



For Immediate Release
December 4, 2008

Contact: Bill Schulz
202-521-2828 (w)
240-678-9398 (c)
wschulz@publiccharters.org

Sarah Johnson
202-521-2826 (w)
202-210-6527 (c)
sarah@publiccharters.org

**REPORT RECOMMENDS NEW MEASURES TO RECRUIT AND PREPARE THE
NEXT GENERATION OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

Washington, D.C. – With a substantially growing number of public charter schools anticipated over the next ten years, a report released today by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools recommends a series of new measures to recruit and prepare the next generation of leadership for these schools.

To meet the challenge of filling thousands of leadership positions in charter schools, the report recommends two approaches: widening existing pathways for effective charter schools and networks to “grow their own,” and creating a new national credential in the executive management of public charter schools that recognizes critical areas of preparation and can be delivered through a wide array of intermediary organizations.

The report, “Charter School Executives: Toward a New Generation of Leadership” is available at www.publiccharters.org/newleadersreport.

“Based on the historic and dramatic growth trend of public charter schools, the next 5 to 10 years is likely to produce an acute shortage of well-prepared leaders for these schools,” said National Alliance for Public Charter Schools President and CEO Nelson Smith. “This fact, combined with anticipated retirements of current leadership, means that we must take action now to develop the thousands of new leaders that will be needed for the decade ahead.”

Growth of Leadership Positions Estimated

Currently, there are more than 4,600 public charter schools enrolling over 1.4 million students in 40 states and the District of Columbia, with between 300 and 400 schools opening every year. Approximately 365,000 students are on waiting lists for charter schools. Depending on the rate of future growth, the report estimates that between 6,000 and 21,000 new leaders of these schools will be required over the next 10 years.

The report breaks new ground in focusing on “charter executives” rather than the traditional principalship. It notes that leading a charter school is very different from leading a conventional district school, given the unique combination of autonomy and contractual performance accountability at charter schools. These characteristics require leaders with educational expertise and business skills that are substantially broader than current leadership development programs deliver.

Expand Current Efforts

The report recommends increasing the number of high-quality leaders in existing programs through stronger marketing efforts to attract energetic social entrepreneurs; developing candidates from within schools, particularly teachers, with better-defined career paths to leadership and succession planning; and “unclogging” the leadership pipeline within charter management organizations and school networks, especially for promising leaders of color.

Leadership Credential Recommended

The new national credential for executive management would replace reliance on traditional principal-preparation programs. The report suggests that it could be developed in collaboration with top-tier executive management programs at graduate business or management schools, and should be validated through a high profile public consensus process. Additionally, the report recommends a stringent accountability system that tracks the success of credential holders in raising student achievement – the most important evaluation point for any leadership-development effort.

Charter School Executives: Toward a New Generation of Leadership was produced under a grant from the Joyce Foundation. A working group of school leaders and education innovators led by Dr. Eleanor Perry, founder of the Leadership for Educational Entrepreneurs (LEE) Program at Arizona State University developed the report and its recommendations. It incorporated a quantitative research study by the University of Washington’s Center on Reinventing Public Education, data analysis of the Schools and Staffing Survey of the National Center for Education Statistics, and comprehensive efforts by the working group, including broad consultation throughout the charter schools movement.

###

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (www.publiccharters.org) is the national nonprofit organization committed to advancing the charter school movement. The Alliance works to increase the number of high performing charter schools available to all families, particularly low-income and minority families who currently do not have access to quality public schools. The Alliance provides assistance to state charter school associations and resource centers, develops and advocates for improved public policies, and serves as the united voice for this large and diverse movement.