



National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

For Immediate Release

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

Jessica Schwartz Hahn
703-478-0658 (w)
571-239-3260 (c)
jessica@peithocom.com

NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS WEEK CELEBRATES “GROWING EXCELLENCE” AND RECORD 1.2 MILLION STUDENT ENROLLMENT NATIONWIDE

April 30, 2008 – Washington, D.C. – With a record 1.2 million students enrolled in public charter schools across the country – 115,000 more than one year ago – “Growing Excellence” will serve as the national theme for celebrations observing National Charter Schools Week May 5 through May 9.

“Since the first public charter opened in Minneapolis over 16 years ago, these innovative schools have grown to serve more than 1.2 million students in over 4,300 schools in 40 states and Washington DC. Many are located in neighborhoods where traditional systems are providing few acceptable options,” said Nelson Smith, president of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, the leading organization supporting the expansion of quality charter schools. “Today, public charter schools are helping some of our most disadvantaged students beat the odds and graduate ready to excel in college and the 21st century economy.”

To celebrate this success under the banner of “Growing Excellence,” the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools and public charter schools around the nation are hosting and participating in a series of activities to mark the movement’s success and growth.

- Monday (May 5): At 4 p.m., the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools will host a reception at 4 p.m. at the L’Enfant Plaza Hotel for participants in the U.S. Department of Education Forum on Charter School Policy.

- Tuesday (May 6): At 10 a.m., in the Dirksen Senate Office Building Room 11 in Washington DC, the Alliance will hold a briefing for policymakers and the news media on federal legislation featuring Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D-IL). The Alliance will release results of the annual National Opinion Survey on Public Charter Schools and the annual Public Charter Dashboard, a compendium of key public charter school statistics.
- Tuesday (May 6): Charter school principals and state charter leaders from across the country will visit their representatives on Capitol Hill to share their personal stories of success and statewide news about public charter schools.
- Tuesday (May 6): At 5 p.m., the Alliance will announce the four recipients of the **2008 Champions for Charters Award** at a reception at the Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2325. Honored for their outstanding support, advocacy and championing of charter schools, the recipients are:
 - U.S. Senator Thomas R. Carper, Delaware
 - California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
 - New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg
 - Colorado State Senator Peter Groff
- Throughout the week and nationwide, public charter schools are participating in a dynamic **“See Us Growing Excellence” Video Campaign** to vibrantly bring the faces and voices of charter school students, teachers, parents, and leaders to federal and state policymakers. Schools are creating short videos and posting them on YouTube, and including email links with letters of support to their legislators.

“This week is about demonstrating that quality public education can be supplied in a different way, that parents deserve an array of options to meet the unique needs of their children, and that charter school students, educators, and supporters have much to celebrate,” said Nelson Smith. “Every year we record new indicators that charter schools are offering viable, quality, public education options.”

The first state charter school legislation was adopted in Minnesota in 1991, and the first charter school, City Academy High School in St. Paul, MN, opened in September, 1992. Today, there are more than 4,300 public charter schools operating in 40 states and D.C., serving over 1.2 million students.

###

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.