



# The Future of Charter Schools and Teachers Unions

RESULTS OF A SYMPOSIUM

*Paul T. Hill, Lydia Rainey, and Andrew J. Rotherham*



center on **reinventing** public education





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OCTOBER 2006

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

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National Charter School Research Project  
Progressive Policy Institute

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We would like to thank our current and past funders for their generous support:

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# Introduction

**O**n May 20, 2006, a group of charter school and teachers union leaders met at the Progressive Policy Institute in Washington, D.C., to discuss areas of agreement and disagreement around teachers unions and public charter schooling.<sup>1</sup> Anyone following recent newspaper coverage of charter schools would find this a strange gathering, as these two parties often behave like cats and dogs toward one another. Friends and foes of charter schools have characterized them as direct threats to teachers unions, since charter school teachers generally do not need to join existing collective bargaining units. Teachers union efforts to hold down the numbers of charter schools, block or repeal charter school laws, and sue school districts that use chartering are also well known.

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So why did leaders from opposing camps agree to meet? One reason was that unions, particularly New York's United Federation of Teachers (UFT), are starting charter schools of their own, indicating that there may be some common ground between the two groups. Leaders also agreed to meet in part because chartering allows teachers to experiment and innovate in ways that are difficult in regular public schools, an opportunity that holds some attraction for progressive teachers union leaders.

Another reason was that most charter school operators understand that their teachers have the right to form unions if they think it necessary; moreover, some charter leaders have found that organized teachers can make good partners. Both groups realize that they have to work together and need to figure out how best to co-exist while maintaining their most valued principles.

*I think we have a lot of possibilities to learn from the charter school movement, and possibly transfer some of that to the bigger, general public school movement. And take some of the stuff that doesn't work, and don't transfer it.*

—UNION LEADER

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1. For a list of meeting participants and their professional affiliations, see appendix A.

*I believe that there really has to be reconciliation between teachers unions and the charter community in order for both to develop in a healthy, successful way.*

—D.C. ASSOCIATION  
LEADER

*The charter movement could gain tremendously from trying to figure out ways to tap into the political acumen that the unions bring. But I also think that the unions can stand to benefit from some of the images that the charter school movement can bring.*

—JOURNALIST

*The scorched earth stuff of we versus them hasn't worked up until now, and it probably won't work.*

—UNION LEADER

Union leaders were particularly articulate about the possible complementarities. As several noted, teachers care most about serving children, and though they want enough income to be able to live decently, few have a strong entrepreneurial spirit. UFT head Randi Weingarten said it best: “To get better schools we have to learn how to merge teachers’ commitments to their daily work with the spirit of entrepreneurship. Today there is too little entrepreneurship within the school district structure and too little [teacher] professionalism in charter schools.”<sup>2</sup> Thus UFT’s move into chartering and willingness to engage otherwise skeptical charter leaders.

Charter leaders, too, would rather stop fighting unions in the legislature and the courts.

Stories of confrontational behavior and instances of zero-sum rhetoric were plentiful. As the body of this report shows, however, members of the two sides agreed that thoughtless conflict between them could divert resources away from helping children learn. That alone was enough reason to seek some common ground. And a fair amount of common ground was found, especially between the more moderate members of each group.

The meeting formally addressed six questions posed by the agenda,<sup>3</sup> but it quickly became apparent that the discussion would focus on a number of much deeper themes. This report focuses on these themes, in the following sections:

1. Charter school and teachers union leaders are deeply divided by the metaphors they use and by their institutional histories.
2. Each side assumes that the other is defined by the views of its most extreme members.
3. Leaders on both sides agree on many attributes of a good school.
4. Each side thinks the other insists on something that interferes with quality teaching.
5. The two sides’ disagreements are exacerbated by conflicting beliefs about questions of fact that could be resolved empirically.

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2. The organizers promised not to quote participants by name, but Ms. Weingarten agreed to be quoted on this pivotal statement.

3. For a list of the conference questions, see appendix B.



6. A gap exists in beliefs and values between the most flexible members of both sides, but it is much smaller than the gap between the extremes and could be narrowed further by reasonable steps that both could take.

*What should keep us together . . . are the things that we all agree make great schools. Some of the schools that have unions are doing them; some of the charter schools are doing them.*

—CHARTER SCHOOL  
HEAD



## Divided by Metaphors and History

**U**nions believe in professionalism through clearly defined roles, rights, and responsibilities for teachers. Charter school leaders equate this vision of professionalism with resistance to change and protection of unfit teachers. Charter leaders believe in competition and entrepreneurialism. Union leaders equate these ideas with indifference to disadvantaged students and treatment of teachers as commodities.

