



Back-To-School: More Choices Than Ever

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As children across America head back to school, new evidence shows that school choice is more popular than ever before. More families are choosing charter schools and voucher programs to meet the educational needs of their children.

According to data gathered by the Center for Education Reform (CER), more families are making choices about what school to attend. Over one and a quarter million students will be enrolled in charter schools as of September 2007 -- and that number is expected to increase when final numbers are reported later in the fall.

Today, many charter schools must create waiting lists for families seeking to take advantage of this innovative and successful educational opportunity, says CER President Jeanne Allen.

"There are almost 50% more families on waiting lists, which tells us that families are actively seeking to exercise their right of school choice."

While the numbers are encouraging, conventional public education still affords too few families the opportunity to choose the best place for their own needs. That lack of choice typically costs taxpayers more.

"We find that the average expenditure per pupil in conventional public schools has been \$9,969 while charter schools will average \$7,155," Allen continued. "And despite these inequities charter schools often feature performance pay for teachers and longer instruction time."

Besides charter schools, the number of children attending private schools using publicly-authorized choice programs also continues to increase. In Ohio this year nearly double the number of students will take advantage of voucher programs available to pupils in the worst performing school districts.

In addition, major public school districts are increasing options offered to students. The city of Los Angeles announced this summer that it will grow its public school choice program and New York City now offers expanded choice programs as well.

"We are pleased with these improvements, but it points to the need to afford every family access to quality education opportunities," Allen concluded.

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The Center for Education Reform creates opportunities for and challenges obstacles to better education for America's communities. Founded in 1993, the Center combines education policy with grassroots advocacy to foster positive and bold education reforms. For more information, call 800-521-2118.

