

Center for Education Reform



Making Schools Work Better for all Children

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Just when you thought it was safe.... Welcome to another week of the Center for Education Reform's weekly Hotline, which is scary both for its content and for its relevance to this Halloween week which is upon us.

Let's start with **New York**, where the New York school boards association has gone batty and is challenging the state's flexible charter law. They're hoping to prevent charter schools from continuing. While many individual school board members are personally supportive of reform, the state and national school board groups have begun to strategically block strong charter efforts and schools from opening.

Some ninety charter school applications were received by the State University of New York, demonstrating that there's tremendous interest in this issue. Perhaps that's why the school boards group is suddenly panicked. What a shame their focus isn't more squarely on kids.

The new Chairman of the **Illinois** state board of education appears to understand his job. According to the Illinois Charter School Facts, Chairman Ron Gidwitz says that we need to try some new things since schools are failing. He's a supporter of greater choice for children. Greater school choice is not on the agenda of the national groups that represent state board of education members.

And speaking of state boards, **Arizona** officials conducted a survey and found that seventy percent of charter school parents are happy with their child's charter schools. They see them as a viable alternative to traditional public education and not merely an experiment.

Other surveys recently released include a parent satisfaction survey of elementary schools sponsored by the Educational Testing Service, the same organization that administers several popular tests, including the SAT. The results are dubious, however. More than half of those surveyed say they were satisfied with their child's elementary school, and the higher the income level, the higher the satisfaction rate. Cleveland parents were most dissatisfied. However, the real question should be whether or not we've lowered our expectations. Being satisfied isn't necessarily something to crow about. Perhaps Mick Jagger could weigh in on this one....

Before the year's end, look for several new publications on charter schools: our Charter School Survey results and a millennium-end report on the state of charter schools, their successes, effects on local school districts, the facts behind the failures and the obstacles they face.

Thanks for checking into the Center's hotline - for more information on the Center for Education Reform and reform issues, please call our offices at 800-521-2118, or browse our website libraries for all the latest in-depth updates on education reform across the nation. Have a safe and goulish Halloween!



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