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Disagreements could not have been starker. One union leader said, “we will never believe [that charter leaders] are concerned about children as long as [they] include people who want to run schools for profit.” This led to an equal and nearly opposite reaction from a charter leader who said, “Unions’ day-to-day business is defending bad teachers. Unions refocus everyone’s energies away from serving kids.”

These disagreements reflect the education and life histories of individuals in the two movements. Some charter leaders come from business backgrounds, and many of the core ideas behind the movement come from the disciplines of economics and political science. Union leaders are lifelong public sector employees, and their intellectual guides are historians and leftist philosophers. The 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, which energized the labor movement in the early 20th century, was on the minds and lips of union leaders at our meeting, but not those of charter leaders. Likewise, charter leaders are very familiar with mantras espoused by business management gurus.

Not all disagreements are about history and ideology. The most heated exchange about the details of schooling focused on the respective roles of “teacher voice” and school leadership. One union leader described chartering as a way to put managers totally in charge and deny teachers any voice in their work or professional life.

Moreover, the same union leader said that teacher voice could come only through elected representatives in a collective bargaining framework. Charter leaders responded that no one wants schools to denigrate teacher knowledge, and claimed that charter managers

*What I hear [in charter schools] is a complete derogation of teacher knowledge, of teacher skill [and the belief that] real knowledge comes from people who have never spent a day of their life in front of a class.*

—UNION LEADER

*Collaboration is what retains teachers in good schools.*

—CHARTER SCHOOL HEAD

*No matter what the character of the employment contract, if a charter school employs somebody who they regard as entirely disposable, it can't possibly be a good school. There is a lot of room between saying, "we committed to you for life the day we hired you," and "we could dispose of you at any time."*

—RESEARCHER

must listen to their teachers because no school can succeed without quality teachers who use their skills to the utmost.

Besides, the charter leaders argued, charter schools are schools of choice for teachers as well as students, so teachers are choosing their work environment. Teachers have market power and can't be ignored, they said.

Union participants retorted that many charter managers think teachers are interchangeable and that they don't care about teacher views. Returning to an earlier point, one union leader said that involvement of teaching staff is the real proof point about whether charter schools are meant to help students or just advance a right-wing political agenda.

Throughout this meeting, union leaders were hard pressed to clearly define what "teacher voice" and "professional working environments" look like in schools. This left charter leaders trying to pinpoint an ideal that was a moving target. Charter leaders rhetorically asked why, if unionization is so good for teaching, there is so much poor teaching in traditional public schools.

Charter leaders were similarly vague about how a school that treated its teachers as commodities that could be easily replaced could survive or improve in a market environment.

# Take the Other Side's Extremes as Representative

**U**nion leaders can easily find statements that the charter movement is at war with the unions and that the ultimate goal of chartering is to close down school districts, bust teachers unions, and put all schools in private hands. Some union leaders were particularly concerned about pro-market foundations' support of charter schools and take no comfort in the fact that traditionally liberal foundations also provide significant support.

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Similarly, charter leaders cited unions that had sued public officials who sponsored charter schools, and unions that had threatened to block the hiring of teachers trained in universities that authorized charter schools. Charter leaders also cited union leaders who were willing to entertain many possibilities in general policy debates but bargained a hard line locally where it counted. Union and charter leaders strongly disagreed over whether union activists had engineered the defeat of innovative union leaders in cities like Chicago, Cincinnati, Seattle, and subsequently Minneapolis.

The discussion was short on specifics, but no one denied the existence of charter school funders who would like to see the end of school districts and teachers unions.

There are also union officials who, as a matter of ideology, believe that independently managed schools can't be public and therefore can't be tolerated. However, despite heated rhetoric, no one could really say definitively what proportion of either side held such extreme views.

Conference participants generally agreed that it is hard to see what either side gets out of stereotyping (or demonizing) the other. Doing so only protracts conflict and threatens harm to schools.

