.

CHARTER SCHOOLS: As Congress prepared to pack up and go home, it passed two funding measure of importance to the future of charter schools.

Measure one included \$25 million to demonstrate new ways to make facilities financing more available and affordable for charter schools. While the money won't be used for direct loans or grants, the demonstration projects it funds are expected to create bond or loan pools, guarantee loans or bonds, subsidize interest rates or create other strategies to bring down the cost of financing charter school facilities.

The same appropriations bill also includes a 31 percent increase in funding for the federal charter school grant program, up to \$190 million in FY2001. However, real equity for charter schools will only come when states guarantee equal funding between traditional public schools and charter schools.

Provisions can be found at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d106:h.r.4577>:

TEACHERS UNION GRINCHES:

The *Wall Street Journal* reported Monday that Ohio industrial arts teacher Denis Robey objected to the Ohio Education Association's use of his dues for non-education-related issues with which he disagreed on religious grounds. So he exercised his right under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act to have his dues directed to charity, specifically Habitat for Humanity.

But the teachers unions want the money for themselves, rather than allowing it to go to a group that builds homes for the homeless. So they demanded Mr. Robey fill out a questionnaire and obtain the signature of a religious official confirming his beliefs – although an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ruled that an individual on record as a religious objector "should not be required to reiterate the objection on an annual basis."

The matter is in a "conciliation period," and it's possible the EEOC will take the OEA and the NEA to court over the matter.

ADVICE:

One of the first to issue policy recommendations to the new Administration is The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, which released its suggestions for President-elect Bush and the 107th Congress in a paper called "Education 2001: Getting the Job Done." Authored by Chester E. Finn, Jr., Bruno V. Manno, and Diane Ravitch, it offers a blueprint for "serious change, not perpetuation of failed programs and faltering strategies." You can get the paper at <http://www.edexcellence.net>.

Looking ahead to the potential of a bright future is a pretty good way to end the NEWSWIRE for the year.

Warmest wishes to you and yours, from all of us at the Center for Education Reform.



The Center for Education Reform
910 Seventeenth Street, NW, Suite 1120 • Washington, DC 20006
800-521-2118 • 301-986-8088 • Fax: 301-986-1826
www.edreform.com • cer@edreform.com
copyright © 2013