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Commercialism in Education Research Unit

**\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\***

**from the Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU)  
and the Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL)  
at Arizona State University**

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**CONTACT:**

Alex Molnar  
Professor of Education Policy Studies, Director  
Education Policy Studies Laboratory  
(480) 965-1886  
epsl@asu.edu  
<http://edpolicylab.org>

Find this document on the web at:

<http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/CERU/Annual%20reports/EPSSL-0309-107-CERU.doc>

Find the executive summary on the web at:

<http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/CERU/Annual%20reports/EPSSL-0309-107-CERU-exec.doc>

**Schoolhouse Commercialism Remains Firmly Entrenched As Opposition Grows**

Tempe, Ariz.—*No Student Left Unsold*, the sixth annual report on schoolhouse commercialism trends released today by the Education Policy Studies Laboratory, finds that commercial activity remains firmly entrenched in American public schools. At the same time opposition from citizens appears to be growing and state legislators are taking notice.

Researchers, from the laboratory's Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU), tracked eight categories of schoolhouse commercialism in media references from July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003.

In all but two of the eight categories, references have increased from the July 1, 2001-June 30, 2002 period.

Schoolhouse commercialism is growing as schools confront tight budgets. Schools across the country have taken steps such as holding a fundraising telethon (in Jefferson Parish, LA) and hiring full-time fundraisers (in Grapevine, TX), along with a variety of other cost-cutting and revenue-enhancing strategies.

The eight categories of schoolhouse commercialism that CERU tracks and their percent increase or decrease from 2001-02 are:

- Corporate Sponsorship of School Programs and Activities: up 1%.
- Exclusive Agreements (Agreements giving marketers exclusive rights to sell a product or a service on school or district grounds): up 65%.
- Incentive Programs (The use of commercial products or services as rewards for achieving an academic goal): up 87%.
- Appropriation of Space (The selling of naming rights or advertising space on school premises or property): up 196%.
- Corporately Sponsored Educational Materials: up 313%.
- Electronic Marketing (The use of electronic media, including radio, television, and Internet, to target students through schools): up 11%.
- Privatization (Private management of public schools, public charter schools, and private, for-profit school involvement in voucher programs): down 15%.
- Fundraising: up 17%.

The report also found:

- An increasingly vocal resistance to commercial activity, reflected both in citizen action and in the introduction of legislation seeking to rein in such activity.
- Despite extensive coverage of commercializing activity in the mainstream U.S. press, the education press continues to pay scant attention to the issue. In contrast to 5,188 references to commercialism in popular, business, and advertising and marketing presses, the education press showed only 76 references in the study period.

According to report author Professor Alex Molnar, “Schoolhouse commercialism is a reflection of larger economic, social, cultural, and political forces. Whether or not schools and their students are subordinated to the market place will depend in large measure on how we understand childhood and the proper relationship between adults and the children for whom we are responsible.”

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 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 Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU), the Education Policy Analysis Archives (EPAA), the Education Policy Reports Project (EPRP), the Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU), and the Language Policy Research Unit (LPRU).  
The EPSL is directed by ASU Professor Alex Molnar.

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