As our discussion demonstrated, the charter and union movements are both big tents. Millions of teachers union members know little about all the agendas their elected leaders

*There are a lot of [market-oriented] people behind the charter movement; that makes it very difficult to look at [charter school and union collaboration] openly.*

—CHARTER SCHOOL HEAD

*Within the charter movement there is a range of opinions, from “the unions are here, we’re here, we have to learn to get along, and there might actually be some benefits to working collaboratively,” to “[charter unionization] is nothing but bad news”.*

—CHARTER  
ASSOCIATION  
LEADER

pursue, and the majority of charter school leaders and managers, totally consumed meeting the day-to-day needs of their students and schools, care nothing about a charters versus unions clash. Moreover, there are prominent national labor leaders who will admit, “Charters are here to stay,” just as there are charter managers who not only tolerate but promote the formation of unions in their schools.

Many charter leaders are teachers and former union members, and not all are strong believers in the market theories espoused by many of the charter movement’s main funders. They, but often not their union counterparts, understand the complexities observed by political scientist Stephen Page: “Chartering is a left-wing movement with right-wing money.”<sup>4</sup> Similarly, substantial minorities of public school teachers vote Republican and send their children to private schools.

In most political parties and interest groups, the most visible members have more extreme views and feel more strongly than the rank and file. This is generally true of the charter and union movements though, as was evident in our conference, both sides include strong leaders who would rather search for common ground than deny its existence.

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4. Communication with authors.

# Agreements About Good Schooling and Good School Management

**N**ot everyone in the meeting had been a teacher or school leader, but all knew a significant amount about schooling. And, like most Americans, the majority of participants held flexible, moderate views about instruction: all children need safe and serene environments, all need personal attention from adults and pressure to achieve, and most need a combination of didactic and self-initiated learning activities—but not all children need the exact same thing.

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Most also agreed that institutions and teachers matter—incorporating teacher voice and promoting collaboration are vital to good schooling. The group united against a common enemy: the school district bureaucracy. Union leaders pointed out, and charter leaders agreed, that the cumbersome collective bargaining agreements common in urban districts are largely a response to big district bureaucracies.

Naturally, agreements were more common among the more moderate members. Both charter and union leaders conceded that respect and trust between teachers and management were missing in too many traditional and charter schools. Some union leaders saw chartering as a tremendous opportunity to experiment and develop new models for incorporating teacher voice into school management, develop less cumbersome procedures for due process, and professionalize the profession.

All agreed that unionization meant more than collective bargaining, and with few exceptions the charter leaders saw a benefit to having a formalized group with which managers could collaborate and consult.

One surprising agreement was about the form of unionization most compatible with chartering. No charter leaders believed a charter school could be governed by a district-wide collective bargaining agreement without losing their financial, managerial, and

*It's clear, historically, that contracts with lots of detailed regulation of working conditions were created in response to big bureaucracies where teachers felt completely powerless, management was very whimsical and constantly making arbitrary and capricious decisions, and no one felt like they had any voice.*

—UNION LEADER

*We want to make sure the teachers get to the point where they're in institutions that are provided with the conditions to succeed . . . We have to remember that the leadership and sometimes policymakers decree the conditions for teachers not to succeed.*

—CHARTER SCHOOL HEAD

*With collective bargaining, the school management no longer has to talk to each [individual teacher] to get them on board. Structures get put in place so that things end up moving together.*

–UNION LEADER

*Why would [a charter school] want to join [the district bargaining unit]? [From my perspective] it's nice to have different bargaining units that you can create in different kinds of ways, and create some experimentation.*

–UNION LEADER

*In some Milwaukee Public Schools there is . . . an opportunity for teachers to run the schools without principals. They do all of the administration, they have control, they interview the staff that comes in.*

–UNION LEADER

instructional flexibility. As one union leader remarked: “Does that mean that unionization in charter schools or the collective bargaining contracts that result from it should look like what they do in big bureaucratic systems? Definitely not.”

To many participants’ surprise, the union leaders most open to charter schools agreed that mandatory transfer rules to protect senior teachers and other forms of standardization common in district-wide agreements were inappropriate for charters. They agreed with the one charter manager whose schools have all unionized that every charter school needs to be its own bargaining unit, and the contract should cover only those issues that teachers and management believe help them do their work better. Some of the most influential union leaders in the room agreed that unionization of charter schools transforms union members from employees in a traditional labor-management arrangement into a new status resembling that of partners in a professional services organization.

There was also a strong contingent of Minnesota- and Wisconsin-based individuals, some identified with charter schools and others with unions, who told about schools run as teacher cooperatives, where teachers function as both labor and management. These examples include both charter schools and district-run schools that have received waivers from their local teachers unions.

