

A Smarter Charter: Finding What Works for Charter Schools and Public Education

Richard D. Kahlenberg, Halley Potter

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"A remarkable new book.... Wise and energetic advocates such as Kahlenberg and Potter can take the charter movement in new and useful directions."

—The Washington Post

Moving beyond the debate over whether or not charter schools should exist, *A Smarter Charter* wrestles with the question of what kind of charter schools we should encourage. The authors begin by tracing the evolution of charter schools from teacher union leader Albert Shanker's original vision of giving teachers room to innovate while educating a diverse population of students, to today's charter schools where the majority of teachers are not unionized and student segregation levels are even higher than in traditional public schools. In the second half of the book, the authors examine two key reforms currently seen in a small but growing number of charter schools—teacher voice and socioeconomic integration—that have the potential to improve performance and reshape the stereotypical image of what it means to be a charter school.

Important reading for policymakers, educators, researchers, and all citizens interested in the future of America's public schools, *A Smarter Charter* features:

- Profiles of charter schools that are bucking the prevailing trends, including their performance data and the challenges they face.
- Best practices from successful charter schools, such as methods for attracting a diverse student body and examples of innovative teacher contracts.
- Reform strategies that can improve student outcomes in a variety of public schools, not just charters.
- "Kahlenberg and Potter have delivered a thought-provoking, serious contribution. Agree or not with their views on the purpose and performance of charter schools, they have important things to say on where charters have been, where they need to go, and how they can get there. Friends and foes of charter schooling, alike, would do well to read this book."
- —**Frederick M. Hess**, resident scholar and director of Education Policy Studies, American Enterprise Institute
- "Read this book and draw inspiration and ideas from charter schools and educators bucking the trend and reclaiming that original, collaborative, and powerful promise and spirit. I hope parents, educators in all sectors, concerned citizens, policymakers, philanthropists—and charter sector leaders—will take its compelling message to heart and act on it."
- —**Dennis Van Roekel**, former president, National Education Association
- "A tour-de-force, laying out in singular fashion what has gone wrong with the charter school movement, and what must be done to get it back on track.... A Smarter Charter is a must-read for those concerned with the future of charter schools and public education."
- -Randi Weingarten, president, American Federation of Teachers

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