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## **Trend Accelerating Toward an ‘Open Sector’ in Public Education**

Growth in Non-District Choices Especially Evident in Minneapolis and St. Paul  
November, 2004

As Minnesota elementary and secondary students returned to school this fall, they faced an accelerating expansion in both the number and diversity of the state’s educational choices. And, based on the latest round of chartered school approvals, that’s a trend we’re likely to see continue into the foreseeable future.

Particularly in Minneapolis and St. Paul, chartered schools and other non-district options are part of an expanding “Open Sector” – a growing segment of public education that *operates outside the traditional and direct control of school districts*. The growth in the role of schools operating in this “Open Sector” is particularly evident in low income communities and in communities of color. In many cases, schools in the “Open Sector” look very different from traditional district schools. And, this growing segment of public education is *spawning its own infrastructure* – of oversight, technical assistance and financial and other forms of support – that *also operates outside the traditional bounds of district boards and central office administrators*. A directory of this emerging infrastructure is on pages 15-16.

The growth we’re seeing in Minnesota charters and chartering is not new, but it does appear to be accelerating – contrary to trends in some other states. These trends raise a number of public policy issues around how best to both support continued growth of the “Open Sector” in public education *and* make sure it promotes the best interest of our state’s students and their families.

### **Chartered school growth a significant factor in the expanding ‘Open Sector’**

To gain a more complete picture of the growing trend toward offering public education outside the traditional control of districts, Education/Evolving analyzed available information on chartered public schools that are operating this fall, charters already approved for opening in the fall of 2005 and an additional batch of charter proposals that have sponsors, but still need state Department approval.

Because of the growing availability of options, particular attention was paid to Minneapolis and St. Paul. Highlights of the Education/Evolving analysis include:

- **Minnesota now has 105 operating chartered schools, including 18 new schools that opened in September.** This is a net increase of 17 schools over last year, since one small rural charter closed over the summer due to insufficient enrollments. One additional school, that opened in September, also closed due to administrative and financial problems after two months of operation.
- **Minneapolis and St. Paul continue to have the greatest concentrations of charters, with a total of 50 schools, up from 39 last year.** Minneapolis now has 23 chartered schools, up from 17 in 2003-04 and St. Paul has 27 charters, up from 22 last year. One of the additional charters in St. Paul is an existing school that re-located from Roseville into a recently vacated parochial school building.
- **Though more dispersed, suburban and outstate areas are also seeing continued growth in chartering,** with seven new suburban charters this fall (including one with three campuses) and two new charters in parts of the state outside the seven country metro area.
- **Total charter enrollments are still a small percentage of public school enrollments statewide, but they are beginning to be a significant factor in Minneapolis and St. Paul.** A total of 17,720 students are now attending chartered schools in Minnesota – or about 2.2 percent of the state’s public school population. In Minneapolis and St. Paul, however, enrollments are above 11.0 percent of public school-attending students. And once all currently approved charters are open (see below), the total “market share” of chartered schools in the two central cities will approach 15 percent. Minnesota chartered schools continue to be relatively small in size, with an average of 169 students – compared to about 250 students in the average chartered school nationally. A more complete summary of current chartered school enrollments – by location, grade-level and size of schools – is included in the table on page 2. These numbers are as of October 1, 2004, and are tabulated from reports filed by the schools with the Minnesota Department of Education.

# MINNESOTA CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT SUMMARY\*

School Characteristics	Number of Schools	Total Enrollments
All chartered schools	105	17,720
Minneapolis	23	4,763
St. Paul	27	5,212
Suburban (7 county)	21	3,736
Outstate	34	4,009
Elementary/Middle Schools (K-9)	51	9,516
High Schools (6-12)	44	5,109
K-12 Schools	10	3,169
Under 100 students	36	2,303
101-200 students	40	5,496
200+ students	29	9,894

\* As of October 1, 2004 – Source: Minnesota Department of Education

- **Recent trends away from chartering by school districts and growth in chartering by non-profit and postsecondary sponsors are continuing.** Of the 18 new charters opening this fall, 16 were authorized by post-secondary or non-profit sponsors or the State Department of Education (on appeal from school districts). Several well-established charters in Minneapolis and St. Paul also switched this summer from district to higher ed or non-profit sponsors. Two exceptions to this trend are charters that opened this fall that were proactively granted by the Hopkins and Waseca School Districts. Both districts granted these charters with the intent of offering their students new and different choices.
- **The growth in the number of charters is likely to be even greater next year,** with 33 new schools already approved for opening in the fall of 2005 or later. Seventeen of these schools are slated for either Minneapolis or St. Paul. This would bring the total number of charters in the state to 148, with 67 chartered schools in Minneapolis or St. Paul.
- **In addition, several dozen planning groups are developing proposals and seeking out sponsors.** Ten of these planning groups already have sponsors, but their proposals were not approved by the State Department in its most recent round. At least some of these proposals are likely to be resubmitted in the next round of State Department consideration in March, including several that are proposed to be located in Minneapolis or St. Paul.
- **The trend away from districts granting charters – and greater reliance on non-profit and post-secondary sponsors – is also evident in the latest round of proposals.** Of the 33 that are approved to open in 2005 or later, only three have district sponsorship, three have college sponsors and the other 27 are sponsored by seven different non-profits organizations.
- **Three non-profit organizations are continuing to increase their roles in sponsoring chartered schools.** Of the 33 schools approved to open in 2005 or later, ten

are sponsored by Friends of Ascension, five by Pillsbury United Communities and seven by Volunteers of America. Once all the schools now approved are open, these three organizations will oversee more than a quarter of Minnesota's chartered schools.

- **In the most recent round of proposals, two new organizations joined what is now a total of 17 non-profit organizations and foundations sponsoring charters in Minnesota.** They are Episcopal Community Services and the Germanic American Institute. Three other non-profits proposed adding one school each to their portfolios: Audubon Center of the North Woods, Northwoods Foundation and Islamic Relief Worldwide.

On page 3 is a summary breakdown of current and pending chartering activity in Minnesota, by geographic area and status of the schools. A more detailed listing of all Minnesota charters, currently pending proposals and their sponsors begins on page 9.

## **'The Open Sector' – Not 'whether' but 'how' and 'how policymakers respond'**

Minnesota's evolution as a leader nationally in expanding educational choices will become more evident as approved chartered schools open and additional proposals are approved. But, there's no question that – especially in Minneapolis and St. Paul – a separate and parallel "Open Sector" in public education is now emerging and is likely to continue to grow into the foreseeable future.

This suggests that the most relevant questions facing policymakers are now not *whether* this huge change in how public education is organized and delivered *is* or *should be happening*. What we're now seeing is a positive response to two decades of state policy initiatives designed to expand choice and choices in public education in our state. It's also a *reality* and seems to be *growing at an accelerating pace*. So, the real and relevant questions are now best focused on *how policy makers should positively and appropriately respond*. Important, also, is *how the nec-*

## Minnesota Chartered Schools—Operating, Approved, Pending Approval

Location	Operating fall 2004	Approved for 2005 or later opening*	Approved by sponsors; state approval pending**	Total
Minneapolis	23	12	3	38
St. Paul	27	5	1	33
Suburbs	21	5	6	32
Outstate	34	11	--	45
Total	105	33	10	148

\* Have both sponsor and State Department approval

\*\* Were not approved in most recent round of proposals; may be submitted in March. In a few cases, schools that are proposed for 2005 or later opening haven't yet determined their locations. At least two of the schools in the "Outstate" category are on-line schools that could serve students statewide.