National leaders from both camps were intrigued with these ideas. Union leaders also admitted that these schools, like the UFT-run charters in New York, blurred the labor movement’s traditional bright line between management and labor. Teacher-leaders in such schools certainly would not welcome rule- and grievance-based labor relations any more than managers of independent charter schools now do.



# Disagreements Over How to Get Good Teaching

*If there are three key components to educating children (good curriculum, good management, and good teachers), charter and union leaders often agreed on instruction and management, yet disagreed on teacher issues. Sticking points included hiring, firing, and work conditions: differential pay for teachers with in-demand skills, causes and effects of turnover, the level of formality surrounding at-will employment, and the ability of school managers to select teachers on the basis of fit with the school's needs. The crux of each disagreement is that both sides think that the other insists on something that interferes with good teaching.*

Charter and union leaders traded anecdotes about hostile working environments, teachers fleeing charter schools for unionized schools, and charter school teachers who rejoiced about getting away from the union. Both sides found ways to attack the other, for example on low average teacher pay in charter schools, and schools in unionized districts forced to employ teachers they do not want.

Union leaders bristled at the description of some charter schools' human resource strategy—maintain a cadre of senior teachers who give the school its character, and make them mentors to much younger people who will spend only a few years teaching before going on to other careers. Union leaders retorted that teaching can be a profession only if it is a lifetime career.

Union leaders were particularly concerned about “at-will” employment of teachers in charter schools. To union leaders, “at will” means capricious and oppressive. Charter leaders argued that teachers employed “at will” have the same rights under state and federal law as employees in private companies and nonprofits, including legal protections about being fired without just cause.

*We're not competing on pay, we're not competing on security. What we're competing on, I think, is the promise of a professional satisfaction.*

—CHARTER SCHOOL HEAD

*We need a professional model instead of a bureaucratic model or a market model... If [charter schools] have teachers that are underpaid, overworked, who lack voice, lack respect, and are dominated by... entrepreneurs and corporate chains—we won't get better results [than in district bureaucracies].*

—UNION LEADER

*I'd say to some of the union folks that I think accountability and transparency for all schools is a common ground. I think that's common for people who care about quality education: transparency, accountability for all schools.*

—CHARTER  
ASSOCIATION  
LEADER

*You cannot build a skilled staff if people are exiting every other year.*

—UNION LEADER

Even though most charters employ teachers on renewable one-year contracts,<sup>5</sup> union leaders are convinced that some charter school managers use the threat of non-renewal to intimidate and drive out perfectly good teachers.

Differences about the status of teachers broaden the gulf between the two sides. Some charter leaders claimed that charter and private schools can anticipate teacher turnover and yet have strong, stable teacher leadership and collaborative working environments. Union leaders claimed that such practices discourage investment in teacher skills and make all but a few teachers into disposable help.

To charter leaders' claim that such strategies are necessary if a school must pay salaries out of a fixed budget, union leaders replied that no school's staffing decisions should be driven by how expensive a teacher is. Charter leaders argued that they have no choice but to make staffing decisions in this way since their funding is based on the number of students they enroll. Unlike district-run schools, whose salaries are covered no matter how high they are, charter schools can pay salaries only up to the limit of their income, which is determined entirely by enrollment.

Union and charter representatives even disagreed about how teachers best build their skills and progress in their careers. Union leaders asserted that the best choices in in-service training can come from a professional organization, and that seniority was the only unbiased basis for career progression. Charter leaders claimed that a teacher working in a labor market that rewards high performance would seek out the most useful learning experiences and find the school that has the greatest need (and willingness to pay) for their skills.

No one could cite hard data on any of these issues, other than a 1998 study of charter school teachers—when teacher hiring and employment might have been very different than it is today—showing relatively high teacher satisfaction.<sup>6</sup>

Many of the views expressed were deeply held, but few were based on more than personal experience in a few schools, a few fragmentary studies, or conference gossip. No one could say for sure whether teachers have greater influence in a school where they are represented by a union than in a school where valuable teachers have market power and

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5. The exception is "conversion" charter schools. These schools assumed charter status after being regular public schools and allow their teachers to stay in their host districts' personnel system.

6. Julia E. Koppich, Patricia Holmes, and Margaret L. Plecki, *New Rules, New Roles? The Professional Work Lives of Charter School Teachers* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1998).

the management must work to keep them. Nor could they say that a particular form of teacher employment or share in decisionmaking had predictable consequences for students. Both sides knew what they liked—formal representation anchored in collective bargaining for union participants, and quality-enforcing market forces for the charter people—but no one could provide more than argumentative evidence.



