



*Making Schools Work Better for all Children*

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- O.K! Breaking news from **Oklahoma** where the state's first charter school was approved late Monday. The proposal by Parents for a New Middle School was approved by the school board, and three other charters are expected to be approved. Congratulations to school reformer and dentist Janet Barisse, who led the charge to bring about the law and is part of the new charter school's founding board.

- Developments in **Florida's** school choice case! The judge presiding in the recent hearing about whether or not Opportunity Scholarships are inconsistent with the state's mandate to provide a sound public education for children, has been asked to disqualify himself from the case.

The [Institute for Justice \(IJ\)](#) said that Leon County Circuit Court Judge L. Ralph Smith's son is engaged to the daughter of a high-ranking official of the Florida Education Association/United, AFT AFL-CIO, Jack Carbone. The FEA is lead plaintiff in one of the lawsuits seeking to enjoin Opportunity Scholarships. Carbone heads the training/leadership and organizational development programs of the FEA. Smith was also the judge who grilled lawyers defending the choice program but didn't have a single question of the plaintiffs. Says IJ, "We are hopeful that Judge Smith will recuse himself so there is no hint of impropriety in the proceedings in this very important case."

- Choice is helping young children in the **Washington, DC** scholarship program do better academically, according to a report by Harvard researcher Paul Peterson. The study showed that the earlier children are exposed to a quality education environment, the better they will do. The study tracked Washington, DC children who were selected to receive vouchers from the Washington Scholarship Fund and found those who took these vouchers to private schools in grades 2-5 outscored their public school counterparts. However, the study did find that WSF students entering private school in grades 6-8 scored lower than public school students and were less happy with their school.

- Colorado's charter schools rock!, according to the state's most recent test scores. Scores on the **Colorado** Student Assessment Program tests were the highest among the state's charter schools. According to the Denver Rocky Mountain News, "two thirds to three quarters of charters also outperformed average test scores of their home school districts and schools with similar demographics." One study highlight found that 77% of third grade students in charter schools tested proficient or above in reading, compared to the state average of 67%.

- Kudos to **Boston's** City on a Hill charter school, which was unanimously renewed for another five years! The state determined that City on a Hill had been a success, and has built an effective secondary school program that responds well to students' needs. This year, City on a Hill enrolled freshmen who

are further behind academically than ever before. Reading and math scores for entering freshmen average at the 4th and 5th grade level, respectively. And they'll have to pass the state's assessment in just a few short years. This school, founded by two committed public school teachers, has our best wishes for continued success!



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