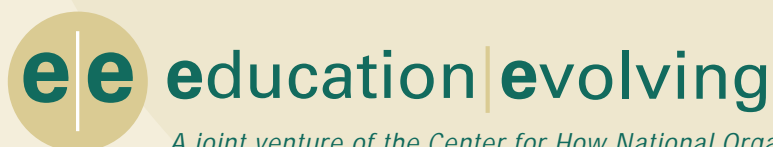


How National Organizations Can Support the New Schools Strategy

The latest in a series of reports on the changing face of public education

January 2004



*A joint venture of the Center for How National Organizations Can
Policy Studies and Hamline University*

ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF AN ‘OPEN SECTOR’ IN EDUCATION

Much of the work being done by Education|Evolving is to help create and sustain an “Open Sector” in public education – in Minnesota and elsewhere in the country. By “Open Sector,” we mean a “space” in public education that is open to new entrants – new schools that are started from scratch by teachers, parents, community organizations and multi-school networks. The “Open Sector” is also open to new authorizers or sponsors – entities other than school districts that oversee schools. The “Open Sector” is open to new learning programs and to new ways of governing and managing schools. And, as part of a broadening definition of public education, the “Open Sector” is open to all students who choose to attend schools in that sector.

The “Open Sector” is based on the premise that we cannot get the degree of change and improvement we need in education by relying only on fixing the schools we now have. And, to get enough new schools that are fundamentally different, we need a combination of public policies and private actions that will allow new schools to emerge and that will create an environment in which they can succeed. This kind of positive environment for creating and sustaining new schools can be established on a state-level through actions led by state policy makers. It can also be done – and is certainly needed – in major urban communities all across America.



Though chartered schools may be the most visible part of the “Open Sector” today, this concept of a positive environment for creating and sustaining successful new schools is not limited to charters. The “Open Sector” can also include schools operating within a district or state on some kind of contract other than a charter – as long as they are truly autonomous, accountable and open to all students who chose them.

There is also no prescribed or uniform learning program presumed by this vision for creating many more schools new. In fact, there’s an urgent need to better understand, respect and address the individual differences in students. It’s likely, however, that successful new schools in the “Open Sector” will be smaller and that they will make it possible for all students to take a more active role in their learning and to develop more direct and nurturing relationships with adults.

ABOUT THIS REPORT AND ITS AUTHORS

This report is one of a series funded with support from the **Annie E. Casey Foundation** to encourage and assist urban and other communities in starting and sustaining high quality new schools. This report focuses on the role that national networks of community-based organizations (CBOs) can play in providing leadership and assistance to their local affiliates in creating new schools. Models for this kind of leadership and assistance are the **National Council of LaRaza**, the **YMCA of the USA** and **YouthBuild USA**. All three of these national organizations are now offering a variety of kinds and levels of assistance in creating new schools that can provide both inspiration and models for others.

The research and writing for this report was done by **Bryan Hassel**, president of North Carolina-based Public Impact, and his associates **Valaida Fullwood** and **Michelle Godard Terrell**. Bryan Hassel has supervised a number of similar projects over the last six years for the Center for Policy Studies and its Charter Friends National Network (CFNN) -- and now Education|Evolving -- initiatives. Final editing and production supervision was also provided by **Jon Schroeder**, Education|Evolving’s coordinator and, from 1996 to 2003, CFNN’s co-founder and director.

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LEADING NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE STARTING SCHOOLS NEW

A growing number of community-based organizations – many affiliates of national networks – are designing, launching and operating new public schools across the country. Some of these schools are chartered schools; others are alternative schools or schools operated under a contract with a school district.

Some of them are truly “new,” started from scratch. Others are fundamentally new school programs existing within “old” school buildings. The common thread is that the schools have a fresh start, with the opportunity to build a strong educational institution from the foundation up.

Their emerging role in school improvement represents an important shift in how community-based nonprofit organizations are approaching collaboration with schools to address local issues and, as a result, influence education reform nationwide.

More and more, community-based organizations (CBOs) and the education community have come to see

that the best way to fulfill their separate missions is to forge strong partnerships with each other. CBOs, especially those serving families and children, view involvement with *new* public schools as a particularly promising way to increase the impact of their programs and services.

As CBOs emerge as important partners in the development of new public schools, strong support from the national offices of CBO networks is becoming more vital.

A significant function of national offices is to support the work of local affiliates. As increasing numbers of affiliates of a national organization get involved with starting schools, the need for a national support system for affiliates developing schools becomes more pronounced.

Several national organizations are recognizing the value of these burgeoning new school partnerships and the critical roles their national offices can play in promoting successful collaboration among affiliates. As a result, these national groups are launching initiatives to help their local organizations with new school development.

This document, produced by the Education/Evolving with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a resource guide for national organizations on how to implement support strategies and provide assistance for new school development through their local affiliates. It

This guide consists of six sections

- Why CBOs are Starting Schools
- Why Support from National Offices is Needed
- Assessing Success Factors Among Affiliates
- Setting a Strategic Direction: Potential Roles of National Organizations
- National Networks Supporting Affiliates' New Schools Activity
- Contacts and Resources for Information and Technical Assistance

outlines options for supporting CBO-linked schools, offers useful information on the growing experience base of national organizations in this area, and shares best practices and lessons learned. While this document is intended to generate interest and guide inquiries about new school

development, it also points readers toward numerous other resources that may be helpful for more in-depth treatment of many of the central challenges in starting schools new.

WHY CBOS ARE CREATING SCHOOLS NEW

The decade-long charter schools movement and districts' growing interest in creating schools new have infused new energy and vitality to school-community collaboration. Often spurred by yearly reports of low student achievement and high dropout rates in traditional public schools, CBOs see newly formed public schools as one vehicle to help achieve their missions. CBOs developing new schools like the chance to design schools from scratch, free of barriers that historically thwart student achievement and impede school-community collaboration.

In the past CBOs would sometimes encounter resistance from schools when attempting to build a collaboration or partnership. Now, by playing various roles in the founding of *new* schools, these same organizations can imbed collaboration into the very structure of the schools they are helping to create. The result is a growing number of partnerships that pool resources to improve the educational experiences of students and their families.

CBOs also are launching schools as a way to extend their pre-existing services for young people into the school day and to have a greater impact on the development of the neighborhoods they serve. Many organizations find that they are well positioned to advance their missions through new schools because of their strong relationships in communities, their extensive experience with preschool, afterschool and youth programs, and their long history of providing services and resources to community members.

Schools linked to CBOs can create a "one-stop-shop" service experience for students and their families. By bringing educational programming into the array of services – health care, child care, job training, language

classes and fitness programs – already being offered by a CBO, the organization can create a seamless delivery system that better meets the interconnected needs of families.

CBOs are recognizing that they can bring considerable resources to new schools that significantly contribute to the schools' success. As established organizations, they have the personnel, volunteers, facilities and experience with budgeting, fundraising, marketing and financial management that are needed to start and run a school.

Educators and other school founders often lack these resources and desire partnerships with organizations that offer them. Such partnerships benefit the new school, as the CBO leads on operational issues and educators are free to focus on the educational program.

Though their reasons and approaches may vary, CBOs – bringing relevant know-how, resources and experience – are clearly playing an expanding role in the creating new schools as a means to improve public education.

Important to their long-term success is how their national offices choose to support and promote these efforts.

Roles of CBOs in developing new schools include:

- Leading the planning and design process.
- Participating in community coalitions that plan and launch schools.
- Operating the school, in addition to planning it.
- Providing various forms of ongoing support to the new school (e.g. renting classroom space to the school, providing classes access to a swimming pool or gymnasium, and serving students and families through after-school programs, mentors, and health services.)

WHY SUPPORT FROM NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IS NEEDED

National organizations can play a vital role in advancing the creation of high quality CBO-linked schools. By providing vision, leadership and resources, national organizations can help affiliate CBOs develop, sustain and expand successful schools. A number of national offices of major nonprofit organizations — such as YMCA of the USA, National Council of La Raza, and YouthBuild USA — have launched national new school initiatives.

The reasons national organizations choose to develop these initiatives are comparable to the motivations at the local affiliate level. The leaders of many national organizations, troubled by national reports on public education, have set education as a priority and are taking aggressive action to significantly improve schooling options for their constituents' children.

National organizations also have recognized that developing healthy, sustainable public schools is a way to advance their missions and to serve more people nationwide. And finally, they have noted the challenges faced by individual CBOs as they start or collaborate on the development of new schools. In response, national organizations have stepped up with the resources that are best leveraged by a national group.

While new public schools are having positive and far-reaching effects on public education, local people starting new schools still face formidable operational hurdles.

These challenges include:

- Resource limitations such as lack of start-up funds and facilities financing
- Lack of capacity at the local level to develop an educational program for the school
- Lack of access to high-quality educational materials and professional development for teachers
- Difficulties navigating the complex legal and financial maze in which public schools operate
- The challenges of governing what is often a small nonprofit corporation.