# Need for Empirical Evidence

**E**vidence might not change the two sides' preferences, but it could surely discipline and moderate their discussions and help third parties distinguish real issues from political posturing.

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Conference organizers catalogued statements made based on anecdotal or logical (for example, “it stands to reason,” or “sounds right to me”) evidence.

There is very little research on charter schools as instructional institutions, or on the status and career trajectories of their teachers, or on charter schools' relations with families. A modest number of studies have tried to link attendance at a charter school with student achievement,<sup>7</sup> but few of these have taken careful account of the differences among charter schools or provided a strong descriptive base on which charter schools can be understood as professional workplaces. Because only a few states and localities collect the same information on charter schools as they do for traditional public schools, what is known comes from small localized studies that tell us little about charter schools in general.

Charter and union leaders disagreed strongly on questions that would be possible to answer through empirical research, for example:

- How does the charter school teaching force differ from the teaching force in the neighboring district's schools in terms of age, educational attainment, and measured ability?
- Are charter schools constantly disrupted by teacher turnover, or have they learned to stabilize instruction and build teacher skills despite turnover (or even benefit from it in some cases)?
- Are charter teachers more or less satisfied in their jobs than teachers in neighboring public schools (and in schools serving similar populations)?

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7. For a review of the research available, its limitations, and its likely future directions, see Charter School Achievement Consensus Panel, *Key Issues in Studying Charter Schools and Achievement: A Review and Suggestions for National Guidelines*, National Charter School Research Project White Paper Series, No. 2 (Seattle: Center on Reinventing Public Education, 2006).

*The whole discussion would be helped if there were a bigger, better base of fact underneath it. It would help to have some case studies of real places and real situations where there's some interconnection between chartering and unionization.*

—RESEARCHER

- Do charter school teachers use their market power (their ability to leave jobs they do not like) to exert influence on schools? If so, how?
- Do parents use their market power (their ability to choose schools and leave those they do not like) to exert influence on schools? If so, how?
- How does at-will employment work in charter schools? What proportion of teachers are bullied or arbitrarily dismissed in charter schools?
- Do charter school leaders (principals) differ from regular public school leaders in their leadership style and openness to teacher input?
- Do unionized charter schools suffer more internal conflict and focus less on instruction than non-unionized schools?

Most of these questions would require original research—surveys and case studies of representative samples of schools. It would be necessary to study charter schools of different types, for example those in urban versus suburban areas and those serving poor versus advantaged populations. For most questions, comparisons with regular public schools would be necessary. For example, no one would assume, union efforts notwithstanding, that every district-run public school had competent leadership, was able to avoid constant teacher turnover, and maintained a collegial work environment. It is therefore very important not only to understand charter schools, but also to keep their characteristics in a real-world perspective.

In addition to research, there is a need for exemplars and models that can show how important problems are solved, for example:

- Charter schools that have thrived after unionization
- Innovative district-union agreements that allow different uses of teacher time and new tradeoffs between teacher labor and technology
- Non-unionized charter schools in which teachers play strong leadership roles
- Charter schools that successfully mix teachers who expect to stay for many years and those who expect to leave after one to three years

The National Charter School Research Project has initiated some of the research suggested above, but it cannot cover all the questions or represent all the variations in charter schools.

The public and elected officials—and union and charter leaders who would rather argue about real problems than politically motivated fantasies—have a strong interest in such research because it can ground future discussions on facts.





## Toward Coexistence—If Not Détente

**S**ome union and charter leaders think their current conflicts are mutually hurtful. Some on both sides agree that charter schools need access to better pools of teachers and more constructive labor relations, but do not think they should join existing district collective bargaining agreements. Though their voices are still weak, moderates in both camps think charter schools can work effectively with some forms of unionization (for example, school-specific bargaining units and “thin” agreements), and that teachers can benefit from taking greater responsibility for key decisions and being employed in schools that must either perform or close.

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However, big gaps and harsh feelings remain, even between the moderates. More real evidence and continued serious talk of the kind initiated in this conference can help. But the two sides are far enough apart, and their mutual suspicion is sufficiently well grounded, that if improved relations are possible it is only through small careful steps.