*essary infrastructure* that supports students and schools – historically organized around school districts and the state Department of Education – *can best be adapted and/or replaced* to assist and support this new and growing “Open Sector.”

### ‘Open Sector’ disproportionately serves lower income and students of color

Minnesota’s chartered schools disproportionately serve lower-income students. In 2003-04, approximately 54.1 percent of Minnesota chartered school students were low income, double an overall statewide average of 27.5 percent. Sixty-nine of the 88 charters operating in 2003-04 were above the statewide average. The concentration of low income students in charters is particularly evident in Minneapolis and St. Paul. In 2003-04, charters exceeded Minneapolis district schools by more than ten percent in their percentages of low income students and St. Paul charters had 11 percent more low income students than their district counterparts.

Minnesota’s charters also serve a disproportionate share of students of color. In 2003-04, approximately 52.9 percent of Minnesota charter enrollees were students of color, almost triple the statewide average of 18.9 percent. And, almost half the charters located in Minneapolis and St. Paul are what might be called “culturally-centered.” They include charters created by and predominantly serving students in the Twin Cities’ African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Hmong, American-Indian and East African communities.

Many of these schools have a high percentage of English Language Learners (ELL). In fact, in 2003-04, about 20 percent of Minnesota’s charters were above the statewide average of 6.2 percent of their students who are ELL. And more than half the students in 10 Minnesota chartered schools are English Language Learners. This trend is continuing with new charter high schools opening this fall in Minneapolis that will predominantly serve East African and Hmong students.

### The ‘Open Sector’ includes a growing infrastructure to support new schools

Minnesota is fortunate to have a number of high caliber organizations available to advise and assist chartered school founders and operators. They include the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS) and the Minnesota Charter School Resource Center and its parent Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota. With a substantial infusion of out-of-state philanthropic support, these organizations now offer a number of technical assistance and support services, many of which historically have been provided by school districts.

For the last five years, MACS has also enjoyed substantial dues income from virtually all the state’s chartered schools. And MACS is increasingly offering services on a fee-basis. This combination of income sources finances major initiatives on leadership and governance, curriculum and assessment, facilities financing, operations and management. And with financial support from the State Department of Education, MACS also has launched a separate Special Education Project that provides administrative and technical assistance and support to a significant number of the state’s charters.

Other non-profit organizations assisting with school start-up funding and technical assistance include School-Start and EdVisions Schools. Both have received significant financial support from national foundations. In addition, dozens of for-profit business have begun offering start-up and administrative support services to Minnesota chartered schools. A number of these businesses support the charter movement financially through associate memberships in the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools.

### Funding sources also available to help spur new school development

In addition to technical assistance, substantial public and private financial support is also available to Minnesota charters for planning, start-up and initial operations. Since 1995, Minnesota has received approximately \$39

million in federal chartered school funding, 95 percent of which is passed through to schools.

Virtually all the state's charters have benefited from this program which provides as much as \$450,000 in start-up and implementation funding to schools over two to three years. In addition, the legislature created a start-up aid program, which has provided an additional \$500 per student to new schools during their first two years of operation. Total appropriations for this program in Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003 were about \$5.9 million. As part of a larger deficit reduction package, this program was suspended for new schools for two years in 2003. Charter advocates are hoping to see funding at least partially restored in 2005.

Finally, several major national foundations – including the Walton Family Foundation and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation – have made almost \$11.0 million in grants to four non-profit organizations to help fund the start-up of new Minnesota chartered schools: the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (\$1.92 million for planning, start-up and expansion grants); Center for School Change (\$3.0+ million for its Star Schools Program to help launch five new charter high schools in St. Paul); SchoolStart (\$1.625 million for start-up grants and other start-up and ongoing assistance to new schools); and EdVisions Schools (\$4.4 million for planning and start-up grants and other assistance for 15 new schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin).

The Walton Foundation also recently announced that it will be making an additional \$3.0 million in grants to planning groups and newly opening charters in the coming year. Finally, EdVisions Schools has also received an additional \$4.5 million grant to replicate its project-based learning and teacher cooperative model in 20 new schools throughout the country.

In addition to pass-through grants for schools, both the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools and SchoolStart have received multi-year general operating grants from the Walton Family Foundation. These grants are likely to continue since the Walton Family Foundation has identified Minneapolis and St. Paul as priority areas for new school development over the next several years.

## **Community institutions, experienced educators play growing role**

The charter idea in Minnesota admittedly originated with a relatively small group of state policy leaders and education reformers. In recent years, however, a much larger and broader group of stakeholders for the charter movement has emerged. Of course, the largest group of stakeholders is the schools themselves – including their parents, students, teachers, board members and other community supporters. In a number of cases, grassroots community organizations and their most respected and influential leaders have been behind the establishment of these new schools – particularly in immigrant communities and other low-income communities and communities of

color. Although no statistics are available, it also appears a growing number of experienced educators – both from district and private schools – are stepping forward to give leadership to Minnesota's expanding cadre of chartered schools.

Another important set of chartered school stakeholders is Minnesota's growing cadre of sponsors. They include a number of the state's most prestigious private colleges and universities – Hamline University, the University of St. Thomas, Bethel University, Augsburg College, Concordia University and others – as well as a growing number of large and well-established non-profits, including Volunteers of America, Pillsbury United Communities, Project for Pride in Living, the Metropolitan Minneapolis YMCA, Audubon Center of the North Woods and the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. (See complete list on page 13.)

## **Charters are just part of this growing 'Open Sector' in public education**

While they get the most attention, it's important to note that chartered schools are just one set of a growing number of non-district school options available to students – particularly in Minneapolis and St. Paul. For example, both school districts have a long tradition of creating or contracting with alternative schools. Some of these schools are run by the districts, with district employees and more traditional oversight. Others are created through contracts with private non-profit organizations and enjoy more autonomy from district control.

In addition to alternative schools, Minneapolis and St. Paul have students enrolling in other districts through inter-district open enrollment and post-secondary enrollment options. Under an NAACP court settlement, Minneapolis students may also enroll in suburban districts to which they are transported at no cost to eligible families. And, as part of broader desegregation efforts, Minneapolis and St. Paul may enroll in one of several multi-district schools that serve students from both the central city districts and suburbs.

All of these options, coupled with other demographic trends, have contributed to a significant drop in Minneapolis district school enrollments in recent years. According to a recent study prepared for the district's school board, the "market share" of all residents enrolled in publicly funded schools has declined from 97 percent in 1994 to 84.9 percent in 2003. That share has declined further this year.

Finally, private and home schooling options are also exercised by families – with some expenses (other than tuition) eligible for state reimbursement under Minnesota's education tax credit program. Minneapolis and St. Paul are home to 60 private and parochial schools, which had total enrollments in 2003-04 of just over 14,000 students. Home-school enrollments are harder to document, but, according to the Minnesota Department of Education, approximately 750 students in Minneapolis and St. Paul were home-schooled in the 2003-04 school year.

## Implications of the growing ‘Open Sector’ for state policy leaders

As noted above, this trend toward a growing non-district sector in Minnesota public education is *real* and, if anything, *accelerating*. This trend is the result of deliberate policy decisions made by the Legislature – with broad bipartisan support – over the last two decades. It’s highly unlikely that Minnesota will ever return to an “exclusive franchise” under which all public education is organized and delivered by monopoly school districts.

