

## Celebrating Chartering @ 30 – MINNESOTA'S STORY

The charter school legislation introduced by Senator Ember Reichgott (Junge) and Representative Becky Kelso in March 1991 included ideas from the draft bill developed by the Working Group formed by Education Commissioner Tom Nelson after the charter legislation failed for a second time in 1990.

In her book **ZERO CHANGE of PASSAGE**, Senator Reichgott wrote:

*"By December 1990, a new draft of the bill emerged from the working group. It focused on the nuts and bolts of implementation, including how charters would be integrated into a variety of funding formulas, special education mandates, and facilities revenue. **The committee recommended that the schools be called "outcomes-based schools" rather than "charter schools" to emphasize an important education focus of the day.** Members believed the focus on outcomes and results would strengthen the legislation and help its passage into law.*

*The new draft bill also allowed schools to organize under Minnesota law as either nonprofit corporations or cooperatives. Finally, the bill expanded prospective charter sponsors beyond the school district and the state board of education to include higher education institutions."*

*"The legislation reflected a shift of philosophy" which Ted Kolderie wrote about:*

*"With the 'charter school' the state makes it possible for more than one public organization to offer public school on the same piece of ground. Like open enrollment, this changes the traditional givens: it 'un-districts' the system. So it requires a new way of thinking about public education."*

Senator Reichgott wrote:

*"Kolderie framed the key elements of the chartered school idea, as summarized here:*

- *It opens the way for different schools to be created new.*
- *A variety of organizations – not just the local school board – could organize new schools.*
- *It is a contract system, not a voucher system.*

- *A variety of public bodies could sponsor a new school.*
- *The school gets to trade regulations for results.*
- ***It's not about a public school, but the delivery of public education.***

*The latter point was most fundamental to Kolderie's vision."*

**Next Week:** The latter point would become a source of contention with the legislative staff who drafted the legislation.



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