Promising incremental steps could include joint visits to the California charter schools that have invited unionization and to the teacher cooperatives and UFT-run charters mentioned here. Leaders from the two sides could seriously discuss the problems evident there and the practices that should be tried elsewhere.

Both camps also need to acknowledge that their battles can hurt children. Our meeting produced one example of thinking beyond the conflict between charters and unions on school funding. Charter leaders expressed concern that receiving less funding per pupil than school districts limited what they could do for their students, while unions were concerned about the consequences of abrupt changes in district funding to the quality of regular public schools. For some time the two sides have been directly opposed, assuming that funding withheld from one would come to the other. However, a brief discussion at the meeting showed what can happen when both sides look beyond their own institutional

*UFT started a charter school to see if we could take the risk to try things that might work in teaching and learning and in what unions were supposed to do—which is to create both the living conditions and the wherewithal for your members to be able to live a better life.*

—UNION LEADER

*In addition to the charter school operators having some degree of understanding that the unions are not out to get them, the unions have to see that people who advocate charter schools are not doing it as a form of union extinguishing.*

—RESEARCHER

*We can't go forward unless we figure out a way beyond that kind of state of war. The solution lies in confidence-building measures where you can find things that both sides want and that they can agree on and move forward with.*

—UNION LEADER

*The charter community has to get a lot better at spelling out what we're going to do, and making people who we hire aware of what the conditions will be.*

—CHARTER ASSOCIATION LEADER

*The legal responsibility of the union is to provide members very high levels of due process. And, in point of fact, unions do this very, very well. You know, they're extraordinarily good advocates.*

—RESEARCHER

interests. One charter leader and one union official suggested that charters get 90 percent of each student's funding in the first year after they transfer, and allow the district to keep 10 percent. In the second year the money would be split 95 percent and 5 percent, and in the third year 100 percent of the funding would go to the charter. Nobody was ready to endorse such a scheme publicly, but most agreed it was an example of an arrangement on which further progress might be built.

Aside from working out issues now considered zero-sum, both sides could act independently to demonstrate the desire to make progress, not just give the appearance of openness:

- Charter school leaders must recognize that the “at-will employment” principle is ill defined and can (and does) encompass both responsible and abusive labor practices. Charter leaders need to acknowledge some abuses. Moreover, a national effort to identify the labor laws and regulations that constrain at-will employment, and to set common standards for fair and respectful teacher jobs, could be a useful confidence-building measure.
- Union leaders must recognize that campaigns to repeal charter laws, stop new charters, or disrupt schools via legal action wreck unions' credibility as potential collaborators. In the face of hard political and legal campaigns, talk can mean little, and charter leaders will understandably suspect that unions are willing to talk only in order to hold their enemies close.

A serious obstacle to détente is the instability of union leadership. Reform-minded leaders are especially susceptible to challenges from others who, above all, promise to protect union members. It remains to be seen the extent to which charter leaders can count on moderate union leaders to make the case for reform to their own members and to hold onto power long enough to see change through. Though union leaders expressed faith in the rank and file of teachers, charter leaders claimed that open-minded union leaders have a way of disappearing from the scene—in one case noting that only days before the meeting a major local union leader who was scheduled to attend had been voted out in favor of a more traditional leader dedicated to hard bargaining.

## Conclusion

**T**hough the interests of charter school and union leaders are now opposed in many ways, they share a common responsibility for the children entrusted to them. Children would not necessarily be better off if one side won a total victory over the other—unions eliminating charters, or charters attracting all the children and money away from unionized schools.

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Union leader Randi Weingarten and charter advocate Ted Kolderie struck the key note. Millions of children in America are not getting the education they need. Continuing with business as usual will not give us different results. People committed to public education—including everyone at our conference—all know that we must experiment with new ideas, which includes new methods and modes of employing teacher talent and time. Chartering schools permits, but does not by itself create, innovation and entrepreneurship. Teacher satisfaction and job security can support, but do not in themselves guarantee, improved student learning.



