



Making Schools Work Better for all Children

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Hello and welcome to the Center for Education Reform's weekly hotline, this week beginning Friday September 3.

Choice is the buzzword these last two weeks, not the least of which is the continuing saga in Ohio where 578 Cleveland children were left to scramble for school space last week even after Judge Oliver, Jr. temporarily stayed his injunction on the 4 year old voucher program. By holding these children's future hostage to political gains, choice opponents paint themselves in black.

Florida choice is off with parental enthusiasm. Tamila Hicks is using the tuition voucher to place her 6 year old son in a "Montessori program that keeps him busy and excited about learning." Even parents that support the public schools make use of the tuition voucher: says one parent... "[it] really didn't matter to me whether she went to a private school or another public school, as long as it was a better school. I think everybody should be given their choice."

The Detroit teachers' strike took an unexpected turn by causing a flood of calls from parents to charter schools hoping to be able to enroll their children. Unfortunately the 48 charters in the Detroit area that serve over 10,000 students already have waiting lists for enrollment.

Among the important features of the demands the teachers unions are making is not to have the districts crack-down on teacher absenteeism! And they don't want to have the up-to-\$3,000 merit bonuses based on good attendance, satisfactory performance or advanced course work! Maybe they just want to stay at home and have their students decide their own studies.

1682 charter schools are open nationwide, according to the official CER count. In Oregon, where charter legislation just passed this Spring, there were up to 50 groups already hoping to be able to open new charters.

And in Illinois the first suburban charter school opened this Fall: Prairie Crossing Charter School in Grayslake, a suburb of Chicago. The building that houses the school, previously a community school, had sat dormant for 40 years. Prairie Crossing will focus on environment and citizenship and will feature longer and smaller classes. One student's parent lamented that modern suburban planning doesn't take into account neighborhood schools anymore. For more information contact Craig Malin at 847-367-3722.



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