Developing national initiatives that help remove the obstacles commonly found among affiliates' schools is a prime role for national organizations. With such support from the national level, CBOs involved in new schools can attend to strengthening their partnerships and schools and additional CBOs can enter the foray with fewer obstacles.

ASSESSING SUCCESS FACTORS AMONG AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

As national organizations consider helping affiliates start schools, two important questions arise.

First, are there certain communities that — by virtue of the local charter school environment and existing affiliate work — would be particularly hospitable to the development of new schools?

Second, what possible roles could the national office play in an effort to support local efforts to development and manage schools? This section addresses the former question, while the latter is addressed subsequently.

A new school has the best chance to succeed in places where two sets of factors intersect — the external environment creates the potential for the development of strong schools, and the people *and* organizations involved in the founding have the capacity to build a quality school.

External success factors are features of the environment that influence how well new schools do — such as:

- The strength of a state's charter law and the politics surrounding chartered or other new schools in an area
- Competition for the school's prospective students;
- The availability of quality technical assistance.

Internal success factors are features of new schools themselves, and the organizations that found them, that help determine how successful the schools will be. In addition to characteristics that any effective school would exhibit, new schools have to tackle what Harvard University's Peter Frumkin has identified as three essential managerial tasks:

- **Stakeholder management**, including effective marketing and recruitment, connections with families, and helpful partnerships and networks).
- **Operational management**, including the quality of board governance, acquisition and management of financial resources and facilities, and management of the instructional program).

- **Mission management**, including defining the school's purpose and goals. (See the box on page 5 for more on Frumkin's analysis.)

In cases where existing CBOs start new schools, some additional internal success factors include:

- The CBO's community relationships and reputation.
- The CBO's past experience working with youth and education.
- The financial and human resources the CBO can bring to the new school.
- The successful structuring of governance and business relationships between the CBO and the new school.

Factors for Success in Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) Starting New Schools

A CBO is best suited to start and operate a new school when it is...

- Making connections in the community and has especially deep roots in the neighborhood(s) to be served by the charter school.
- Familiar with the needs and values of the community's young people and families.
- Experienced in providing services to students and their families, and in addressing personal needs as well as community issues.
- Perceived as a credible voice on community issues and held in high regard by a cross-section of community members.
- Committed to working effectively and intensively with young people who are in the most need.
- Experienced in operating large programs, including programs receiving substantial public funds.
- Able to gain access to or acquire an adequate facility in which to operate a school.
- Successful at fiscal management and in good standing with banks and able to secure capital for the school's start-up and operations.
- Able to invest seed funds or direct subsidies during the school's critical start-up years.
- Experienced in marketing, public relations, personnel management and fundraising.
- Able to structure staffing relationships between its existing employees and the new school's personnel.
- Committed to creating or supporting a new school that aligns with the CBO's mission and philosophies.
- Seeking to have a positive impact on education.
- Willing to forge partnerships to support student learning and bring diverse resources, expertise and innovations to the school and CBO.

Sources:

"A Guide to Developing CBO Linked Charter Schools," *Charter Friends National Network and The Annie E. Casey Foundation*, 2001.
"CBO Schools: A History of High Standards for All, Issue Brief II," *Academy for Educational Development*, Fall 2000.

How National Organizations Can Support the New Schools Strategy

It should be noted that in addition to the above list of success factors for starting up a new school, there are other facets of affiliate assessment and new school creation that national organizations should take into account. Some of these issues are addressed in two notable papers.

One of these papers, “Creating New Schools: The

Strategic Management of Charter Schools and School Leaders,” by Peter Frumkin, is summarized in the box below.

A citation for the second, “Managing Multisite Nonprofits,” by Allen Grossman and V. Kasturi Rangan, may be found at the end of this document.

The Strategic Management of New Schools: Frumkin’s Model

Peter Frumkin’s paper* asserts that there are three managerial tasks that demand strategic approaches by charter school entrepreneurs. Frumkin, an Harvard associate professor, defines the tasks as *stakeholder management* (support), *operations management* (capacity), and *mission management* (value), which require attention over every developmental phase of a school – from start-up to expansion and through institutionalization. He makes the case that successful new schools must bring the disparate pieces of charter school management together into a coherent strategic framework. He also argues for a broader, more integrated approach to strategy in the charter school do-main that will help new and experienced charter school leaders improve their management skills.”

Stakeholder Management: The building of support and legitimacy within the authorizing environment is critical. As is the case with all organizations, schools require support from multiple stakeholders that comprise the environment in which they operate. These stakeholders include *internal supporters* (teachers, administrators, and students) and *external players* (parents, local community, state departments of education, and legislators). Frumkin maintains that successful schools work hard over time to build and sustain stakeholder support.

Operations Management: The effective mobilization of operational capacity to deliver services is also critical. While capacity includes the full range of physical and human resources needed to translate educational principles and good intentions into realized action and deliverable services, “operational capacity” refers specifically to the resources outside the immediate boundaries of the organization and school. Operational capacity includes the capacity that school partners (local businesses, community groups, parents, and alumni) possess, which leadership within the school can tap to fulfill the school’s mission. Frumkin writes that “expanding and strengthening operational capacity is critical, particularly in environments where resources are scarce and where work is complex, as is the case with charter schools.”

Mission Management: Finally, Frumkin cites the importance of defining a “value proposition” or mission to guide the school. New schools must articulate a purpose that satisfies the needs of the public and that is aligned to the values of employees and students. Frumkin contends that a school’s mission management is dependent on its stakeholder management (support) and its operations management (capacity). It’s not independent or antecedent to them – because “no school can function successfully without a mission that is operationally feasible and that is supported widely.” He adds, “thus one of the first and most important steps in developing a meaningful definition of charter school strategic management is to understand mission as something that is contingently produced in relation to both capacity and support.”

* Peter Frumkin’s paper is available on the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s website at www.aecf.org/publications/data/createnewschoolspages.pdf

A RANGE OF POTENTIAL ROLES FOR NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

A critical issue for the national office is what roles it could play in helping affiliates start successful new schools. To develop some specific ideas about that question, it is helpful to examine how other national networks of community based organizations, such as YMCA of the USA and National Council of La Raza (NCLR), are

assisting their affiliates in this way. The early experience of these national networks suggests that there is a range of potential roles that a national organization can play in helping its affiliates launch new schools.

In reviewing this list, it is helpful to have a handful of strategic choices in mind. First, though these roles are not

in any strict order, they do tend to progress along a continuum. At one end of the continuum, the national organization plays a minimal role — informing affiliates about the opportunities presented by schools, assuming local sources of assistance.

Moving along the continuum, the national organization takes an increasingly proactive role — engaging in more active recruitment of sites, providing more intensive financial or technical assistance and other resources. Taking a proactive role involves providing more and more intensive forms of assistance. Deciding where to end up on that continuum is a critical strategic choice for national groups. A more proactive role requires a larger commitment of leadership and resources, including the hiring of staff and/or consultants to carry out the work. But it also holds out the likelihood of greater impact and success.

A second strategic choice concerns the degree to which the national office seeks to create a “brand” of affiliated schools that have certain common characteristics or standards. Again, a continuum is helpful for thinking about this issue. At one end, a national organization chooses to provide help to local communities establishing new schools, but those schools vary greatly from one community to another.

More than likely, they share some elements in common due to similarities in affiliates’ mission and due to networking and exchanges among affiliates. But the national organization does not seek to promote certain models of school design, particular administrative or governance systems or other qualitative standards.

At the other end of this continuum, the national organization creates or adopts one or more design elements it then encourages affiliated schools to use, and it provides a range of back-office services and products to affiliated schools, either directly or through partnerships and bulk purchasing. In between, the national organization develops some common elements but not others, or makes common elements available to affiliates but does not

require them to use them as a condition of involvement in the national initiative.

A third strategic choice concerns the scale and pace of a national effort. Will the national organization focus on just a few communities, or does it envision a broader involvement across the network? If the latter, what time frame will it set for the network to grow? In considering scale, tradeoffs arise between the value of moving slowly and deliberately, learning as you go, and the value that numbers bring in terms of impact, networking and economies of scale.

A final strategic choice relates to partnerships. Will the national organization “go it alone,” developing whatever kinds of services and supports it intends to provide for its affiliates? Or will it forge partnerships with other entities that bring complementary expertise? For example, a national organization may have a strong network of local affiliates with strong roots in their communities, but little expertise in education. Such a network might seek out a partner that has developed a model of school design. A more educationally savvy organization might seek a partner skilled in school finance.

For more discussion of the key issues surrounding the role of the national office, see “Managing Multisite Nonprofits,” an article by Allen Grossman and V. Kasturi Rangan. The full citation appears on page 20 of this document.

