
Celebrating Chartering @ 30 – MINNESOTA'S STORY

One of Ted Kolderie's key elements about the idea of chartering was "It's not about a public school, but the delivery of public education." It was this key element that was an initial source of controversy between Kolderie and the Senate Legal Counsel Betsy Rice, who would draft the charter legislation.

In **ZERO CHANCE OF PASSAGE**, Senator Reichgott Junge wrote, "*After Kolderie described the key components Rice replied, 'These are not public schools.' He responded, 'They are part of the state's program of public education.' In her thoughtful way, Rice reflected, looked out the window, and replied 'Okay'.*"

COMMENT: The charter school law reflects Kolderie's response to Rice: Minnesota's charter school law MN Statutes 124E.03 Subdivision 1 states, "*A charter school is a public school and is part of the state's system of public education.*"

Of Betsy Rice, Senator Reichgott Junge wrote "*If there is one unsung hero in the chartered school story, it was Rice. Rice was critical in shaping the legislation and asking the hard questions about how the chartered schools would work. In January 1991 Rice sent a three-page memo to Senator Reichgott with a full range of questions, from how the chartered schools would be funded, licensing requirements, what laws would apply to chartered schools, and how things would be dealt with if things went wrong at these schools. Most of the questions were answered in the legislation.*"

While Senator Reichgott, Kolderie, and other advocates worked with Rice on the legislation in January, there were a new cast of players that came on the scene after the November 1990 election that would affect the fortunes of chartering.

In January, Arne Carlson (R) was inaugurated as Governor. He had defeated Governor Rudy Perpich (DFL) who was the architect of public-school choice, including open enrollment and post-secondary education options (PSEO). Carlson was at the time not a supporter of chartering nor was his surprise appointment of Gene Mammenga, the lobbyist for the Minnesota Education Association (MEA), as the new Commissioner of Education.

Next Week: The legislative maneuvering begins.



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