

Center for Education Reform



Making Schools Work Better for all Children

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Hello and welcome to the Center for Education Reform's weekly hot-line, this week beginning Friday August 27.

The Annual Phi Delta Kappan Gallup Poll is out, and once again, its misleading questions are stirring the debates over how best to improve schools.

PDK annually asks questions about American's attitudes. This year, it asked whether the public would prefer improving public schools or creating alternatives. Of course, with that devil's bargain, over 70% agreed with improving public schools. But of course, we do, too. The exception is that we believe, like the vast majority of Americans, that parents need greater choices and that tools like vouchers, particularly for poor children, are one method to achieve the goals of an ever changing public school system.

Minority parents, in particular, support the option of choice, because they've seen the plague bad schools have caused on less advantaged peoples.

If you want to know what Americans really think, check with, for example, the 45 groups who applied to open a charter school next year in New Jersey. Or check with the nearly 300,000 families whose children have begun to go back to school at charter schools nationwide.

With such efforts as charters and choice now beginning to more than dot the landscape, it's a wonder traditional education groups are scurrying to spin the public's attitudes in their favor!

Speaking of choice:

Choice proponents are up in arms over Cleveland Judge Oliver's decision to grant an injunction of the cities successful voucher program. Cleveland children were devastated by this ruling that blocked their continued involvement. *The New York Times* commented that studies show that religious based schools, especially Catholic schools have great success serving poor children.

And finally we applaud the Michigan School Board Leaders Association for their endorsement of a compromise with teachers unions and Detroit public schools whose reform plan calls for merit bonuses. Let's hope that the unions will belly up to the bar and not go through with their threat of a strike delaying the school years beginning.

We welcome these reform minded groups joining in the center's cause.



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