Now, for the list of 11 possible roles for national organizations in supporting school development among its affiliates. Those possible roles include:

1. Providing general information about new school development to help affiliates make informed choices.

The national organization could make such information available through mailings, e-mailings, conferences, or other typical channels of distribution. Leaders of affiliate organizations often state they need basic information about the school development process before they can decide whether opening a new school makes sense for their site.

The YMCA of the USA, for example, has held special meetings about chartered schools for interested affiliates and has included charter-related sessions at broader conferences.

2. Brokering relationships between affiliates and existing local technical assistance resources. In virtually every state with a charter law, there are state-level technical assistance organizations that exist to help chartered schools. In some cities with lots of new school activity, there are even city-level organizations, like New Visions in New York City. The national organization could become more knowledgeable about these organizations so that it could refer affiliates to them when the need arises.

3. Facilitating networking among affiliates interested in starting new schools. The national organization could facilitate this sharing through email networks, conference calls, or events. NCLR is creating “clusters” of affiliated schools — linked by geography or approach — to share experiences and professional development resources. The YMCA of the USA has helped arrange site visits by Y’s to other Y chapters involved in chartered schools.

4. Establishing specific values and design elements that will be mainstays in every new school. A national organization can have a great range of influence over the guiding principles, educational philosophies and academic climate that will define the new schools supported by its affiliates. For example, a network could choose to dictate such things as the curriculum, instructional approach, course work, organizational structure, policies, and school size of schools operated by affiliates nationwide. And it could opt to go even deeper by prescribing the cultural attributes, belief systems, working relationships and level of involvement it envisions in schools – and by extension, among their teachers and staff, with their families and the community, and with their organizational partners. NCLR reports that one of the key tenets of its work in education has been “to involve Hispanic-controlled, community-based organizations more fully and effectively in helping

to shape and strengthen education in their own communities.” NCLR’s belief transcends its schools across the country. And, NCLR’s Charter School Development Initiative requires grant seeking affiliates to be philosophically aligned with the NCLR mission and core beliefs and to meet specific eligibility criteria (see a summary of the criteria below). Even with a broad range of clearly defined guidelines set by the national organization, however, each NCLR affiliate retains a considerable degree of flexibility in creating a school that meets local needs and is reflective to the local community context. There is plenty of latitude for individual schools to be very different. While NCLR elected to set and institute several criteria, it’s up to each network to determine the scope and depth of the imprint it desires to see among its affiliated schools.

Eligibility Requirements for Grant Awards under NCLR’s Charter School Development Initiative

Under NCLR’s Charter School Development Initiative, grant applicants are required to be community-based organizations that are philosophically aligned with the NCLR mission/core beliefs, and to meet the eligibility criteria for topics below.

- NCLR Affiliate
- Community Based
- Community Controlled
- Small School
- Significant Latino Population
- Bilingualism and Bi-literacy

5. Providing more intensive start-up and operational technical assistance. Some national initiatives, such as NCLR’s, have taken it upon themselves to provide more than basic information and brokered relationships. NCLR provides on-site technical assistance to affiliates through staff and consultants; has created some written resource guides to help affiliates decide whether to pursue new schools and to take initial steps; and has arranged joint professional development opportunities for “clusters” of schools. YMCA created a technical assistance manual to help affiliates explore school start-up as an option.

6. Providing (or helping raise) planning, start-up, and operational grant funding. Lack of planning and start-up funding is a key barrier for many new school organizers, especially in the planning stages before schools begin to receive public funds. A federal start-up grant program helps with the start-up phase, but even it is often inadequate to the task. Further, some new schools — especially those that start small or serve many special needs students — require ongoing operating subsidies

even beyond the planning and start-up phases. Hence, one strategy for a national initiative is to offer grant funding for some or all of those purposes. Grants and federal funding is available to national organizations interested in assisting networks of affiliates with funding. Some national offices have used grant funding as a way to encourage quality planning and execution. To receive the funds, affiliates must develop solid plans. To continue receiving funds, they must deliver.

FEDERAL AND STATE PLANNING AND START-UP GRANTS

Some states and the federal government provide planning and start-up grants to charter school developers and operators. The largest program by far is the Federal Public Charter School Program that awards grants to states each year. States, in turn, make grants to individual charter school developers and operators. The grants may be for planning, start-up or implementation. Since 1999, grants have also been made to more mature schools for dissemination of what they have learned that might benefit other schools. The size of grants varies among states, but generally range from \$30,000 to \$150,000 with smaller grants sometimes made for pre- or post-charter planning.

For information on federal planning and start-up grants, contact the Office of Charter Schools in the State Department of Education in your state. Information on the start-up grant programs is also generally available from the technical assistance organizations (see list beginning on page 12) and from many school districts and other sponsors of charter schools. In addition, some states, including Pennsylvania and Minnesota, have state-funded start-up grants or aid. For a state-by-state directory of State Department and some district contacts, go to: www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscs_docs/gi/state_map.htm

7. Assisting with facilities or facilities financing. In addition to operating funding, start-ups and even mature chartered schools often lack access to affordable financing for facilities. A national initiative could assist them in several ways: providing facilities grants to help with renovation costs; creating a revolving loan pool affiliates could tap for lower-cost or otherwise favorable capital; forging relationships with national or regional lenders to develop products that many affiliates could use; raising funds to serve as “credit enhancement” for private financing for affiliated schools, lowering their costs by offsetting some of the lenders’ risks; actually making available, purchasing and renovating space for use by one or more schools — either permanently or as an “incubator” for the early years of schools’ lives.

NCLR has taken the most strides yet among national organizations to assist its affiliates with facilities

financing. It created the Raza Development Fund (RDF) project as a part of its Charter School Development Initiative (CSDI). Established in 1998, RDF is a support corporation of NCLR and is the largest Latino Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) in the United States. Its mission is to provide for the investment of reasonably priced capital into the Latino community for the purpose of stimulating economic and community development. RDF places a special focus on facilities acquisition and financing to house alternative education programs and community-based chartered schools. The project is designed to mitigate the inherent risk of financing chartered schools in two ways — by frontloading educational quality controls and by combining the experience and expertise available under the auspices of NCLR and RDF in charter school development and real estate development and financing.

A national organization can also seek program-related investments (PRIs) from foundations to assist with facilities financing. PRIs provide a way for foundations to use their endowments to support programmatic objectives, thus having a larger impact than they can have with grant-making alone. Unlike a grant, a PRI will generally need to be repaid over time, like a loan. National organizations often have an advantage over local affiliates in demonstrating the credit-worthiness required to secure these funds.

8. Creating or adopting one or more school design models for affiliates to use. The national networks that are assisting their affiliates with school start-up are not, as of this writing, pursuing this strategy. It is conceivable, however, that such a network could develop a school design that fits the organization's mission, or adopt one or more of the many available designs for use by affiliated schools. Creating a new design would be a vast undertaking, but could add real value if the resulting model aligned more closely with the organization's mission and target populations' needs. Conducting research on existing designs, however, might reveal that some of them fit closely with the organization's mission and its clients' needs, since many of the existing designs exist primarily to work with disadvantaged youth.

9. Obtaining economies of scale in back-office services or purchasing through direct provision or partnerships. Small new schools often end up spending a great deal of money on or diverting leadership attention to on ancillary services such as accounting, payroll, purchasing, and the like. This loss of economies of scale is one disadvantage of the autonomy from the school district many new schools have sought. A national or regional effort could help schools win back some of these economies by providing services or products to schools, most likely by forging partnerships with national or regional vendors who agree to serve the network of schools for a reduced price. A less ambitious approach would be to provide schools with tools to help identify and choose among vendors.

10. Recruiting and developing leaders to start and manage affiliated schools. Some observers of the new schools movement believe that the supply of excellent school leaders is a critical constraint on the spread of quality new schools. At least some proactive networks have sought to address this problem for their own schools by creating leadership talent identification and development programs. The most well-known is the KIPP network, which offers a fellowship program for aspiring school leaders to attend a crash business / school leadership course at a prominent business school; intern at an existing KIPP network school; get help developing a charter application (or negotiating a contract with the district) and receive ongoing support from the network as they begin operating their own schools.

11. Building community relationships to pave the way for the development of new schools. KIPP is also noted for the "trailblazing" its national office does in local communities prior to launching a KIPP school. National staff work with local individuals to create the relationships that are essential to the success of a chartered school – relationships with the school district/sponsor, key community leaders, providers of assistance and funding, and others.

* * * * *

Taken together, this list of 11 options for providing national-level leadership and support represents an enormous effort and would require substantial resources. However, taking on parts of the list, or ramping up a national effort over time could be a viable organizational strategy that could help support a broader mission and provide a valuable set of services to local affiliates all across the country.

