



Making Schools Work Better for all Children

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When it comes to trouble in education, few things could compare to the U.S. Department of Education's blatant disregard of a policy that, by now, should have allowed the American people to know **how many of the nation's teacher education graduates pass state certification tests**. Rather than implement such an important accountability program right away, it turns out that the feds left the rulemaking up to the colleges themselves, and ... what a surprise! Two years later there's still no data. California Congressman George Miller, the author of this little known provision of a 1998 law, has accused the administration of bowing to election-year pressures. "College presidents are going to be embarrassed at how poorly their schools of education are doing; some governors are going to be embarrassed," Miller said. "It's a political year and the administration has made a political choice."

So call your Congressman NOW and tell him what you think about this stall. Shouldn't parents have the right to know how the graduates of the nation's teacher training institutions score on these tests? Here you have a perfectly legitimate area for federal oversight and the government can't even handle a little data collecting. This year's buzzword is accountability – for students, teachers, schools and parents. Let's put a little accountability into our tax-funded programs, too!

For more information about this issue, see:

- **Teacher colleges drag feet on reporting their weaknesses**, *USA Today*, January 31, 2000.
- **Education Department Blasted for Delaying Teacher-Training Reports**, By Anjetta McQueen, *Nando Media*

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Who says reform is not contagious? A growing number of school superintendents are developing that great American entrepreneurial spirit and jumping on the charter school train. **Denver** Public Schools chief Chip Zullinger wants to give nine of his schools the chance to convert to charters as a way to raise student achievement and restore more local control over schools.

"I believe the community can offer a big leg up in making things better for children," Zullinger told the *Denver Post*. "I'm looking for new ways to engage them and empower them."

Some months ago, **Cincinnati** Superintendent Steven Adamowski proposed to charter a bunch of

his schools, and his effort became reality the other night when the board of education approved three charters to open. That's not sitting too well with the local AFT union leader, who has also threatened a strike over charters and other issues.

Not all politics is bad for kids. **Michigan** Governor John Engler is getting touch with his legislature. Engler's proposal to allow more charters to open is being paired with an increase in school funding. An eye for an eye... though this time charter opponents don't like it when it's done to them!

Engler's **New York** colleague George Pataki traded legislative raises for charters in late 1998; a move that while criticized, finally allowed charters to come to the Empire State. About 19 will be opened this fall, despite continual opposition from a variety of school board groups and unions statewide.

Hats off to **Philly**'s school board, which is looking into hiring a successful private company to educate some of the system's most disruptive children. Community Education Partners, Inc. currently operates schools for many challenged kids in Texas, and has a great track record in raising their esteem, their standards, and lowering their changes for getting into trouble.



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