# APPENDIX A: Participants

**Steve Barr**, *Green Dot Public Schools*

**Leo Casey**, *United Federation of Teachers*

**Rebecca DiBaise**, *Broad Foundation*

**Michael Goldstein**, *MATCH School*

**Joe Graba**, *Education/Evolving*

**Jane Hannaway**, *Urban Institute*

**Paul Hill**, *National Charter School Research Project*

**Charles Kerchner**, *Claremont Graduate School*

**Ted Kolderie**, *Center for Policy Studies*

**Jessica Levin**, *The New Teacher Project*

**Will Marshall**, *Progressive Policy Institute*

**Tom Mooney**, *Ohio Federation of Teachers*

**Joe Nathan**, *Center for School Change*

**John Parr**, *Education/Evolving*

**Bill Raabe**, *National Education Association*

**Lydia Rainey**, *National Charter School Research Project*

**Andrew Rotherham**, *Education Sector*

**Terry Ryan**, *Thomas B. Fordham Institute*

**Irasema Salcido**, *César Chávez Public Charter Schools for Public Policy*

**Nelson Smith**, *National Alliance for Public Charter Schools*

**Michelle Stockwell**, *Progressive Policy Institute*

**Nancy Van Meter**, *American Federation of Teachers*

**Randi Weingarten**, *United Federation of Teachers*

**Joe Williams**, *Freelance Writer*

**Jonathan Williams**, *Accelerated Charter School*



## APPENDIX B: Agenda Questions

- ✓ How is unionization likely to affect charter schools—how they operate, what instructional options they provide, and how they spend money?
- ✓ Will unionized schools have any disadvantage or advantage in competing for students?
- ✓ How will charter unionization affect unions, as increasing numbers of their members become accustomed to working in a less regulated environment?
- ✓ Do these answers depend on whether charter school teachers form their own single-school bargaining units with divergent contract provisions or join existing district-wide bargaining units?
- ✓ Can the charter school strategy mitigate some of the problems that some analysts see with public sector unionization because charter schooling introduces an element of competition?
- ✓ What institutional resources might teachers unions bring to charter schooling that school districts and other entities lack?





# About the Authors

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Paul Hill is a Research Professor at the University of Washington's Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs and Director of the Center on Reinventing Public Education, which studies alternative governance and finance systems for public K-12 education. He is also the chair of the National Charter School Research Project. Dr. Hill's recent work on education reform has focused on school choice plans, school accountability, and charter schools. He chaired the National Working Commission on Choice in K-12 Education, which issued its report, "School Choice: Doing It the Right Way Makes a Difference," in November 2003. Dr. Hill holds a Ph.D. and M.A. from Ohio State University and a B.A. from Seattle University, all in political science. He is a nonresident Senior Fellow of the Brookings and Hoover Institutions.

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Lydia Rainey is a researcher at the University of Washington's Center on Reinventing Public Education, where she specializes in urban politics and public school choice. Her current work is part of the National Charter School Research Project and includes studies of charter school curriculum and instruction, school replication, and unionization. She is coauthor of several reports, including "Chasing the Blues Away: Charter Schools Scale Up in Chicago," and "High-Quality Charter Schools at Scale in Big Cities." She holds a B.A. and M.P.A., both from the University of Washington.

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Andrew J. Rotherham is co-founder and co-director of Education Sector, a national education policy think tank, and a senior fellow at the Progressive Policy Institute. He also writes the blog Eduwonk.com. Rotherham serves on the Virginia Board of Education, a position he was appointed to by Governor Mark Warner in 2005. Previously, Rotherham served at the White House as special assistant to the President for domestic policy during the Clinton Administration. He is the author of numerous articles and papers about education and the co-editor of three books on educational policy, most recently *Collective Bargaining in Education: Negotiating Change in Today's Schools* with Jane Hannaway (Harvard Education Press, 2006). He serves on advisory boards and committees for a variety of organizations including the American Academy for Liberal Education, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Broad Foundation, Citizens Commission on Civil Rights,

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# Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the following people for the contributions they made to this project: The Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for their generous financial support, the participants for sharing their thoughts and expertise, the Progressive Policy Institute for hosting and sponsoring the meeting, Robin Lake of NCSRP and Ted Mitchell of the NewSchools Venture Fund for their comments on earlier drafts, and Debra Britt and Julie Angeley for their hard work editing and producing the final publication.

The authors bear all responsibility for any errors, omissions, or mistakes in facts or judgment.

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The National Charter School Research Project (NCSRP) aims to bring rigor, evidence, and balance to the national charter school debate. For information and research on charter schools, please visit the NCSRP website at [www.ncsrp.org](http://www.ncsrp.org). Original research, state-by-state charter school data, and links to charter school research from many sources can be found there.



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The Center on Reinventing Public Education at the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington engages in research and analysis aimed at developing focused, effective, and accountable schools and the systems that support them. The Center, established in 1993, seeks to inform community leaders, policymakers, school and school system leaders, and the research community.