NATIONAL NETWORKS SUPPORTING NEW SCHOOLS ACTIVITY

National Council of La Raza (NCLR)

NCLR's Charter School Development Initiative (CSDI) is a central vehicle by which the missions and strategic plans of NCLR and its Center for Community Educational Excellence (C²E²) will be accomplished. Through the initiative, NCLR seeks to establish and strengthen a national, multi-community network of Latino-serving chartered schools that will deliver quality educational services to students, be responsive to parents and communities, empower and reward teachers, and result in measurable improvements in student achievement.

NCLR seeks to assist and empower Latino serving community-based organizations to open new chartered schools and improve the operations, offerings, and performance of existing affiliate chartered schools. NCLR and C²E² expect to be involved with the creation of up to 50 new affiliate conceived and operated chartered schools, while at the same time assisting current affiliate-operated chartered schools in improving or expanding their existing programs.

Fundamental goals:

- To strengthen the quality of educational services and programs offered by NCLR affiliates and Latino serving community based organizations by providing assistance in developing the capacity to create and successfully operate chartered schools that are linguistically and culturally appropriate and directly meet the unique educational needs of Latinos of all ages.
- To foster ongoing community development and empowerment on the part of affiliates by building and improving chartered schools that are community-based and community controlled.
- To promote and publicize compelling examples and models of high achieving, community-based, chartered schools, thereby providing a mechanism to inform affiliates and traditional educational systems about best

practices that effectively serve Latino student populations and English language learners.

Primary strategies:

- Award planning grants to organizations that are interested in developing new chartered schools.
- Award start-up, implementation, and/or follow-up grants to affiliates or pending affiliates that have received approval of a charter application are eligible.
- Award small pre-acquisition grants and for facilities acquisition, renovation, and financing assistance through NCLR's Raza Development Fund.
- Provide on-site technical assistance and promote and sponsor professional development opportunities.
- Produce and distribute a series of resource guides for affiliates, including "Are You Ready to Begin the Charter School Planning Process? A Self-Assessment to Determine Readiness (Part I)" and "So You Want To Start A Charter School."

For more information:

Jim Ford, Consultant
Charter School Development Initiative
National Council of La Raza
1111 19th Street NW #1000
Washington, D.C. 20036
602.417.1407
fordje@earthlink.net -- www.nclr.org

YMCA of the USA

The YMCA of the USA is comprised of more than 2,400 nonprofit community service organizations. Working in over 10,000 communities nationwide, its mission includes meeting the health and social service needs of adults and children.

Several YMCA affiliates are linked to chartered schools. And, the national organization is providing information and assistance to local YMCAs that are exploring chartered schools, in the beginning stage of

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development or that simply want to learn more about chartered schools and the YMCA's potential role. This initiative is part of the YMCA Strong Communities Agenda, a national strategy to give all YMCAs an opportunity to expand their work with children and families in low income, underserved and disadvantaged communities.

Primary strategies:

- Coordinate national consultations that provide internal technical assistance to YMCAs seeking entry into the charter school arena
- Connect YMCAs to external organizations, consultants, management companies and others to support school development
- Develop a technical assistance manual (a compilation of information and resources) to guide YMCAs in researching and developing chartered schools.

Additional support:

- Host site visits to chartered schools, primarily those run by YMCAs.
- Disseminate printed materials that promote the start-up of chartered schools.
- Promote charter resources and sponsors workshops at YMCA national assemblies.

For more information:

Glenn Haley, Director
Strong Communities Agenda
YMCA of the USA
101 N. Wacker Drive
Chicago, IL 60606
(800) 872-9622, ext. 8412
(414) 332-6234 -- (414) 332-6238 (f)
glenn.haley@ymca.net -- www.ymca.net

YouthBuild USA

Founded in 1990, YouthBuild USA is a national nonprofit organization that supports a nationwide network of 180 local YouthBuild programs. In YouthBuild programs, unemployed and undereducated young people ages 16-24 work toward their GED or high school diploma

while learning construction skills by building affordable housing for homeless and lower-income people. Strong emphasis is placed on leadership development, community service and the creation of a positive mini-community of adults and youth committed to success. Since 1994, more than 20,000 young people have helped rebuild their communities transform their lives and create more than 7,000 units of affordable housing.

YouthBuild has launched a Charter Schools Initiative. In 2003, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's awarded \$5.4 million to YouthBuild as one of its alternative secondary school grantees. The initiative is part of a larger effort of the Gates Foundation to support small alternative schools that can demonstrate effective ways of educating students who do not thrive in traditional public schools.

This Charter Schools Initiative seeks to strengthen the existing network of 23 diploma-granting YouthBuild programs and chartered schools and to establish 10 new ones. This network of 33 YouthBuild schools will be consistent with the instructional design principles and attributes of high achieving schools laid out by the Gates Foundation and consistent with YouthBuild's philosophy.

The Charter Schools Initiative is designed to reach beyond the 33 schools directly involved. By focusing on the development of new schools, YouthBuild expects dramatic changes in the image of the YouthBuild movement and of the national organization and in its capacity to lead more GED-based schools to aim to become diploma granting over the next decade.

For more information:

Sangeeta Tyagi, Director of Education
YouthBuild USA
58 Day Street
P.O.Box 440322
Somerville, MA 02144
(617) 623-9900 -- 617-623-4331 (f)
styagi@youthbuild.org
www.youthbuild.org

CONTACTS/RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The following section lists sources of useful information for national offices and local CBOs researching and operating chartered schools. The categories of information include:

- * National Online Resources
- * State Charter Support Organizations
- * Technical Assistance Publications
- * Resources for Developing and Sustaining Partnerships and Collaborations
- * Integrating Support Services into the Educational Program of Charter Schools
- * Electronic Sample Documents

NATIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES FOR NEW SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

The following national websites have information that is either generic or could adapted for use in any state:

U.S. Department of Education – www.uscharterschools.org
Center for Education Reform – www.edreform.com
National Charter School Alliance – www.charterfriends.org

National Association of Charter School Authorizers – www.charterauthorizers.org
National Charter School Clearinghouse – www.ncsc.info
Education/Evolving — www.educationevolving.org

DIRECTORY OF STATE CHARTER SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Chartered schools are authorized by state laws that vary greatly in setting the ground rules for both starting and operating these less regulated, more autonomous public schools. So, not surprisingly, the best resources to assist with the planning, start-up and operations of chartered schools are also organized at the state/sub-state level.

Most states with any significant number of chartered schools now have one or more technical assistance organizations – generally either non-profit resource centers or membership-based associations of chartered schools in the state. In some cases, they are working to pass a charter law in a state that doesn't now have one.

Following is a directory of state-level charter school support organizations. Several of these organizations have published resource guides for new school developers and operators in their states; in many cases these publications are available on their organizations' websites. Because this contact information changes frequently, please check for updates at the following internet address: www.charterfriends.org/contacts.html.

ALASKA

ALASKA CHARTER SCHOOL ASSOC
Barb Gerard, Secretary
Academy Charter
School 260 S. Cobb Street
Palmer, AK 99645
907-746-2358 -- 907-746-2368 (fax)
e-mail: Bgerard@msb.mat-su.k12.ak.us

ARIZONA

ARIZONA CHARTER SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION
Margaret Roush-Meier, Executive
Director 721 North San Francisco Street
Flagstaff, AZ 86001 928-779-2761
e-mail: mroushmeier@qwest.net
web site: <http://www.azcharters.org/>

ARIZONA REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

Rick Brown, Director
1840 E. Benson
Highway Tucson, AZ 85714
520-294-6997 x2019 520-682-4926 (fax)
rbrown@resourcenter.org
<http://www.resourcenter.org/>

ARKANSAS

ARKANSAS CHARTER SCHOOL
RESOURCE CENTER
Michael T. Scoles
University of Central Arkansas
201 Donaghey Ave. Conway, AR 72035
501-450-5418
e-mail: michaels@mail.uca.edu
ACSRC@org.uca.edu

CALIFORNIA

CA CHARTER SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION
Caprice Young, President/CEO
P.O. Box 811610
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3700
213-244-1446/213-244-1448 (fax)
916-448-0995 (Sacramento phone)
info@charterassociation.org
www.charterassociation.org

CHARTER SCHOOLS DEVELOP CENTER
Eric Premack / Laurie Gardner
Foley Hall #327 -- California State University
6000 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95819-6018
916-278-6069 -- fax 916-278-4094
epremack@calstate.edu
lgardner@calstate.edu
web site: www.cacharterschools.org

How National Organizations Can Support the New Schools Strategy

CHARTERVOICE
2443 Fair Oaks Blvd., #124
Sacramento, CA 95825-7684
info@chartervoice.org
http://www.chartervoice.org/who.htm

COLORADO

COLORADO LEAGUE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS
Jim Griffin, Director
1601 Vine St.
Denver, CO 80206
303-989-5356 office
303-984-9345 fax
email: jm@coloradoleague.org
web site: <http://www.coloradoleague.org/>

CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT CHARTER SCHOOLS NETWORK
Richard Bentley, Treasurer
88 Hillandale Road
Westport CT
203-227-2952/203-227-2956 (fax)
e-mail: bentleybentley@hotmail.com
web site: <http://www.ctcharterschools.org/>

DELAWARE

DELAWARE CHARTER SCHOOLS NETWORK
Martha Manning, Director
100 West 10th
Street, Suite 403
Wilmington, DE 19801
302-778-5999
302-778-5998 (fax)
e-mail: martha@decharternetwork.org
Web site: www.decharternetwork.org

INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Gary W. Fredericks, President and CEO
100 W. 10th Street, Suite 403
Wilmington, DE 19801
302-656-4737
301-656-4738 (fax)
gfredericks@innovativeschools.org
Web site: www.innovativeschools.org

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

FRIENDS OF CHOICE IN URBAN SCHOOLS (FOCUS)
Robert Cane, Director
1530 16th Street NW #1001
Washington, DC 20036
202-387-0405 202-667-3798(fax)
e-mail: info@focus-dccharter.org
web site: <http://www.focus-dccharter.org/>

DC CHARTER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
Joanne Hurlston
202-261-0215

DC PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COOPERATIVE
Julie Camerata, Executive Director
e-mail: jcamerata@aol.com

FLORIDA

FLORIDA CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTER
Cathy Wooley-Brown, Director
Christy Noe, Assistant Director
University of South Florida - HMS 401
4202 E. Fowler Ave.
Tampa, FL 33620-8360
800-214-4247 813-974-8350
813-974-7823 (fax)
e-mail: cathy@iirp.coedu.usf.edu
e-mail: christy@iirp.coedu.usf.edu
web site: www.charterschools.usf.edu/

FLORIDA CONSORTIUM OF CHARTER SCHOOLS
Robert Haag, President
1500 Cordova Rd. #210
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316
954-463-9595 954-463-9494 (fax)
e-mail: r.haag@floridacharterschools.org
www.floridacharterschools.org

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF CHARTER SCHOOLS
Neil Drake, President
4180 NE 15 St.,
Gainesville, FL 32609
352-376-4014
352-376-3345 fax
NDrake2513@aol.com

CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY CENTER
Dr. Peter Doherty, Program Director
215 Stone Building
FSU College of Education
Tallahassee, FL 32306
850-644-0336/866-556-0682 (fax)
pdoherty@csac.fsu.edu or
sbanner@csac.fsu.edu
<http://csac.fsu.edu/>

GEORGIA

GEORGIA CHARTER SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION
Phil Andrews, Executive Director
2606 Alston Drive
Atlanta, GA 30317
404-371-9992 404-373-4354 (fax)
e-mail: pandrews@Gacharters.org
Web site: <http://www.GAcharters.org/>

CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTER
Kelly McCutcheon, Dr. Holly Robinson
Georgia Public Policy Foundation
6100 Lake Forest Drive, Suite 110
Atlanta, GA 30328
404-256-4050 404-256-9909
e-mail: hrobinson@gppf.org
web site: <http://www.gppf.org/>

HAWAII

HAWAII CHARTER SCHOOLS NETWORK
Donna Estomago
Lanikai Public Charter School
140 Alala Road
Kailua, HI 96734
808-266-7844
estomagop001@hawaii.rr.com

NA LEI NA'AUAO
Native Hawaiian Charter School Alliance
Dr. Ku Kahakalau
65-1170 Opello Road
P.O. Box 393
Kamuela, HI 96743 808-887-8144.
kukahaka@gte.net

HAWAII CHARTER SCHOOLS RESOURCE CENTER
Nina Buchanan, Director
University of Hawaii
200 W. Kawili Street
Hilo, HI 96720
phone: (808) 974-7583 e-mail:
ninab@hawaii.edu

IDAHO

IDAHO CHARTER SCHOOL NETWORK
Kerri Whitehead, Director
Center for School Improvement
MS 1745 Boise State University
Boise, ID 83725
208-426-2243 -- 208-426-3564 (fax)
e-mail: kwhiteh@boisestate.edu
web site: <http://csi.boisestate.edu/icsn>

ILLINOIS

LEADERSHIP FOR QUALITY EDUCATION
John Ayers, Director
Bank One Plaza, Suite 3120
Chicago, IL 60603
312-853-1206/1210/3691/312-853-1214 fax
email: jayers@lqe.org
<http://www.lqe.org/>

CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTER
Makiyah Moody, Director
Leadership for Quality Education
21 S. Clark St. Suite 3120
Chicago, IL 60603
(T) 312-853-3696 (F) 312-853-3413
mmoody@lqe.org

How National Organizations Can Support the New Schools Strategy

ILLINOIS NETWORK OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

Kathleen Harris, Executive Director
1 East Pedway Drive, Suite 2810
Chicago, IL 60601
312-261-5269 312-261-5265 (fax)
info@incschools.org www.incschools.org

INDIANA

CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTER OF INDIANA

Dolly Bauman
10 W. Market St., Suite 1990
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-464-2694 317-464-2039 (fax)
e-mail: dbauman@indianacharters.org
Web site: <http://www.indianacharters.org/>

IN CHARTER SCHOOLS SERVICES CTR

Kevin Teasley
302 South Meridian
Street, Suite 201
Indianapolis, IN 46225
317-524-3770 317-524-3773 (fax)
teasleygeo@aol.com
www.geofoundation.org

CHARTER SCHOOL ASSOC OF INDIANA

Ron Gibson, President
10 W. Market Street
#1990 Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-464-2679
rgibson@indianacharters.org

IOWA

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Charter Schools
Laurie Phelan
400 E. 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319
515-242-5611
laurie.phelan@ed.state.ia.us

KANSAS

NORTHEAST KANSAS EDUCATIONAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE

Jim Wheeler, Executive Director
601 Woodson, Box 320
Lecompton, KA 66050
785-887-6711 -- 785-887-6711 (fax)
jwheeler@nekesc.org
www.nekesc.org

LOUISIANA

LA CHARTER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Jim Geiser, Director
9119 Redbud Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70815
225-603-7706
jimgeiser3@cox.net
www.lacsa.org

MAINE

MAINE ASSOCIATION FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS

Judith Jones
199 Hatchet Mountain
Road Hope, Maine 04847
207-763-3576 207-763-4552 (fax)
e-mail: wijones@tidewater.net
www.mainecharterschools.org

MARYLAND

MARYLAND CHARTER SCHOOL NETWORK

Joni Gardner
597 Brightwood Rd.
Millersville, MD 21108
410-729-1585 410-987-3889 (fax)
e-mail: mcsn@comcast.net
www.groups.yahoo.com/group/MarylandCharterschoolNetwork

CENTER FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS IN FREDERICK COUNTY

Leslie Mansfield
PO Box 24
Braddock Heights, MD 21714-0024
301-473-8051
e-mail: CCSFredCo@cs.com

MASSACHUSETTS

MASSACHUSETTS CHARTER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Marc Kenen, Ed.D., Executive Director
11 Beacon Street, Suite 430
Boston, MA 02108
617-973-6655
P.O. Box 147/132 Main Street
Haydenville, MA 01039
413-268-3361 413-268-3185 (fax)
e-mail: kenen@masscharterschools.org

BUILDING EXCELLENT SCHOOLS

Linda Brown, Executive Director
262 Washington St. 7th Fl.
Boston, MA 02109
617-227-4545 office 617-227-4551 (fax)
lbrown@buildingexcellentschools.org
www.buildingexcellentschools.org

MICHIGAN

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMIES

Dan Quisenberry, President
215 S. Washington Sq. #135
Lansing, MI 48933
517-374-9167 office
517-374-9197 fax
email: mapsa@charterschools.org
<http://www.charterschools.org/>

METRO DETROIT ALLIANCE FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS

Nawal Hamadeh, Vice President
PO Box 1440
Dearborn, MI 48121
313-598-3344 -- 313-581-9475 (fax)
e-mail: hsemco@aol.com

NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

Teresa Staten, President
2520 South University Park
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858
989-774-2999 -- 989-774-2591 (fax)
e-mail: info@nationalcharterschools.org
Web site: www.nationalcharterschools.org

MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF CHARTER SCHOOLS (MACS)

Steve Dess, Executive Director
1295 Bandana Blvd. #165
St. Paul, MN 55108
651-644-0031 office -- 651-644-0433 (fax)
email: stevedess@mncharterschools.org
Web site: <http://www.mncharterschools.org>

MACS SPECIAL EDUCATION PROJECT

Cori Wahl, Project Director
1295 Bandana Blvd. N., Suite 240
Saint Paul, MN 55108
Telephone: 651-644-6947
Fax: 651-251-5371
cwahl@mncharterschools.org
www.mncharterschools.org/tech_specialed.htm