But, as this trend toward a parallel “Open Sector” in public education continues, policy leaders, philanthropists and others need to make sure that the legal and institutional infrastructure of support for these new schools keeps pace. Following is a quick capsule of a number of policy issues and other aspects of this support infrastructure that will need ongoing updating as the number of schools and students in the “Open Sector” continues to grow.

### **STRENGTHENING AND CLARIFYING THE ROLE OF CHARTERED SCHOOL SPONSORS**

Minnesota’s Legislature has been on a deliberate path over time of expanding the number and variety of chartered school sponsors. As a result, we have more and more diverse sponsorship arrangements than any other state. More recently, substantial efforts have been initiated to strengthen the capacity of sponsoring organizations – particularly those that are non-profits and higher education institutions – the most rapidly growing segment of sponsorship activity in the state. Much of the leadership for this effort is coming from the Minnesota Sponsors Assistance Network directed by former Minnesota Education Commissioner Bob Wedl.

At the same time – and without specific legislative mandate – the state Department of Education has undertaken a much more direct and definitive role in approving and overseeing charters. This is despite the fact that the original intent of this (then state board) approval was to keep track of the number of charters being granted so that legislative caps on those numbers weren’t exceeded.

Those caps no longer exist, yet the state’s role in approving charters has expanded to the point that applicants are faced with a kind of “double jeopardy” – first having to gain approval from a legislatively authorized sponsor, then having to gain separate approval from the state department. Particularly as efforts expand to strengthen the capacity of sponsors, that balance in roles needs to be revisited.

The role of the Department of Education – in simultaneously serving both existing districts and district schools and a growing “Open Sector” – also needs constant review. Creation, in 2003, of an Office of Choice and Innovation within the state department is a positive development. But, long-term, it may be that the needs and perspectives of new schools created in the “Open Sector” won’t be

best served by a state department created primarily to serve districts and district schools. No one is interested in creating new state-level bureaucracy. However, it could be that creating and sustaining a truly robust “Open Sector” will require its own focal point for state-level leadership and support. Time and experience will tell.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY, STANDARDS, TESTING**

It’s no secret that many charter – and non-charter – educators have serious reservations about what they view as a “one-size fits all” approach to academic accountability that’s presumed in the federal “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) legislation. They’re particularly concerned about the uniform and relatively limited measures used to determine “Adequate Yearly Progress” on a decade-long path toward proficiency on a common set of standards by all public school students in the state.

While agreeing with the overall goal of holding schools accountable for results, many charter educators feel this approach ignores the realities of a continuous entry of new schools, highly mobile student populations and a variety of learning models needed to address widely varying student needs. These concerns are not limited to charter educators and it’s likely that adjustments to these kinds of realities will be made in NCLB over time.

As changes are considered and made, state and federal policy makers must solicit and listen to the insights of chartered school operators and sponsors. At the same time, charter operators and sponsors must be much more proactive in developing specific academic goals and appropriate measures of how well they’re doing to achieve them. These goals and measures need to be codified in the charter agreement of each school and used by sponsors to determine if and when intervention is needed and, ultimately, whether charters should be renewed or terminated at the end of their terms.

The state’s standards for core subject areas – like reading and math – will need to be included in this process. But, at the same time, charters should be considered laboratories, both for developing new goals for the knowledge and skills students should be acquiring, and for determining how progress toward achieving those goals can best be measured. This process should include strong input from students and their parents and from the ultimate “customers” for K-12 education -- including post-secondary educators, employers and the military – who should all help define and recommend measures for what it is that *they* need graduates of K-12 education to know and be able to do.

### **FACILITIES FINANCING**

Minnesota chartered schools now get a maximum of \$1,500 per student per year to pay rent on buildings (\$1,200 for schools opening in 2003 or later). In about 15 cases, these payments are, in effect, used to service long-term debt for those buildings – that are actually owned by

parallel non-profit corporations. This “Building Lease Aid” program has made a huge difference in not only the quality of chartered school facilities in Minnesota, but in the financial resources these schools have been able to use in the classroom where they belong.

One unneeded limitation in Minnesota’s charter law is its prohibition on charters using state funds to buy buildings directly. Removing that prohibition should produce long-term cost savings to both schools and the state. In addition, chartered schools should be able to access tax-exempt financing for facilities at rates comparable to the General Obligation bond rates available to school districts, perhaps through state-supported loan guarantee and loan pooling arrangements. And chartered schools should be assured priority in accessing excess building capacity in districts.

Legislation will be introduced in the 2005 Legislature to address several of these objectives. And, the Minnesota Department of Education has also recently received a \$15 million multi-year federal that will be used, in part, to help chartered schools develop and implement innovative facilities improvements

Longer-term, charters should be viewed as an R&D opportunity for testing more flexible and affordable ways of financing facilities for all public schools. Ideally, such financing should flow from the state and should be flexible enough to follow students to the growing number of public school choices being made available to them. It should also support a variety of kinds of sites for teaching and learning, including multi-use facilities and schools that benefit from co-locations and partnerships with other organizations. And it should not discourage creation of less capital-intensive schools that place a greater emphasis on technology and on learning that takes place away from traditional settings.

### **PUPIL TRANSPORTATION**

One of the realities of offering more choice -- and more choices -- is that it inevitably costs more to transport students to numerous, often smaller school sites. So, one of the realities facing states like Minnesota -- with a strong commitment to expanding school choices -- is that we must be willing to make a greater state financial commitment to getting students to and from school and related activities. That’s true both for charters and for districts when they offer a number of choices among their own schools.

Beyond money, education policy leaders in both the charter and district sectors should work together to develop new approaches to organize and finance pupil transportation. This might include use of public transportation systems where available and age-appropriate for students. It could also mean subsidizing parents and other adults to transport students, as well as collaboration with employers, district and private schools, higher education institutions and other common destinations.

Safety of students must be paramount in exploring these or other options. But, the affordability and feasibility

of numerous, smaller school choices inevitably depends on finding new and more cost-effective ways of transporting students to and from the schools they choose to attend.

A working group of the Minnesota Charter School Forum is now developing legislative and non-legislative proposals to address both cost-concerns by districts and the need to develop innovative charter-specific pupil transportation strategies and assistance in implementing them.

### **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Small high schools will inevitably struggle to provide the range of extra-curricular activities that their students will demand. In the short-term it seems reasonable that chartered school students be allowed to participate on sports teams and in other extra-curricular activities sponsored by their “home district” high school. To be fair, that opportunity should carry with it a requirement that chartered schools and their students pay the same fees and per-student subsidies paid by district students and the resident district.

Longer-term, greater availability of small high schools will require fundamental changes in how extra-curricular activities are organized and funded. Options include organizing these activities on a geographic or community basis. Such arrangements could also include much stronger partnerships with Community Education, city and county park and recreation departments and with non-school sports, arts and other youth serving organizations and activities.

Finally, these extra-curricular activities need not have the winning-is-everything mentality we see too often in many district school sports and other competitive activities. By building their own program from scratch, in partnership with other community institutions, charters have the opportunity to more fully-integrate extra-curricular activities with their academic programs and with other academic and non-academic goals of the school.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

As public schools, charters have an obligation to accept all students who choose to enroll. And, in Minnesota, they have the same responsibility as districts under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and other federal and state legislation pertaining to special education and students with disabilities. Again, because of their small scale, this creates a financial risk for individual schools that might be bankrupted by unfunded costs of serving students that require higher cost services.

Fortunately, Minnesota charters have been able to take advantage of a pre-existing law that allows districts (now including charters) to bill-back to the district of residence costs of providing special education services that exceed revenues received by the school for that student. This law has been essential to charters as a form of “catastrophic insurance protection” against individual high cost cases that could otherwise bankrupt them.

