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**For Immediate Release**

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## **A TRIBUTE TO AMERICAN INGENUITY**

Statement by Jeanne Allen  
President, The Center for Education Reform

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National Charter Schools Week saw hundreds of celebrations at these public schools nationwide, including a presidential visit and speech to the nation's first charter school, The City Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota.

President Clinton helped shine the spotlight on this important movement, which he agreed provided the right recipe for helping different children through unique schooling opportunities. "We have enough evidence that charter schools work if done right," — the president said — "like it's done here [in Minnesota]."

But what has been done right has been done by the literally hundreds of thousands of active teachers, parents and community leaders who have shed the proverbial blood, sweat and tears to build schools from the ground up that begin and end with a mission and a purpose and foster real accountability.

The good old-fashioned American Ingenuity is apparent in the creation of the nearly 2,000 schools that will open this fall. Thanks first to the policymakers who enacted the laws, those who deserve the most praise in this whole endeavor are those whose local efforts are apparent in the halls, on the marquis and throughout every charter classroom.

President Clinton says there was only one charter school when he ran for President, and now there are 1,700. That's correct, but like all of us, our tenure in this movement is incidental. It's the teachers, parents and charter founders that deserve our applause.