MINNESOTA CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTER

Cari Forman, Director
Center for School Change
HHH Institute of Public Affairs
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455
612-624-8616 612-625-0104 (fax)
cforman@hhh.umn.edu
<http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/school-change/>

CENTER FOR SCHOOL CHANGE

Joe Nathan, Director
HHH Institute of Public Affairs
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Phone: (612) 626-1834
Fax: (612) 625-0104
jnathan@hhh.umn.edu
<http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/school-change/>

How National Organizations Can Support the New Schools Strategy

EDUCATION|EVOLVING
Ted Kolderie and Joe Graba
Jon Schroeder, Coordinator
1295 Bandana Blvd., Suite 165
St. Paul, MN 55108
651-644-6115/651-644-0433 (fax)
info@educationevolving.org
www.educationevolving.org

MISSISSIPPI

HAYES COOPER CENTER
Beverly Hardy, Director
500 N. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Merigold, MN 38759
662-748-2734
bbhardy123@hotmail.com

MISSOURI

CHARTER SCHOOLS INFORMATION
CENTER
Dave Camden, Director
35 North Central Avenue, Suite 335
St. Louis, MO 63105-3871
314-726-6474 office 314-721-4729 fax
email: mocsic@aol.com
http://www.mocsic.org/

THE LEARNING EXCHANGE CHARTER
SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP
Kathleen Boyle Dalen
3132 Pennsylvania
Kansas City, MO 64111
816-751-4116 816-751-4101 (fax) e-mail:
kboyledalen@lx.org
Web site: http://www.lx.org/

NEBRASKA

NEBRASKA CHARTER SCHOOL
COALITION
Rhonda Stuberg
230 68th Avenue
Omaha, NE 68132
402-558-4644
e-mail: rstuberg1@cox.net
web site:
http://spsware.com/necharterschools

NEVADA

CENTER FOR CHARTER SCHOOL
DEVELOPMENT/NEVADA CHARTER
SCHOOL ALLIANCE
Ricci Rodriguez-Elkins
P.O. Box 50128
Sparks, NV 89435-0128
775-626-4619 (phone and fax)
e-mail: ricci@ed-excellence.org
web site: http://www.ed-excellence.org/

NEW HAMPSHIRE

NEW HAMPSHIRE CHARTER SCHOOL
RESOURCE CENTER
Susan Hollins, Director
PO Box 2464
Concord, NH 03753
603-863-4411/603-863-0608
603-863-4880(fax)
e-mail: SuefromNH@aol.com

NEW JERSEY

NEW JERSEY CHARTER PUBLIC
SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION
Jennifer Langer, Executive Director
349 West State Street
Trenton, NJ 078618
609-989-9700 -- 609-989-9745 (fax)
e-mail: ldonnelly@njcpsa.org
www.njcpsa.org

NEW JERSEY CHARTER SCHOOL
RESOURCE CENTER
Heather Ngoma, Director
Rutgers University-Center for Effective
School Practices
1 Possumtown Road
Piscataway, NJ 08854
732-564-9087
email: hngoma@rci.rutgers.edu
Web site: http://cesp.rutgers.edu/csrf

NEW MEXICO

NM COALITION FOR CHARTER
SCHOOLS
Pam Pierce
P.O. Box 8624
Santa Fe, NM 87504-8624
505-983-1775 505-983-1998 (fax)
e-mail: bpp@hargray.com

NEW YORK

NEW YORK CHARTER SCHOOL
RESOURCE CENTER
Gerry Vazquez, Director
250 W. 34th St. -- 36th Fl.
New York, NY 10119
212-896-3901/212-896-3902 (fax)
1 Commerce Plaza Suite 402
99 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12210
Phone: 888-343-6907 Fax: 877-248-5326
Email: info@nycsrc.org

NEW YORK CHARTER SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION
Bill Phillips, President
One Commerce Plaza, Suite #402
99 Washington Avenue Albany, NY 12210
518-694-3110 518-694-3115
e-mail: bphillips@NYCSA.org
www.nycsa.org

CENTER FOR GOVERNMENTAL
RESEARCH
Kent Gardner
37 South Washington Street
Rochester, NY 14608
716-325-6360 -- 716-325-2612 (fax)
518-542-4205 (Albany office)
e-mail: kgardner@cgr.org
http://www.cgr.org/

CHARTER SCHOOL ASSISTANCE
CENTER NEW VISIONS FOR PUBLIC
SCHOOLS
Beth Lief, President
E. Lydell Carter, Director
96 Morton Street
New York City, NY 10014
212-645-5110 x3049 212-645-7409 (fax)
e-mail: lcarter@newvisions.org
web site: http://www.newvisions.org/

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL
INNOVATION-PUBLIC EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION-CHARTER SCHOOL
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER
Harvey Newman, Director
28 West 44th Street
New York, NY 10036
212-302-8800
212-302-0088 (fax)
hnewman@cei-pea.org

NORTH CAROLINA

UNCOMMON SCHOOLS
Jim Diana, Director
3112 Planters Ridge Road
Charlotte NC 28207
336-841-4663
jdiana@carolina.rr.com

NORTH CAROLINA LEAGUE OF
CHARTER SCHOOLS
Roger Gerber, Director
200 Stags Trail
Chapel Hill, NC 27516-7310
919-967-1029 office & fax
e-mail: roger@charterleague
http://www.charterleague.org/

SELF-HELP, COMMUNITY FACILITIES
FUND
Reginald Johnson
PO Box 3619
Durham, NC 27702-3619
919-956-4456 919-956-4600 (fax)
e-mail: reginald@self-help.org
http://www.self-help.org/

OHIO

OHIO CHARTER SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

Steve Ramsey, President
Anita Nelam/Clint Satow, Vice Presidents
50 West Broad Street #3050
Columbus, OH 43215
614-221-3992 00 614-225-0662 (fax)
sramsey@ecr.net
cfsatow@ohiocharterschools.org;
AnitaNelam@aol.com
<http://www.OhioCharterSchools.org>

DAYTON EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER

Myrrha Pammer, Director
One Chamber Plaza
Dayton OH 45402-2400
937-226-8282 937-226-8254 (fax)
E-mail: Myrrhapam@aol.com
mpammer@dacc.org
Web: www.educaitonresourcecenter.org/

LUCAS COUNTY EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER

Tom Baker, Superintendent
Peg Hull, Inservice Coordinator
415 Emerald Avenue - Second Floor
Toledo, OH 43602
419-246-3137 (Baker) 419-246-3123 (Hull)
e-mail: lc_mjm@nwoca.org

OKLAHOMA

OK CHARTER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Janet Barisse
Independence Charter Middle School
3232 NW 65th St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73116
(405)590-4797
e-mail: jajojobe@msn.com

OREGON

OR CHARTER SCHOOL SERV CENTER

Rob Kremer, Director
9498 SW Barbur Blvd. #302
Portland, OR 97219
503-244-7523 503-244-3372 (fax)
rob@oregoneducation.org
John Liljegren, Field Director
5832 SW 52nd Ave.
Portland, OR 97221
503-246-7883 -- 503-246-7883 (fax)
e-mail: johnliljegren@msn.com
<http://www.oregoneducation.org/>

LEAGUE OF OREGON CHARTER SCHOOLS

Mary Northern, President
37355 Northern Drive
Brownsville, OR 97327
541-466-5818 541-258-1898 (fax)
e-mail: Lmnorthern@proaxis.com

PENNSYLVANIA

CHARTER SCHOOL PROJECT

Chenzie Grignano, Director
507 Rockwell Hall - Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, PA 15282
412-396-4492 office 412-396-1776 fax
email: grignano@duq.edu
<http://www.bus.duq.edu/projects/charter/>

DREXEL/FOUNDATIONS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS

Phil Esbrandt, Director
2 Executive Drive #1
Moorestown, NJ 08057
888-977-5437 -- 856-533-1601 (fax)
e-mail: pesbrandt@foundationsinc.org

PA COALITION OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

Timothy H. Daniels, Executive Director
311 South Church Street
West Chester, PA 19382
877-572-9689 -- 801-382-0384 (fax)
tdaniels@pachartercoalition.org
www.pachartercoalition.org

PA CHARTER RESOURCE CENTER

Robert W. O'Donnell, Chairman Melanie
Burke Reiser, Director
2 Penn Center, Suite 1100
Philadelphia PA 19102
215-557-9919 215-563-6555 (fax)
e-mail: csrctr1@aol.com

RHODE ISLAND

RHODE ISLAND LEAGUE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

Robert Pilkington
42 Weybosset #502
Providence, RI 02903
401-521-9433 401-521-9434 (fax)
e-mail: leagueofcharters@aol.com
Web site: www.RIcharterschools.com

SOUTH CAROLINA

SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

David A. Church, President
103 North Main St. #200
Greenville, SC 29601
864-232-8654 -- 864-232-8851 (fax)
email: davidchurch@gtchs.org