Ultimately, however, fairness and equity suggests

that this backup financial protection be provided by the state, rather than districts. That might be more likely under IDEA reauthorization legislation encouraging states to create state-level risk pools for this purpose that is now nearing final action in Congress.

Longer-term, chartered schools should be viewed as laboratories for designing and testing new and more effective ways of serving special education students within an historic context of legal obligations and protections and today's context of expanded parent options and choice.

## **TEACHER QUALITY**

The federal "No Child Left Behind" legislation requires that charter and all other public school teachers be "highly qualified." By "highly qualified," NCLB places a very high premium on being able to demonstrate competency in a core subject area – like Math, English, Social Studies or Science.

The presumption, of course, is that students must always be taught one subject at a time and that content knowledge can only be transferred directly from teacher to student, most often by teachers lecturing from the front of a classroom to groups of 25 or 30 students... as one Minnesota student put it a few years ago, "watching teachers work!"

This emphasis on subject-matter competency is problematic for any small high school – including already struggling rural high schools in all parts of the state. But, it's especially problematic for innovative charter and other high schools that use project-based learning, web-based curriculum or other interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning.

To address common concerns, Minnesota charters have joined with district alternative high schools and rural educators – in a "Minnesota Teacher Quality Coalition – to propose a new type of license or license endorsement for teachers working in educational programs where students are not taught one subject at a time.

This license or endorsement would carry with it a list of very different kinds of competencies needed to be successful in very different kinds of teaching and learning environments. It would also value competencies around motivating and engaging students, use of technology and assisting students meet state content standards through projects and activities that cross traditional subject areas and learning activities that engage the community and community resources. These competencies presume a much different role for teachers -- acting more as facilitators of learning by students who are much more engaged in their own work.

As this discussion goes forward, education officials and teacher training institutions and programs should work with charter and other small school leaders to create new kinds of teaching credentials that are both rigorous and relevant to different models of teaching and learning.

This vision of new opportunities and roles for

teachers also includes several models now being tested by small groups of teachers in Minnesota and a few other states to be much more in charge of their lives as professionals. In these pioneering schools, teachers have organized a cooperative or other partnership to provide the learning program under contract with the non-profit organization that is that chartered school and that legally holds the charter.

These "teacher professional practice" arrangements can look and act more like a law firm or a medical practice than a traditional school. The traditional employer-employee model is replaced by much more of a collegial relationship among those working in the partnership. Administrators either work for the teachers or are equal members of the professional practice. These new arrangements seem to be emerging without specific legislative authority. But, policy makers need to be watching to make sure barriers don't exist or emerge – as interest in the arrangements grow – in charters and in the district sector, as well.

## **'Open Sector' expansion will require a second generation of state leadership**

The bottom line in identifying this list of policy issues and ideas for fundamental change is that Minnesotans now have the opportunity to become much more strategic and proactive in using chartering to create the number of new and different learning environments that the state will need. Much of that activity will continue to take place in an emerging "Open Sector" and require a second generation of policy leadership with ideas and commitment just as bold as the first.

All Minnesotans should be proud of the leadership we have given the rest of the country since our legislature passed the nation's first chartered school law in 1991. But, this is no time to sit back and watch others do the hard work that's now needed to maintain our state's past leadership. Creating a second generation of chartered schools and chartering will take the same kind of dedication that Minnesota's education and policy leadership gave to the first. Our state's students and their families and communities deserve nothing less.

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

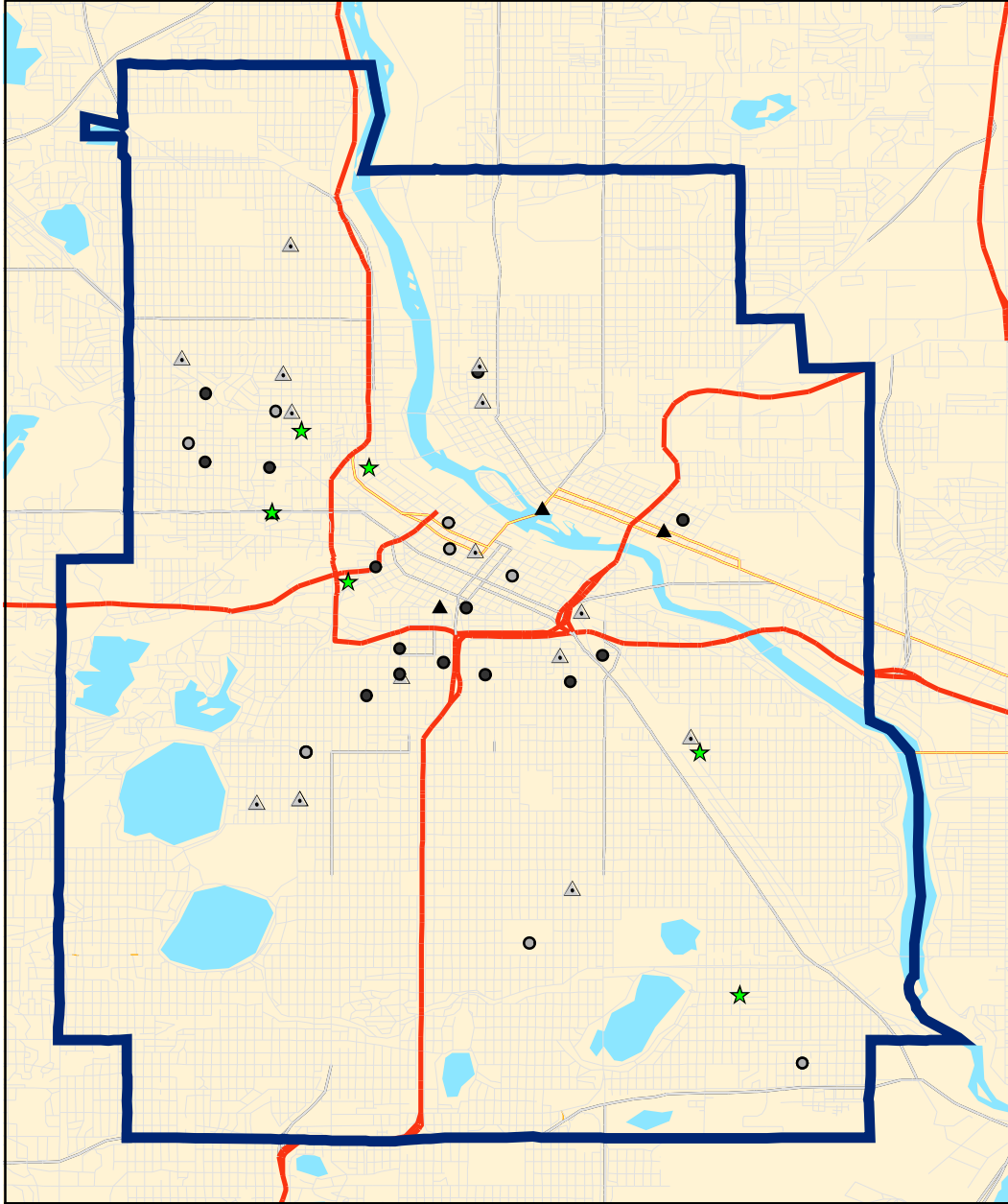
Attached to this analysis are a series of tables documenting Minnesota's currently operating and proposed chartered schools, as well as their sponsors, a map showing the location of chartered and alternative public schools in Minneapolis and a directory of charter-related resources.

