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**CONTACT:**

Tom Carroll, Project Director  
Office: 518-383-2977

**SURVEY OF BUFFALO PARENTS:  
STRONG SUPPORT FOR “NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND” OPTIONS**

A startling 75 percent of the parents of students in 32 poorly performing Buffalo public schools do not realize that their children are attending schools on the State Education Department’s roster of failing public schools, according to a new survey of Buffalo parents. The federal No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law one year ago, grants children in failing public schools the right to transfer to better schools or receive free tutoring and other supplemental educational services.

“If parents don’t know their children are attending a failing school, then they are not likely to avail themselves of the federal right to transfer to a better public school or the right to free tutoring services,” explained Tom Carroll, the project director for the Brighter Choice Public School Choice Project.

The state released its “failing school” list at the beginning of the current school year, and designated 32 Buffalo schools as failing.

The first-ever survey of Buffalo parents with children in failing schools was commissioned by the Brighter Choice Public School Choice Project. The project is funded through a \$4.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Once told that their children presently are attending a failing school, 92 percent indicated that they would transfer their children to another school and 93 percent said they would seek the free tutoring services to which they are entitled under federal law. Based on the latest published student data, this means that approximately 17,750 of the 19,300 qualifying students at 32 schools would transfer to a better school and approximately 10,900 of the 11,750 qualifying students at 19 schools would seek free tutoring and other supplemental services.

“These results underscore the need for a much more aggressive campaign to inform Buffalo parents about their rights under the No Child Left Behind Act,” said Carroll.

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A plurality of parents, 36 percent, identified “improving our schools” as the number one priority facing Buffalo, surpassing crime, jobs and the economy, and property taxes.

According to the survey, one popular alternative to Buffalo’s failing public schools is the creation of additional charter schools. By a 7-to-1 margin, parents favored the creation of more charter schools in Buffalo. A majority also favored converting Buffalo’s failing public schools into charter schools “as a way to provide a better education to Buffalo’s students.” Recently, the Buffalo school board approved the creation of a new, independent charter school, expected to open in September 2003. Buffalo is the first elected city school board to create for its children this option.

The survey was conducted by *the polling company*<sup>TM</sup>, *inc.*, headed by Kellyanne Conway, with offices in New York City and Washington, D.C. Other clients of *the polling company*<sup>TM</sup>, *inc.* include *New York* magazine, *National Journal’s Hotline*, *The New York Post*, *Ladies Home Journal*, Spelling Entertainment, Major League Baseball, Grocery Manufacturers of America, Safeway Stores, and The Limited, Inc.

A total of 450 parents in Buffalo were interviewed from January 9 to January 13, 2003. This included only parents of children attending the Buffalo city schools designated as failing. The margin of error for the overall survey data is +/- 4.7 % at the 95% confidence level, meaning that the results obtained would differ by no more than 4.7 percentage points in either direction if the entire population of parents with children enrolled in the designated failing schools had been surveyed.

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