TENNESSEE

CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTER OF TENNESSEE

Dedrick Briggs, Director
511 Union Street Suite 740
Nashville, TN 37219
615-248-6401 615-250-0586 (fax)
email: dbriggs@myaetherbb.com

TEXAS

ASSOC OF TX CHARTER EDUCATORS

Lisa Kesterson
PO Box 684547
Austin, TX 78768-4884
512-583-3245 512-835-8384 (fax)
e-mail: lkesterson@aceoftexas.org
web site: <http://www.aceoftexas.org/>

CHARTER SCHOOL REC CTR OF TEXAS

Patsy O'Neill
40 NE Loop 410 - Ste. 408
San Antonio, TX 78216
210-348-7890 office 210-348-7899 fax
email: oneillp@texas.net
<http://www.charterstexas.org/>

UTAH

UTAH CHARTER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Steve Winitzky
Center City School
55 N. Redwood Rd.
Salt Lake City, UT 84116
801-596-8489 801-521-4181 (fax)
email: steve@centercityschool.org

VERMONT

VERMONTERS FOR BETTER EDUCATION

Libby Sternberg
170 North Church Street
Rutland VT 05701
802-773-5240--Lsteenberga@aol.com

VIRGINIA

THOMAS JEFFERSON INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Chris Braunlich
9035 Golden Sunset Lane
Springfield, VA 22153
703-922-6768 703-455-1531 (fax)
c.braunlich@att.net

WASHINGTON

EDUCATION EXCELLENCE COALITION

Jim & Fawn Spady, co-directors
4426 - 2nd Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98105-6191
Jim's office phone: 206/634-0589
Jim's cell phone: 206/949-8484
Fawn's cell phone: 206/295-6505
JimSpady@aol.com -- Fawn@winisp.net
web site: <http://www.wacharterschools.org/>

CENTER ON REINVENTING PUBLIC ED

Robin Lake
PO Box 353060
Seattle, WA 98195
206-616-1797 206-221-7402 (fax)
e-mail: rlake@u.washington.edu

How National Organizations Can Support the New Schools Strategy

WISCONSIN

INSTITUTE FOR THE TRANSFORMATION
OF LEARNING

Howard Fuller, Director
Cindy Zautcke, Assoc. Director
Marquette University
750 N. 18th Street -- PO Box 1881
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881
414-288-5775 Fuller 414-288-1540 Zautcke
414-288-6199 fax

cindy.zautcke@marquette.edu
Fuller59h@aol.com web site:
<http://www.itlmuonline.org/>

WI CHARTER SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION
Senn Brown, Secretary
PO Box 628243
Middleton, WI 53562-8243
608-238-7491 608-663-5262 (fax)
e-mail: sennb@charter.net
Web site: www.wicharterschools.org

WYOMING

WY CITIZENS FOR ED CHOICE

Margarita Rovani
5635 Sunset Drive Laramie, WY 82070
307-742-6515
e-mail: snowyrangeAcademy@yahoo.com

CHARTER FRIENDS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PUBLICATIONS

Charter Friends National Network (CFNN), now in transition to a new national charter school leadership organization, has published a number of resource guides that are available upon request and online at www.charterfriends.org.

- **A Guide for Developing a Business Plan for Charter Schools** (February 1998). This publication offers practical suggestions, and outline and sample budgets that can be used by charter developers in preparing a business plan to be included with a charter application and with grant and loan requests.
- **Accountability for Student Performance – An Annotated Resource Guide for Shaping an Accountability Plan for Your Charter School** (June 1998). This resource guide offers dozens of resources grouped under six key questions schools need to ask and answer as they develop accountability plans that match their unique missions and goals.
- **Charter School Facilities: A Resource Guide on Development and Financing** (April 2000). CFNN and the National Cooperative Bank Development Corporation have collaborated on this guide that walks charter operators through all the major steps of facility planning, development and financing.
- **Charter Schools and Special Education: A Guide for Navigating the Challenges and Opportunities of Serving Students with Disabilities** (April 2001). The second edition of a pioneering work on special education and chartered schools that was originally produced in 1997 by Project FORUM at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education.
- **Charting a Clear Course: A Resource Guide for Charter Schools Contracting with School Management Organizations** (Second edition, April 2001). This publication raises common issues that have arisen in contracting arrangements, noting important considerations and options for both parties. It includes examples from existing contracts on key issues like roles and responsibilities of charter boards, performance evaluation and compensation.
- **Creating an Effective Charter School Governing Board** (December 2000). Produced in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, this guide offers strategic advice for meeting critical challenges charter governing boards must meet.
- **Creating and Sustaining Family Friendly Charter Schools** (December 2000). Produced in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, this guide helps charter founders develop schools that are connected to their communities and involve and serve families whose children attend them.
- **Employer-Linked Charter Schools: An Introduction** (June 2000). Produced jointly by Public Policy Associates, CFNN and the National Alliance of Business, this guide includes profiles on employer-linked charters as well as experience and advice from successfully operating schools on how to form employer-charter school partnerships.
- **How Community-Based Organizations Can Start Charter Schools** (2001). Produced in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, this guide focuses on lessons learned and best practices in starting and operating chartered schools in partnership with established community-based organizations.
- **If the Shoe Fits! A Guide for Charter Schools Thinking About a Pre-existing Comprehensive School Design** (August 1998). This resource guide is designed for charters to use in deciding whether a partnership with a school design group could be in their interest and offers some helpful hints for evaluating individual school designs to determine if there might be a mutually beneficial "fit."
- **Mobilizing and Motivating Staff to Get Results** (December 2000). Produced in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, this guide is designed to help charter operators think creatively about their use of compensation and benefits, recruitment, selection, professional development, staff organization and performance evaluation to best serve schools.

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- **Out of the Box: An Idea Book on Charter School Facilities Financing** (June 1999). This publication aims to help charter leaders identify creative ways to finance facilities, drawing on the real-life experiences of dozens of chartered schools.
- **Paying for the Charter Schoolhouse: Policy Options for Charter School Facilities Financing** (February 1999). This 22-page resource guide contains both policy options and examples of current initiatives to use public financing and public-private partnerships to help meet the facilities needs of chartered schools.
- **Personnel Policies and Practices: Understanding Employment Law** (December 2000). Produced in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, this guide is designed to help charter operators develop basic personnel policies that meet all federal, state and local regulations and law.

OTHER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PUBLICATIONS

Numerous organizations nationwide have produced reports and guides on developing chartered schools based on their respective research and experiences. Below are few publications on charter school development that are available online.

- **Accessing Federal Programs: A Guidebook for Charter School Operators and Developers**, Public Charter Schools Program. A guidebook that provides basic information about the federal programs and resources available to chartered schools. This on-line document contains descriptions of federal programs, charter school initiatives, and contact information for technical assistance providers and state charter school representatives (tel. 877-4ED-PUBS; www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscsc_docs/fr/pcsp_info.htm).
- **Are You Ready to Begin the Charter School Planning Process? A Self-Assessment to Determine Readiness** (Part I), National Council of La Raza. (www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/laraza1.doc).
- **So You Want To Start A Charter School**, National Council of La Raza (www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/laraza2.doc).
- **The Landscape of Educational Contracting: Helpful Resources**. A list of resources for new school organizers considering contracting with educational service providers (www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/landscape.doc).
- **The New Schools Handbook: Strategic Advice for Successful School Start Up in Partnership with School District Officials, Staff and Community Members**, Robin J. Lake, Abigail Winger & Jeff Petty (www.crpe.org/pubs.shtml#forNewSchools).

RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPING AND SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

The following resources are on the subject of developing and sustaining partnerships and collaborations involving nonprofits:

- Arsenault, Jane, Forging Nonprofit Alliances, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1998.
- Kohm, Amelia, La Piana, David, and Gowdy, Heather, Strategic Restructuring: Findings from a Study of Integration and Alliances among Nonprofit Social Service and Cultural Organizations in the United States, Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute, 2000.
- Mattessich, Paul W. and Monsey, Barbara R., Collaboration: What Makes It Work, A Review of Research Literature on Factors Influencing Successful Collaboration, 2nd Edition, St. Paul, MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 2001.
- Mattessich, Paul, Murray-Close, Marta, Monsey, Barbara, Collaboration: What Makes It Work, 2nd Edition, St. Paul, MN: Wilder Publishing Center, 2001. (This publication summarizes research drawn from close to 300 research studies on collaborations and partnerships. The publication includes the Collaboration Factors Inventory. While not specifically designed for a CBO-linked new school partnership, the inventory can be adapted for use as a "partnership effectiveness" assessment tool. www.wilder.org)
- McLaughlin, Thomas A., Nonprofit Mergers and Alliances: A Strategic Planning Guide. NY: John Wiley & Sons 1998.
- The National Assembly, The Community Collaboration Manual. Washington, DC: The National Assembly, 1991, 1993.
- Rackham, Neil, Friedman, Lawrence, and, Ruff, Richard, Getting Partnering Right. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996.
- Sharken Simon, Judith, The Wilder Nonprofit Field Guide to Conducting Successful Focus Groups, Amherst Wilder Foundation, 1999.