## **A NOTE ON THE AUTHORSHIP OF THIS EDUCATION/EVOLVING POLICY BRIEF**

This policy brief was written by Education/Evolving's coordinator, Jon Schroeder, with research assistance from Chrissy Lee and Kim Farris Berg. Feedback is welcomed and should be directed to [jon@educationevolving.org](mailto:jon@educationevolving.org)

# Alternative and Chartered Schools in the City of Minneapolis

(As of September 2004)



- ★ Chartered Schools Approved to Open Fall 2004
- ▲ Chartered Schools (sponsored by MPS)
- △ Chartered Schools (sponsored by other entity)
- District Alternative Schools
- Contract Alternative Schools



**TABLE I****Minnesota Chartered Schools Operating in the 2004-05 School Year\***

School	City	Opened	Grades	Enrollment*	Poverty**	ELL**	SPED**	Color**	Sponsor
Academia Cesar Chavez	St. Paul	2001	K-7	224	88.3	51.0	12.0	94.0	University of St. Thomas
Achieve Language Academy	St. Paul	1996	K-8	304	77.7	55.0	10.0	82.0	St. Paul School Dist.
Agricultural & Food Sciences Academy	Little Canada	2001	9-12	160	51.0	9.0	9.0	48.0	Intermediate District 916
ARTech	Northfield	2003	6-12	98	NA	NA	NA	NA	Northfield School Dist.
Ascension Academy	Minneapolis	2004	6-12	30	NA	NA	NA	NA	Friends of Ascension
Aurora Charter School	Minneapolis	2000	PreK-4	177	86.6	82.0	1.0	100.0	St. Mary's University
Avalon Charter School	St. Paul	2001	9-12	122	15.7	1.0	9.0	23.0	Hamline University
Beacon Academy	Plymouth	2004	K-3 (8), add grade/yr	109	NA	NA	NA	NA	Friends of Ascension
BlueSky Charter School	St. Paul	2003	7-12	46	NA	NA	NA	NA	Brooklyn Center SD
Bluffview Montessori School	Winona	1993	PreK-8	190	17.5	NA	7.0	3.0	Winona School Dist.
Cedar Riverside Community School	Minneapolis	1993	K-8	109	96.9	55.0	5.0	98.0	Augsburg College
Chiron Downtown Middle School	Minneapolis	2002	6-8	117	84.1	NA	14.0	86.0	Pillsbury United Communities
City Academy	St. Paul	1997	9-12	105	94.6	30.0	25.0	88.0	College of St. Catherine
Community of Peace Academy	St. Paul	1995	K-12	575	80.4	46.0	10.0	93.0	St. Paul School Dist.
Concordia Creative Learning Academy	St. Paul	1998	K-6	85	77.2	19.0	13.0	63.0	Concordia University
Coon Rapids Learning Center	Coon Rapids	1999	Age 16-21	170	23.8	NA	17.0	10.0	Bethel College
Covenant Academy of Minnesota	Faribault	2001	7-12	52	82.5	NA	38.0	29.0	College of St. Catherine
Crosslake Community School	Cross Lake	2000	K-8	96	42.2	NA	30.0	4.0	MN Dept. of Education
Cyber Village Academy	St. Paul	1998	4-8	125	19.0	NA	12.0	10.0	Minneapolis School District
Dakota Area Community School	Dakota	2004	K-5	61	NA	NA	NA	NA	MN Dept. of Education
DPSA – Kenwood Edison Charter School	Duluth	1997	K-8	799	48.2	NA	16.0	12.0	Northwoods Childrens Services
E.C.H.O. Charter School	Echo	1997	K-12	159	51.7	NA	18.0	7.0	Yellow Medicine East SD
Eagle Ridge Academy	Edina	2004	6-12	136	NA	NA	NA	NA	Friends of Ascension
Eci'Nompa Woonspe' Charter School	Morton	1998	K-12	25	27.8	NA	20.0	86.0	Redwood Falls School District
El Colegio Charter School	Minneapolis	2000	9-12	90	79.3	50.0	6.0	84.0	Augsburg College
Emily Charter School	Emily	1994	PreK-6	79	63.9	NA	18.0	1.0	MN Dept of Education
Excell Academy for Higher Learning	Brooklyn Park	2001	K-6	190	82.8	NA	10.0	100.0	North Central University
Face to Face Academy	St. Paul	1998	9-12	62	66.1	NA	32.0	48.0	St. Paul School Dist.
Family Academy	St. Paul	2001	PreK-9	228	18.8	NA	20.0	8.0	District 916
Four Directions	Minneapolis	1999	9-12	89	98.7	NA	23.0	97.0	Metro State University
Fraser Academy	Minneapolis	2004	K-2, add grade/yr	63	NA	NA	NA	NA	St. Cloud State University
Friendship Academy of Fine Arts Charter	Minneapolis	2000	K-4	85	85.7	NA	2.0	94.0	Minneapolis School District
General John Vessey Jr. Leadership Academy	St. Paul	2004	9-12	77	NA	NA	NA	NA	Concordia University
Great Expectations School	Grand Marais	2003	K-8	37	50.0	NA	20.0	20.0	Audubon Center of the North Woods
Great River Education Center	Sartell	2000	7-12	40	40.8	NA	33.0	6.0	MN Dept of Education
Great River School	St. Paul	2004	7-10, add grade/yr	83	NA	NA	NA	NA	Hamline University
Harbor City International School	Duluth	2002	9-12	203	28.7	NA	14.0	7.0	Volunteers of America
Harvest Preparatory School	Minneapolis	1999	K-6	370	59.0	NA	3.0	99.0	Minneapolis School District
Heart of the Earth Charter School	Minneapolis	1999	K-12	284	97.7	NA	8.0	100.0	Minneapolis School District
High School for Recording Arts	St. Paul	1998	9-12	200	91.6	NA	30.0	85.0	St. Paul School District
Higher Ground Academy	St. Paul	1999	K-12	425	87.1	7.0	7.0	99.0	St. Paul School District
Hmong Academy	Minneapolis	2004	9-10, add grade/yr	207	NA	NA	NA	NA	Concordia University
HOPE Community Academy	St. Paul	2000	K-6	519	89.3	61.0	5.0	99.0	University of St. Thomas

