



Making Schools Work Better for all Children

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Vol. 2, No. 23 * TESTING PHONIES: While cheating may be occurring in some schools, the real hoodlums in the whole testing arena are the so-called anti-testing folks, who apparently believe their agenda is to conquer capitalism and not simply to stop high stakes tests. Here's one short quip from a recent electronic conversation.

Q: "Do we defer on winning on tests until we break the corporate stranglehold, or do you think this is all or nothing, we can't stop the testing and make real progress toward good education for all without stopping capitalism." A: "No, of course this isn't an all-or-nothing proposition. It may well be possible to stop high-stakes testing and corporate-led reform, though the fact that the same corporate forces are imposing education reforms around the US and around the world suggests that they have a lot at stake... And there are limits on the depth of the transformation of the schools we can achieve while the corporations are the dominant force in society. The elite have a fundamental stake in maintaining social inequality, and the educational policies and practices we would most want to change are designed to justify social inequality by giving it an aura of "meritocracy." Q: "Should only anti-capitalists be part of the opposition to testing?" A: "...Your question seems to imply that most people support capitalism. I think that the great majority of people are opposed to the dog-eat-dog money-oriented values of capitalism. We are used to being told that there are only two possible systems—capitalism and communism. Given this choice, 99% of people choose capitalism. But that doesn't mean that people agree with capitalism or share corporate values. If people actually shared the goals and values of capitalism, the media and politicians wouldn't have to devote fulltime to deceiving us and controlling us." Link to: [complete listserve post](#).

(CER: Note that nothing is said about children **achieving** and yet these folks have gotten people to think they really care about the issues of standards and testing.)

*** CHARTER ACHIEVEMENT:** California charter schools outperformed traditional public schools on the 1999 Academic Performance Indicator (API). The API is the cornerstone of the state's Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999. It measures the academic performance and progress of schools. The API for 1999 was based on results of the Stanford 9 achievement test. A review of the baseline results from the 1999 API shows that a greater percentage of charter schools than of non-charter schools score in the top 50 percent of all public school rankings. Scores of 92 charter schools that received an API ranking were included in this analysis, conducted by the California Network of Educational Charters (CANEC). These superior results were reflected at each of the elementary, middle and high school levels. Fifty-eight percent of all charter elementary schools are in the sixth through tenth deciles, as compared to only 50 percent of all elementary schools. In fact, charter

elementary schools scored significantly higher than the total population, with 40 percent of all elementary charter schools scoring in the top three deciles, compared with 30 percent for all elementary schools. For more information on this report visit <http://www.canec.org/>.

*** CHARTER KUDOS to:**

1) Arizona School for the Arts, which has been accredited by the North Central Association as a college preparatory school. Only a handful of the charter schools in the 19 states the association covers have received the recognition. Accreditation allows the school to compete in sports, music and other extra curricular activities. The school's Executive Director Mark Francis said that the accreditation helps crumble the false perception that charter schools aren't as strong as traditional public schools.

2) Las Vegas Charter School of the Deaf, to which Clark County School Board members granted provisional approval Tuesday. About 25 students are expected to enroll in kindergarten through fifth grade. Maureen Parente, chairwoman of the committee behind the charter school for the deaf, said the charter school will be the first school for the deaf in Nevada. Classes will follow year-round schedule and be taught in American Sign Language and written English.

*** CHARTER ARTICLE:** In the 6/5/00 magazine article from *The Nation* called "Giving Charter Schools A Chance" author **Jonathan Schorr** says that more progressives and those concerned with racial justice should join the charter school movement. "Charters ought to be on the agenda for the left, in part because of their potential to serve as tools of racial and economic justice. Nationally, 52 percent of charter school students are nonwhite, compared with 41 percent of students at other public schools. Charters also serve a population that is slightly poorer than average. But the relationship between charter schools and children of color varies widely from state to state. In California and Colorado, for instance, charter school student bodies are whiter and wealthier than those of regular public schools.... We have reached a curious pass when inner-city parents look to right-wing billionaires and well-heeled corporations for help while Democrats and progressives get tagged as hypocrites and sticks-in-the-mud. But liberals need not abdicate their place on the educational cutting edge, and ought not be seen as defenders of bureaucracy and failure. Charter schools present an opportunity to do the right thing, politically and morally. There is a need here, as evidenced by the struggles of inner-city communities to start their own schools, and progressives ought to answer the call, giving their own flavor to the charter movement. People—and particularly educators—of conscience can lead by example, aiding in the creation of excellent, model schools." To see the full article, go to <http://www.thenation.com/>

*** CER FILES FRIEND OF THE COURT BRIEF IN FLORIDA SCHOOL CHOICE CASE.** On May 27th, the Center for Education Reform and several national groups filed a brief in the Second Judicial Court arguing that The Florida program is a life line for parents and children most in need of help, is their best hope for educational opportunity, and it as a bold exemplar of reform for other states and cities. This is not about legal jockeying; this is about our children's education.

*** JOB WATCH:** LearnNow, a private management company, is collaborating with community-based organizations and educators to build charter schools in which all students meet or exceed high academic standards, regardless of socio-economic status, race or gender. The group currently runs the following schools: (1) HOPE Community Academy, an elementary school in a Hmong community in St. Paul, MN; (2) Minnesota Institute of Technology, an elementary school in an African-American community in St. Paul, MN; and (3) Mariana Bracetti Academy Charter School, a secondary school in an Hispanic community in Philadelphia. LearnNow is looking for enthusiastic and innovative educators to join this exciting venture of creating a new kind of charter school. "We seek teachers from a wide variety of backgrounds: public and private school teachers who want to work in a creative and

supportive professional environment, professionals in other fields who want to make a career change, and college graduates who want to explore teaching as a career. Most importantly, we seek teachers who believe that all children can learn and that they can teach all children." Prospective candidates should send resume and cover letter to: Holly Braid, LearnNow, 80 Broad Street, 25th Floor, New York, NY, 10004. Fax: 212-209-1205. Email: hbraid@LNschoools.com. Phone: 800-518-5484. www.LNschoools.com.



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