



Education Watch

Enhancing Flexibility & Accountability ■ Leaving No Child Behind

U.S. House Education & the Workforce Committee ■ John Boehner, Chairman
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Charter Schools Improve Student Achievement in Arizona

Charter schools in Arizona improve student academic performance, according to a recently released study by the Goldwater Institute. Researchers found that students who enrolled in the state's charter schools for two consecutive years scored an average of two percentile points higher in reading than students in traditional public schools on the Stanford 9 test.

H.R. 1, President Bush's *No Child Left Behind* bill, aims to make it possible for all charter school programs to similarly increase student achievement. It promotes charter schools by assisting with start-up costs, facilities, and other needs associated with creating high-quality schools.

The bill creates a "charter" option for states and districts committed to accountability and reform. Interested states or districts will enter into a "charter" agreement with the Education Secretary, which offers significant flexibility to use federal dollars in return for a five-year performance agreement with the secretary that establishes specific goals for increasing student performance. A state or district would lose "charter" status if student achievement and other performance indicators agreed to in the charter do not improve.

Charter schools are playing an increasingly important role in our nation's public education system, and the Bush plan ensures that they can maximize their effectiveness in increasing student achievement.

Message of the Day

The *No Child Left Behind* bill encourages charter school programs and will help charter schools increase student achievement.

- *Many charter schools take an innovative approach to serving the needs of students and providing them a good education.*
- *By affording them flexibility, H.R. 1 encourages what is best about charter schools -- innovation and commitment to results -- while holding them strictly accountable for improving academic performance.*

DAILY EDUCATION FACTS

- According to the Education Department, there are approximately 1,500 charter schools in operation today.
- Approximately 500,000 students are now enrolled in charter schools (*William Bennett, "The Next Chapter in American Education, Hoover Digest, Winter 2001*).
- A 1998 study by the Pioneer Institute found that charter schools in Massachusetts enhanced parental involvement: When compared with parents of children in other district schools, for example, charter school parents reported twice as many in-person meetings with their child's teacher.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The true choice here is between preserving the status quo at all costs, which is slamming a door in the face of the parents and children who want to do better, and doing what is necessary to put those children first."
Sen. Joseph Lieberman, Congressional Record, September 30, 1997, speech on school choice