School	City	Opened	Grades	Enrollment *	Poverty**	ELL**	SPED**	Color**	Sponsor
Jennings Experiential High School	St. Paul	1998	9-12	69	48.6	3.0	24.0	47.0	Pillsbury United Communities
Kaleidoscope Charter School	Rogers	2004	K-8	194	NA	NA	NA	NA	Volunteers of America
LaCrescent Montessori Academy	LaCrescent	1999	PreK-8	68	14.5	NA	7.0	3.0	MN Dept of Education
Lafayette Charter School	Lafayette	1999	K-8	104	72.4	NA	14.0	9.0	GFW School District
Lake Superior High School	Duluth	1999	7-12	88	47.4	NA	22.0	25.0	Duluth Public Schools
Lakes Area Charter School	Osakis	1999	9-12	60	34.5	NA	25.0	1.0	Alexandria Technical College
Lakes International Language Academy	Forest Lake	2004	K-6	175	NA	NA	NA	NA	MN Dept of Education
Liberty High Charter School	Blaine	2003	Age 16-21	153	?	NA	NA	NA	Pillsbury United Communities
Main Street School of Performing Arts	Hopkins	2004	9-10, add grade/yr	103	NA	NA	NA	NA	Hopkins School District
Math & Science Academy	Woodbury	1999	6-12	270	NA	NA	12.0	16.0	MN Dept of Education
Metro Deaf School	St. Paul	1994	PreK-8	61	13.1	NA	100.0	7.0	Forest Lake School District
Minneapolis Academy	Minneapolis	2004	5-6 (8), add grade/yr	67	NA	NA	NA	NA	Friends of Ascension
Minnesota Academy for Technology	St. Paul	2003	9-12	72	NA	NA	NA	NA	Saint Paul College
Minnesota Business Academy	St. Paul	2000	9-12	365	33.2	NA	6.0	37.0	St. Paul Chamber of Commerce
Minnesota International Middle School	Minneapolis	2000	5-8	242	100.0	93.0	2.0	100.0	Century College
Minnesota Internship Center Charter School	Minneapolis	2003	9-12	400	NA	NA	NA	NA	Pillsbury United Communities
Minnesota New Country School	Henderson	1994	7-12	115	25.2	NA	15.0	7.0	LeSeuer-Henderson School District
Minnesota North Star Academy	St. Paul	2004	9-11, add grade/yr	20	NA	NA	NA	NA	Volunteers of America
Minnesota Transitions Charter School	Minneapolis	1996	K-12	888	83.5	NA	15.0	75.0	Pillsbury United Communities
Nerstrand Elementary School	Nerstrand	1999	K-5	154	15.7	NA	8.0	3.0	Faribault School District
New Century Charter School	Hutchinson	2002	7-11	152	18.9	5.0	11.0	10.0	Hamline University
New City School	Minneapolis	2003	K-6	93	NA	NA	NA	NA	Hamline University
New Heights School	Stillwater	1993	K-12	135	38.0	NA	32.0	5.0	Stillwater School District
New Spirit School	St. Paul	1998	K-8	307	91.9	58.0	10.0	93.0	St. Paul School District
New Visions School	Minneapolis	1994	K-6	211	64.5	NA	50.0	64.0	Volunteers of America
North Lakes Academy	Forest Lake	1999	6-9	194	7.9	NA	NA	NA	MN Dept of Education
North Shore Community School	Duluth	2002	PreK-6	243	32.0	NA	6.0	NA	Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center
Nova Classical Academy	St. Paul	2003	K-6	223	NA	NA	NA	NA	Bethel College
Odyssey Charter School	Brooklyn Center	1998	K-9	219	36.4	NA	10.0	29.0	Osseo School District
PACT Charter School	Anoka	1994	K-12	540	8.3	NA	17.0	1.0	Bethel College
Partnership Academy	Richfield	2002	K-6	170	85.0	28.0	10.0	88.0	Project for Pride in Living
Pillager Area Charter School	Pillager	1998	9-12	40	73.9	NA	37.0	NA	Northwoods Childrens Home
Prairie Creek Community School	Northfield	2002	K-5	110	4.9	NA	12.0	12.0	Northfield School District
Prairie Seeds Academy	Minneapolis	2004	K-8	127	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lao Family Community
Ridgeway Community School	Houston	2001	PreK-5	64	33.3	NA	24.0	NA	Winona School District
River Heights Charter Schools	West St. Paul	2004	9-12	83	NA	NA	NA	NA	EdVisions, Inc.
RiverBend Academy Charter School	Mankato	2000	7-12	100	24.2	NA	29.0	8.0	MN Dept of Education
Riverway Learning Community	Minnesota City	2000	PreK-12	76	60.3	NA	19.0	5.0	Audubon Center of the North Woods
Rochester Off-Campus Charter School	Rochester	1999	9-12	110	52.0	NA	28.0	31.0	Rochester Community/ Technical College
SAGE Academy Charter School	Brooklyn Park	2002	9-12	80	19.6	NA	15.0	23.0	Osseo School District
Schoolcraft Learning Community	Bemidji	2000	K - 8	160	36.6	NA	9.0	4.0	MN Dept of Education
Skills for Tomorrow High School	St. Paul	1994	9-12	110	74.2	NA	20.0	70.0	Rockford School District
Sobriety High	Edina/Suburb. Ramsey County	2003	9-12	101	NA	NA	NA	NA	Intermediate District #917
Sojourner Truth Academy	Minneapolis	1999	K-6	245	53.9	8.0	10.0	99.0	Pillsbury United Communities
St. Croix Preparatory Academy	Stillwater	2004	K-7, add grade/yr	199	NA	NA	NA	NA	Friends of Ascension

School	City	Opened	Grades	Enrollment *	Poverty**	ELL**	SPED**	Color**	Sponsor
St. Paul Family Learning Center	St. Paul	1998	K-7	91	91.8	NA	15.0	72.0	St. Paul School District
Studio Academy	Rochester	2000	age15-21	125	5.6	2.0	5.0	10.0	Volunteers of America
Tarek ibn Ziyad Academy	Inver Grove Heights	2003	K-5	215	NA	NA	NA	NA	Islamic Relief International
TEAM Academy	Waseca	2004	K-6	42	NA	NA	NA	NA	Waseca School District
TrekNorth High School	Bemidji	2003	9-12	150	NA	NA	NA	NA	Volunteers of America
TRIO Wolf Creek Distance Learning Charter School	Lindstrom	2002	9-12	69	16.0	NA	6.0	NA	Chisago Lakes School District
Twin Cities Academy	St. Paul	1999	6-8	185	28.5	6.0	6.0	39.0	St. Paul School District
Twin Cities International Elementary School	Minneapolis	2000	PreK-4	433	100.0	100.0	3.0	100.0	Century College
UBAH Medical Academy	Minneapolis	2004	9-10, add grade/yr	115	NA	NA	NA	NA	Century College
Urban Academy	St. Paul	2003	K-3	149	NA	NA	NA	NA	Hamline University
Village School of Northfield	Northfield	1997	K-12	62	42.9	NA	24.0	14.0	Northfield School District
Voyageurs Expeditionary High School	Bemidji	2003	9-10, add grade/yr	51	NA	NA	NA	NA NA	Audubon Center of North Woods
Watershed High School	Minneapolis	2002	9-12	113	NA	NA	10.0	17.0	Adler Graduate School
William E. McGee Institute of Technology	St. Paul	2000	K-6	380	60.3	NA	11.0	99.0	University of St. Thomas
WISE (Woodson Institute for Student Excellence)	Minneapolis	2002	K-4	208	89.7	NA	8.0	100.0	Metro Minneapolis YMCA
World Learner School of Chaska	Chaska	1995	1-6	140	1.0	NA	15.0	7.0	Chaska School District
Yankton Country School	Balaton	2000	9-12	25	13.2	NA	31.0	--	Balaton School District
				17,720					

\* Enrollments are for the 2004-05 school year; and other student information is for 2003-04 school year

\*\*Poverty = Students on free and reduced lunch; ELL = English Language Learners; SPED = Special education students; Color = Percentage students of color