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- Winer, Michael and Ray, Karen, Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining and Enjoying the Journey, St. Paul: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1992.
- Video: "Strategic Alliances: Enhancing Your Effectiveness," from the Excellence in Nonprofit Leadership and Management Series produced by The Learning Institute for Nonprofit Organizations. (tel: 800-424-7367; www.uwex.edu/li)

INTEGRATING SUPPORT SERVICES IN DEVOLOPING NEW SCHOOLS

Here are a number of useful resources for CBOs and others wishing to integrate a range of youth and family support services into a school design.

Publications

- Dryfoos, Joan, Full Service Schools. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1994.
- Calfee, Carol, Wittwer, Frank & Meredith, Mimi, Building the Full Service School: A Step by Step Guide. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1998.
- Children's Aid Society, Building A Community School: A Revolutionary Design in Public Education, New York, NY: Children's Aid Society of New York City, 1995.
- Metaville, Atelia, Learning Together: A Look at 20 School-Community Initiatives, Flint, MI: Mott Foundation, 1998. (Executive Summary available at www.mott.org/publications/mt97_learning_together.pdf. For a free copy of full report, make request by e-mail infocenter@mott.org)

Organizations

- **The Search Institute:** Offers a training program "Building Developmental Assets in School Communities" that shows educators how to initiate, increase, and strengthen the asset-building efforts in a school. (tel: 800-888-7828; www.search-institute.org)
Its publications include:
Starkman, Neal, Scales, Peter C. and, Roberts, Clay, Great Places to Learn: How Asset-Building Schools Help Students Succeed, Minneapolis, MN: The Search Institute, 1999.
Draayer, Donald, and Roehlkepartain, Eugene C., Learning and Living: How Asset Building for Youth Can Unify a School's Mission, Minneapolis, MN: The Search Institute, 1998.
- **Academy for Educational Development:** Studies schools founded and operated by community-based organizations. (tel: 202-884-8000; www.aed.org).
Two related policy briefs are available:
CBO Schools: A History of High Standards for All. (Available at no charge at: www.aed.org/CBO_Schools/cboschools2.html).
CBO Schools: An Education Resource Whose Time Has Come (www.aed.org/CBO_Schools/CBOSchools1.html).
- **Public Policy Associates:** Provides an array of technical assistance publications to support educators and business partners as they plan and implement employer-linked schools. (tel: 517-485-4477; www.publicpolicy.com)
Access publications at: www.employercharterschools.com/learn/pubs.htm
- **National Center for Educational Alliances:** Works to expand opportunities for underprepared students in the United States and abroad by supporting collaboration among schools and other organizations. (tel: 718-289-5164; www.ncup.org)
- **National Association of Partners In Education:** Publishes a number of how-to guides on all aspects of school community partnership building. (tel: 703-836-4880; www.napehq.org)

Electronic Sample Documents

Below are websites to access sample documents for planning and operating new schools.

- **Bylaw Excerpts Showing How Common Partnership Structuring Issues Are Being Addressed.**
www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/bylaw1.doc
- **Charter School Bylaws.**
www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/bylaw2.doc

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www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/bylaw3.doc

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/bylaw4.doc

- **Charter School Planning Timetable**, Milwaukee Center for Independence.
www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/timetable.doc
- **Charter School Vision Worksheet**, Frank Martinelli, The Center for Public Skills Training, Milwaukee, WI.
www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/vision.doc
- **Charter School Planning Project Interest Form** (recruitment flyer)
www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/interest.doc
- **Governance and Administrative Reporting Structure Overview**, East Bay Conservation Corps Charter School.
www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/structure.doc
- **Job Description: Family Support Services Coordinator**, O'Farrell Charter School, San Diego.
www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/posdesc.doc
- **Management Agreements**, Passage Charter School and Noble Street Charter School.
www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/mgmt2.doc
www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/mgmt1.doc
- **Organizational Charts**, Noble Street Charter School and Northwestern University Settlement House, Chicago, IL (example of charter school separately incorporated from founding organization; and East Bay Conservation Corps Charter School (example of charter school organized as a major program within the founding nonprofit).
www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/orgchart3.doc
www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/orgchart2.doc
- **Planning Grant Proposal**, Milwaukee Center for Independence www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/plangrant.doc
- **Worksheet: Establishing Linkages Between Existing Programs and the Proposed Charter School**, Silver Spring Neighborhood Center, Milwaukee, WI.
www.uscharterschools.org/gb/community/linkages.doc

Sources for this guide:

- Center for Education Reform website (www.edreform.com).
- "Challenge and Opportunity: The Impact of Charter Schools on School Districts," U.S. Department of Education: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, June 2001.
- "Charter Schools Today: Changing the Face of American Education," Center for Education Reform, 2000.
- Frumkin, Peter. "Creating New Schools: The Strategic Management of Charter Schools and School Leaders," supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2003.
- Grossman, Allen and Kasturi Rangan. "Managing Multisite Nonprofits," *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 11(3), Spring 2001.
- "How Community-Based Organizations Can Start Charter Schools," Charter Friends National Network and The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2001.
- National Council of La Raza, Charter School Development Initiative overview and the NCLR website (www.nclr.org)
- National Study of Charter Schools: Fourth Year Report, U.S. Department of Education, 2000.
- US Charter Schools website (www.uscharterschools.org), WestEd and the U.S. Department of Education.
- YMCA of the USA phone interview and website (www.ymca.net)
- YouthBuild website (www.youthbuild.org)

*Funding for this publication was provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
We thank them for their support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this document
are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Foundation*

ABOUT EDUCATION|EVOLVING

Millions of America's students head off to school each morning sporting brightly colored backpacks and determined to make this their "best school year yet." At the same time, federal and state policymakers are making tough new demands that our schools change and improve – so that "All students learn at high levels." New standards, tests, timelines and consequences are all being put in place to make sure that "No child is left behind."

Yet, all across the country, many policymakers, journalists, teachers, parents and students themselves are troubled by a haunting feeling that all this effort may not really produce the degree of change and improvement that we need. At a minimum, we are now taking a series of risks that are neither wise nor necessary to be making with other people's children. These are, after all, demands and results well-beyond what we've ever expected of American public education – all at a time of severe budgetary pressures on states, districts and individual public schools.

That, at least is the serious concern of a small group of Minnesota-based public policy veterans who have come together as Education|Evolving... a joint venture of the Center for Policy Studies and Hamline University. The individuals behind this initiative believe...

... it's an unwise and unnecessary risk for the state and nation to be trying to get the results we need solely by changing the schools we now have...

... the issues about teachers and teaching should not be debated only in the old employer/worker framework...

... the solution to maintaining financially viable public education in rural areas may not lie in the three old 'solutions' of excess levies, consolidation and state aid...

... today's schools should not go on largely failing to take advantage of new electronic technologies and other substantially different ways of teaching and learning...

... and the critical discussion about the future of K-12 education in Minnesota and nationally must not proceed solely as a discussion among adults, with students largely left on the outside looking in.

Education|Evolving is undertaking a number of initiatives over the coming year. They include a national initiative to convince policy makers, education reform leaders, journalists and others that *creating new schools* should be an essential element in achieving needed changes and improvements in teaching and learning – at least equal in importance to *changing the schools we now have*.

One focus of this initiative is to introduce the concept of an "*Open Sector*" – to help create the kind of legal and political environments in which new schools can be created and succeed. Another is designed to challenge the fundamental premise that teachers in schools must always be "employees." Another initiative is looking at the premises used in asking the critical question, "How are chartered schools doing?" Other ongoing Education|Evolving projects focus on strengthening and enhancing the role of the agencies and organizations that sponsor chartered schools – and on how policymakers, journalists and others can more routinely and substantively tap into the experiences and perspectives of students and of young people not now attending school.

Education|Evolving's leadership is provided by two Minnesota public policy veterans: Ted Kolderie, senior associate at the Center for Policy Studies, and Joe Graba, a senior policy fellow at Hamline University. Its coordinator is Jon Schroeder, former director of Charter Friends National Network.

Education|Evolving's activities are regularly updated on the initiative's new and unique web site – www.educationevolving.org. To receive print and electronic updates of Education|Evolving initiatives, contact info@educationevolving.org.



education evolving

*A joint venture of the Center for
Policy Studies and Hamline University*

1295 Bandana Boulevard / Suite 165
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55108

telephone: 651-644-6115
e-mail: info@educationevolving.org
web site: www.educationevolving.org

Nonprofit organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Saint Paul, MN
Permit No. 5242