



Celebrating Chartering @ 30 – MINNESOTA'S STORY

So, what were the criteria that the 1988 Citizens League Report: ***Chartered Schools = Choices for Educators + Quality for All Students*** laid out for chartered schools? There were five overall criteria given – today we look at the first of the five:

1. ***The chartered schools must meet specific criteria.***

Fundamental criteria are essential to establishing the schools as public schools and to prevent the creation of "elitist" schools

These criteria are necessary to attain student enrollments that represent a mix of achievement levels, constrain operators against screening out certain students, and provide accountability. Schools that fail to meet the criteria within three years or design a plan to enable them to meet the criteria, are subject to charter revocation.

- ***The school's student enrollment could not be segregated.*** *The school must have an affirmative plan for promoting integration by ability and race.*

(Although these criteria would prohibit the establishment of schools designed for any single racial or ethnic group, the committee appreciates the complexity of this issue and suggests that the legislature might wish to deal separately with voluntarily segregated schools established by minority groups.)

- ***The school would accept students of all academic achievement levels,*** *athletic or other extra-curricular abilities, handicapping conditions, proficiency in English, or previous disciplinary violations. To prevent "creaming off" the brightest students, chartered schools would have to enroll a cross section of students. However, schools could refuse students because of lack of space in the program, class, grade level, or building.*

One exception would be schools organized specifically for students at-risk of failing in traditional school setting. The instructional program might be uniquely tailored for

students with specific needs. For these schools, student's eligibility could be determined by their previous school record or from preschool screening data.

- **The school could not charge fees or tuition for its core operating costs.** *Like existing public schools, the chartered schools would have the authority to charge fees in areas considered extra-curricular or supplementary to the program.*

General education revenue would flow to the school in the same arrangement now used when the students attend another district's school under Minnesota's Enrollment Options Program: The state aid would go to the school in which the student is served. State aid would be subtracted from the district in which the student resides. (This does not preclude use of venture fund, financed by public or private sources, for organizational or start-up costs.)

- **The school must be nonsectarian.**
- **The school must meet accreditation standards** *within three years of its establishment. The Department of Education should choose the accreditation vehicle to ensure the school meets its goals.*

COMMENTS:

1. Even though Minnesota's charter school law requires that students of all academic achievement levels be enrolled – we now know where those who opposed chartered public schools lifted their “creaming” argument.

2. The issue of desegregation vs “culturally affirming” schools were punted to the Legislature, and 30 years later these issues are still being debated – in fact, these issues are at the heart of the Cruz-Guzman Case now in the courts.

In the next installment - **Tuesday, September 21st of Celebrating Chartering @ 30** - learn about the other four criteria the Report laid out for chartered public schools.



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