**TABLE II****CHARTERED SCHOOLS APPROVED FOR FALL 2005 OPENING**

<b>SCHOOL NAME</b>	<b>GRADES</b>	<b>SPONSOR</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
Adam Abdulle Academy	K-8	Pillsbury United Communities	Rochester
Augsburg Acad of Health Careers	9-12	Augsburg College	St. Paul
BioScience Academy	5-12	Friends of Ascension	Fridley
Birch Grove Community School	K-5	Volunteers of America	Tofte
Central Charter School	K-8	Friends of Ascension	Minneapolis
Cities West Academy	9-12	Volunteers of America	Golden Valley/Robbinsdale
Cygnus Academy	6-8	Friends of Ascension	Coon Rapids
Dugsi Academy	K-5	Pillsbury United Communities	Minneapolis
Early Literacy Academy	Age 3-3	Volunteers of America	Minneapolis
EdVisions Off-Campus	7-12	Volunteers of America	Henderson/LeSeuer
F. Scott FitzGerald Writers Acad	9-12	District 916	St. Paul area
Green Isle Community School	K-6	Volunteers of America	Green Isle
Harriet Bishop Core Knowledge	K-5	Friends of Ascension	St. Paul
Laura Jeffrey Academy	5-8	Appeal Commissioner	Mpls or St. Paul
Lighthouse Academy	6-12	James Ford Bell Foundation	Minneapolis
LoveWorks Academy	K-8	Pillsbury United Communities	Minneapolis
Midtown Academy	K-5	Friends of Ascension	Minneapolis
MILROY Area Charter School	K-4	Milroy SD	Milroy
MN Online High School	9-12	Pillsbury United Communities	Mpls/Edina/Richfield
Naytahwaush Community School	K-6	Volunteers of America	Naytahwaush
New Millenium Academy	K-8	Friends of Ascension	Minneapolis
Northern Lights Community School	6-12	Northwood Foundation	Grand Rapids
Paideia Academy	K-8	Friends of Ascension	Eagan
Recovery School of Southern MN	7-12	Pillsbury United Communities	Owatonna
St. Paul Conserv for Perform Artists	9-12	Ordway Center/Performing Arts	St. Paul
Soul Academy	K-5	Friends of Ascension	Minneapolis
Southeast Charter School	K-6	Augsburg College	Minneapolis
STRIDE Academy	K-5	Friends of Ascension	St. Cloud/Sartell/Sauk Rapids
Swan River Montessori	K-6	Audubon Ctr. of the N. Woods	Monticello
Twin Cities Academy High School	9-12	St. Paul School District	St. Paul
Twin Cities German Immersion	K-8	Germanic American Institute	Mpls/Roseville/St. Paul
Veritas Academy	6-12	Friends of Ascension	Plymouth
Worthington Area Language Acad	K-8	Volunteers of America	Worthington

**SCHOOLS WITH SPONSORS, NOT APPROVED IN OCT. 1 ROUND OF STATE APPROVALS**

<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>GRADES</b>	<b>SPONSOR</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
Achieve Charter School	K-8	Friends of Ascension	Woodbury
ADDvantage Learning Academy	K-12	Pillsbury United Communities	Wayzata
Bilingual Learning On-line*	7-12	Request MDE*	Statewide
Brooklyn Park Academy	K-8	Friends of Ascension	Brooklyn Park
Dakota Academy	6-12	Crossroads College	Apple Valley/Burnsville
GEM Arts/Environmental Campus*	7-12	Request MDE*	Mankato Area
Integrated Performing Arts Academy	K-8	Pillsbury United Communities	Mpls or St. Paul
Liberty Charter School	K-8	Friends of Ascension	Andover
MN Leadership Charter School	9-12	Pillsbury United Communities	Roseville
Musa ibn Nusayr Academy	6-8	Islamic Relief Worldwide	Minneapolis
PEASE Academy	9-12	Pillsbury United Communities	Minneapolis
The International Academy	9-12	Episcopal Community Services	Minneapolis

\* Technically not considered since the Department determined that they did not have sponsors or qualify for an appeal

**TABLE III****MINNESOTA CHARTERED SCHOOL SPONSORS – 1991-2005**

Sponsor	Total authorized*	Total currently operating	Approved, not operating*	Closed or never opened	Open but changed sponsor
<b>School Districts – 30</b>					
Anoka-Hennepin School District	1	--	--	--	1 – (PACT)
Balaton School District	1	1	--	--	--
Brooklyn Center School District	1	1	--	--	--
Chaska School District	1	1	--	--	--
Chisago Lakes School District	2	1	--	1	--
Duluth School District	2	1	--	--	1- (Edison Duluth)
Faribault School District	1	1	--	--	--
Forest Lake School District	1	1	--	--	--
GFW School District	1	1	--	--	--
Hopkins School District	2	1	--	1	--
Intermediate District #917	1	1	--	--	--
LeSeuer/Henderson School District	1	1	--	--	--
Milroy School District	1	--	1	--	--
Minneapolis School District	10	4	--	1	5-(Cedar Riverside, Sojourner Truth, New Visions, Minnesota Transitions and Chiron)
Mountain Iron School District	1	--	--	1	--
New Ulm School District	2	--	--	--	2-(Hanska, Lafayette)
NE Metro Intermediate District #916	3	2	1	--	--
Northfield School District	3	3	--	--	--
Osseo School District	2	2	--	--	--
Red Wing School District	1	--	--	1	--
Redwood Falls School District	1	1	--	--	--
Rockford School District	2	1	--	1	--
Roseville School District	1	--	--	1	--
St. Cloud School District	1	-	--	1	--
St. Louis County School District	1	--	--	1	--
St. Paul School District	15	8	1	4	2-(City Academy, Minn. Business Academy)
Stillwater School District	1	1	--	--	--
Waseca School District	1	1	--	--	--
Winona School District	2	2	--	--	--
Yellow Medicine East School District	1	1	--	--	--
<b>Colleges and Universities-20</b>					
Alexandria Technical College	2	1	--	1	--
Alfred Adler Graduate School	1	1	--	--	--
Augsburg College	4	2	1	1	--
Bethel College	3	3	--	--	--
Central Lakes College	4	--	--	1	3-(Lake Superior, Pillager, Great River)
Century College	4	3	--	1	--
College of St. Catherine	2	2	--	--	--
Concordia University	3	3	--	--	--
College of Visual Arts	1	--	--	--	1-(Studio Academy)
Crossroads College	1	--	1	--	--
Hamline University	5	5	--	--	--
Inver Hills Community College	1	--	--	--	1-(Jennings HS)
Metropolitan State University	1	1	--	--	--
Normandale Community College	1	--	--	1	--
North Central University	1	1	--	--	--
Rochester Community/Technical Col	2	1	--	--	1-(Riverway)
St. Cloud State University	1	1	--	--	--
St. Mary's University	1	1	--	--	--
Saint Paul College	1	1	--	--	--
University of St. Thomas	3	3	--	--	--
<b>Non-profit organizations-16</b>					
Audubon Center of the North Woods	4	3	1	--	--
EdVisions, Inc.	1	1	--	--	--
Episcopal Community Services	1	--	1	--	--
Friends of Ascension	18	5	13	--	--
Germanic American Institute	1	--	1	--	--
Islamic Relief Worldwide	2	1	1	--	--
Lao Family Community	1	1	--	--	--
Northwoods Children's Services	3	2	1	--	--
Ordway Center for the Performing Arts	1	--	1	--	--

Sponsor	Total authorized*	Total currently operating	Approved, not operating*	Closed or never opened	Open but changed sponsor
Pillsbury United Communities	15	6	9	--	--
Project for Pride in Living	1	1	--	--	--
Sabathani Community Center	1	--	--	1	--
St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce	1	1	--	--	--
Volunteers of America	13	6	7	--	--
Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center	1	1	--	--	--
YMCA of Greater Minneapolis	1	1	--	--	--
<b>Foundations – 1*</b>					
James Ford Bell Foundation	1	--	1	--	--
<b>State Agencies – 1</b>					
Minnesota Department of Education	14	10	1	2	1
<b>ALL SPONSORS – 68</b>	<b>187* **</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>43*</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17</b>

\* Includes 10 schools approved by sponsors but not yet approved by the State Department

\*\* Seventeen of these schools are doubled counted, since they were authorized by two different sponsors and 10 have not yet been approved by the state; thus the net number of schools operating or approved by both the state and sponsor is currently 138; and the number approved by a sponsor, including those awaiting state approval, is 148.

