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Commercialism in Education Research Unit

*****NEWS RELEASE— FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE *****

FOR-PROFIT EDUCATION COMPANIES TAKE PUBLIC MONEY, PROVIDE LITTLE INFORMATION

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TEMPE, Ariz. (Thursday, August 9, 2007) — The “Profiles of For-Profit Education Management Organizations: 2006-2007” released today by the Arizona State University Commercialism in Education and Education Policy Research Units finds that, despite repeated requests, several large publicly funded Education Management Organizations (EMOs) failed to provide information about their schools or finances when queried by researchers. Ohio-based White Hat Management, for example, was so reluctant to provide information that an employee answering the phone at their corporate headquarters refused to provide even her name before hanging up on an ASU researcher.

The data collected in the report suggest that the number of charter schools overall has increased and the number of EMO-run charter schools has stabilized or declined slightly. The number of students enrolled in charter schools has shown a slight decrease.

Large-size Education Management Organizations appear to have increased the percentage of charter school students educated in their schools. EMO enrollments are heavily concentrated in the primary grades and EMO-run charter primary schools are likely to be larger than the national average enrollment for charter primary schools.

The report finds that:

- 1) A significant number of students attending charter schools (about 25 percent) are enrolled in schools run by EMOs;
- 2) Large-size EMOs dominate the for-profit education management industry;
- 3) EMOs focus on charter primary schools;
- 4) A significant percentage (about 89 percent) of students enrolled in EMO-run charter primary schools will be in a school larger than the national average.

Molnar suggests that policy makers take a close look at the business models as well as the education models of EMO’s: “For-profit firms are cashing checks worth a lot of taxpayer dollars. They do so while withholding as much information as possible from the public.

This does not seem like a situation likely to benefit taxpayers and school children either financially or educationally.”

Find this document on the web at:

http://epsl.asu.edu/ceru/CERU_2007_emo.htm

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The Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU) conducts research, disseminates information, and helps facilitate a dialogue between the education community, policy makers, and the public at large about commercial activities in schools. CERU is the only national academic research center dedicated to schoolhouse commercialism.

Visit the CERU website at <http://schoolcommercialism.org/>

The Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU) conducts original research, provides independent analyses of research and policy documents, and facilitates educational innovation. EPRU facilitates the work of leading academic experts in a variety of disciplines to help inform the public debate about education policy issues.

Visit the EPRU website at <http://educationanalysis.org>

The Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL) at Arizona State University offers high quality analyses of national education policy issues and provides an analytical resource for educators, journalists, and citizens. It includes the Arizona Education Policy Initiative (AEPI), the Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU), the Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU), and the Language Policy Research Unit (LPRU). The EPSL is directed by Professor Alex Molnar.

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