

Please file to
DC CHARTER BINDER

Thu, Jun 19, 2003 3:57 PM

Subject: This morning's Washington Post article
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2003 12:19 PM
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Priority: High

June 19, 2003

Dear DC Charter School Leaders:

This morning's Washington Post article has the potential to be very damaging, particularly as budget negotiations are underway and legislation that could positively help charters on Capitol Hill is under consideration.

Upon close read, the article has much good to say. But most people do not read such articles closely, particularly those who worry more about PR than substance.

Therefore, CER has begun communicating with members of the media - in communities and on television - to clear up some of the clear misrepresentations the article provides. We will send you our Media memo shortly so you can use it to help clarify the record for you own constituencies. In the meantime, we'd recommend the following pro-active steps and offer our assistance to each of you on any level in getting the word out:

- 1) Parents: Parents whose children are in your schools often get hit in their own communities by bad press about charters. If they can't respond well to the criticisms, they may feel defensive or wonder about their own schools. You can help them by providing them with information that counteracts the reporters' claims. We recommend you send out a brief fact sheet of positive stories and achievement you have achieved -- very soon.
- 2) Legislative Leaders: Your Mayor, city council members, ward leaders, etc. all need to hear from you about what you think about this article and the state of charter schools. They will be among the first to get criticized or to undergo an inquisition about why they support (or aren't

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- LM w/ Charity Low
6/19
"Traveler's quest"
Monday

doing enough to oppose) charter schools.

3) Media: If you haven't talked to any local papers lately (not the Post or Times), it's time to do so. With school having finished and reporters having more time on their hands, contacting them now will ensure that you get the first word when it comes to any story they may want to do. Test scores for the 2003 school year will be published this summer, so it's even more important for you to be proactive in contacting the media and DC's policymakers.

In closing, let me just say that this situation underscores why it is vital that DC have a new charter school association that is able to respond, alongside its local partners, to such issues. More importantly, a strong association staff will be prepared to handle this the minute it happens again in the future.

We are delighted that association is under formation and urge you to act with all due speed in getting it up and running.

Let me or Anna@edreform.com know if you need help on any of these suggestions or have feedback.

Best regards,

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