*SOURCES: Information in the previous tables on Minnesota chartered schools and sponsors was provided by the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools and Minnesota Department of Education.*

# MINNESOTA CONTACTS & RESOURCES

Following is a directory of Minnesota organizations and agencies that provide information or assistance on issues and programs relating to chartered schools, prospective charter founders, interested districts, sponsors, parents and others connected to the charter or broader "new schools" and school choice movements. This "emerging infrastructure" for charters and new schools is likely to continue to grow with the number of schools and students it serves.

## Center for School Change

Joe Nathan, Director  
 HHH Institute of Public Affairs, U of M  
 Minneapolis, MN 55455  
 612-625-3506  
 jnathan@hhh.umn.edu  
 www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/school-change  
*Does research, supports innovative learning options, new schools initiatives, broader district reform initiatives.*

## Charter School Special Education Project

Cori Wahl, Director  
 1295 Bandana Blvd. N., Suite 240  
 Saint Paul, MN 55108  
 651-644-6116  
 cwahl@mcssep.org  
 www.mncharterschools.org/tech\_specialed.htm  
*Provides technical assistance and training to schools; contracts with schools for special ed director services.*

## Charter Vision Newspaper

Leisa Irwin, Coordinator/Lars Johnson, Webmaster  
 1295 Bandana Blvd., Suite 165  
 St. Paul, MN 55108  
 507-403-1014  
 leisa@mncharterschools.org/[ljohnson@macalester.edu](mailto:ljohnson@macalester.edu)  
 www.mnchartervision.org  
*Quarterly statewide newspaper written and edited by students; related web site.*

## Education|Evolving

Ted Kolderie/Joe Graba, Co-founders  
 Jon Schroeder, Coordinator  
 1295 Bandana Blvd., Suite 165  
 St. Paul, MN 55108  
 651-644-6115  
 info@educationevolving.org  
 www.educationevolving.org  
*Develops and promotes new school and broader system reform initiatives in Minnesota and Nationally.*

## EdVisions, Inc/EdVisions Cooperative

Doug Thomas, Director  
 501 Main Street/PO Box 518  
 Henderson, MN 56044  
 507-248-3738  
 doug@edvisions.coop  
 www.edvisions.coop  
*Replication of project-learning/teacher cooperative model, nationally and in MN; services cooperative for member schools.*

## Electric Telescope

Dan Reiva, Artistic Director  
 255B NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
 Forest Lake, MN 55025  
 651-982-2773  
 dprw@yahoo.com  
 www.mncharterschools.org  
*Project to develop the creativity of charter school students in grades 7-12 in acting, playwriting and technical theatre.*

## Metro Lakes Conference

Ron Buckanaga, Treasurer  
 1035 West Broadway Ave  
 Minneapolis, MN 55411  
 612-588-0183  
 rbuckanag@4directionsmn.com  
*New athletic league to organize and expand opportunities for charter school students to participate in inter-school sports.*

## Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs

Synova Shelgren, President  
 210 20th Street South  
 New Ulm, MN 56073  
 507-359-8780  
 sshelgren@riverbend.k12.mn.us  
 www.maapmn.org  
*Membership organization of alternative educators, advocacy, conferences, networking*

## Minnesota Association of Charter Schools

Norm Chaffee, Facilities Project  
 Ken Wright, Governance/Accountability  
 Julie Cutler, Communications/Development  
 1295 Bandana Blvd., Suite 165  
 St. Paul, MN 55108  
 651-644-0432  
[ken@mncharterschools.org](mailto:ken@mncharterschools.org)  
 www.mncharterschools.org  
*Initiatives on governance, management, accountability, advocacy; administers grant program for schools, planning groups.*

## Minnesota Charter School Forum

Jon Schroeder, Coordinator  
 1295 Bandana Blvd., Suite 165  
 St. Paul, MN 55108  
 651-644-6115  
 jon@educationevolving.org  
*Coalition of charter supporting organizations and individuals; current working groups on facilities financing, pupil transportation, teacher quality.*

## Minnesota Charter School Resource Center

Aaron North, Director  
 Center for School Change  
 U of M HHH Institute of Public Affairs  
 Minneapolis, MN 55455  
 612-625-7552  
 anorth@hhh.umn.edu  
 www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/school-change  
*Provides technical assistance, training, workshops to charters and charter development groups.*

## Minnesota Department of Education

Morgan Brown, Director, Office of Choice and Innovation  
 1500 Highway 36 West  
 Roseville, MN 55113  
 651-582-8337  
 morgan.brown@state.mn.us  
 www.education.state.mn.us  
*Approves all charters, grants charters on appeal, charter grant program, general district support and reporting functions.*

**Minnesota K-12 On-line Learning Alliance**

Tracy Quarnstrom  
 Trio Wolf Creek Charter School  
 13750 Lake Blvd  
 Lindstrom, MN 55045  
 651-213-2017  
 tqarnstrom@chisagolakes.k12.mn.us  
*Membership association of district and charter on-line schools, advocacy, networking.*

**Minnesota Minority Education Partnership**

Carlos Mariani-Rosa, Exec Dir  
 Bruce Vandal, Associate Director  
 2211 Riverside Avenue South  
 Minneapolis, MN 55454  
 612/330-1645  
 cmariani@MMEP.net  
 bvandal@MMEP.net  
[www.mmep.org](http://www.mmep.org)  
*Research and advocacy to attack achievement gap, strengthen schools, other educational programs serving students of color.*

**Minnesota Quality Teaching Coalition**

Wayne Jennings, Chair  
 449 Desnoyer Avenue  
 St. Paul, MN 55104  
 651-644-2805  
 wayne@institute4learning.org  
*Coalition of charter, alternative and rural educators promoting interdisciplinary teacher licensure and related teacher training and research initiatives.*

**Minnesota Rural Education Association**

Jerry Ness, Director  
 Vernae Hasbargen, Dir Leg Action  
 700 Cedar Street, Suite 208,  
 Alexandria, MN 56308-1764  
 320-762-6574  
 jness@mnrea.org  
 vernae@mnrea.org  
 www.mnrea.org  
*Membership organization of rural school districts and educators, research, advocacy, conferences, networking.*

**Minnesota School Boards Association**

Bob Lowe/Jan Rhode  
 1900 West Jefferson Avenue.  
 St. Peter, MN 56082  
 800-324-4459  
 jrlowe@mnmsba.org  
 www.mnmsba.org  
*Provides insurance, training, other technical assistance on board governance, policies, personnel, management, etc.*

**Minnesota Sponsors Assistance Network**

Bob Wedl, Director  
 1295 Bandana Blvd., Suite 165  
 St. Paul, MN 55108  
 612-501-9606  
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*Provides technical assistance, training and other support for Minnesota charter sponsors.*

**Partnership for Choice in Education**

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**Real Impact: Student Opinions for a Change**

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**The SAGA Project**

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*"Students Addressing Gaps in Achievement." Service-learning program that's driven by youth voice and geared toward students in charter schools.*

**SchoolStart**

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*Planning, charter approval, grant proposal, start-up and back-office support services for planning groups and newer charters.*



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