



The Charter School Advocate

Wednesday, January 3, 2019

The Public Policy Newsletter of the Association

HAPPY NEW YEAR – New Opportunities & Challenges

The New Year brings with it a lot of change politically – a new Governor, a new Commissioner of Education, a new majority in the MN House, new chairs in the House Education Committees and new Committee members, a new Senate Education Committee structure – all these changes bring new opportunities and challenges.

New opportunities and challenges provide a chance to rethink ideas, make adjustments in direction, explore different options, and create new or strengthen relationships.

We strongly encourage every charter school to seize the opportunities that these changes create: to reach out to your legislators, create a relationship with new legislators, and strengthen the relationships with veteran legislators. Involve your boards, staffs, and parents in creating or building those relationships.

At the Association level, we will be meeting with new and returning legislators to create and strengthen our relationships in order to explore opportunities to advance our agenda as well as understand the concerns and challenges of legislators.

Creating, building, and strengthening relationships with legislators and other public officials is a cooperative endeavor. We can and will do our part – but you and your school community must do your part.

If you need help in reaching out to your legislators let me know, our government affairs consultant/lobbyist is available to you. Just let me know, and she will be happy to assist you.

Eugene Piccolo

NEW EDUCATION COMMISSIONER



As you know, right before the Christmas Holiday, Governor-elect Walz appointed **Mary Cathryn Ricker** as the new Commissioner of Education. Below is the bio that the Governor-elect's office published about the new Commissioner.

"A native of Hibbing, Mary Cathryn Ricker, 50, is a National Board Certified middle school English teacher with over a decade of classroom experience. She has taught in classrooms from St. Paul to St. Cloud to Washington to South Korea to Yemen. She is currently the executive vice president of the American Federation of Teachers and previously served as the president of the Saint Paul Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 28. Her teaching and leadership skills have been recognized with a number of other honors, including receiving the Education Minnesota Peterson-Schaubach Outstanding Leadership Award, qualifying as a semifinalist for the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence, and serving as a featured contributor in the Annenberg Foundation's national professional development series, "Write in the Middle." She earned her undergraduate degree in English with a mathematics minor at the University of Saint Thomas, and completed her graduate work in Teacher Leadership at the University of Minnesota. Ricker's husband teaches English language learners in the St. Paul Public Schools, and they have two children."

On the day her appointment was announced, Commissioner Ricker reached out to education organizations – including MACS. The new Commissioner and I had a very pleasant and productive conversation. I congratulated her on behalf of the charter school community and told her that we looked forward to working with her to advance public education and address the challenges that charters have had with the MN Department of Education and impasse at the legislature.

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2019 - HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEES MEETING SCHEDULES

- **9:30 – 11:15 am – House Education Finance Committee – Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays** – Chair Rep. Davine and 19 other members (12 DFL – 8 Republicans) – *all but one of the representatives is from a suburban or greater MN district.*
 - **2:30 – 4:00 pm – House Education Policy Committee – Tuesdays and Wednesdays** – Chair Rep. Youkim and 17 other members (11 DFL – 7 Republicans) – *all but two of the representatives are from suburban or greater MN districts.*
 - **8:00 – 9:30 am - House Subcommittee on Early Childhood Finance & Policy – Tuesdays and Thursdays** - Chair Rep. Pinto and 9 other members (6 DFL and 4 Republicans)
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2019 – SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

- **3:00 – 4:30 pm – Senate Education Committee** (*Education Finance & Policy have been combined into one Committee*) – **Mondays & Wednesdays** – Chair Senator Nelson and 11 other members (7 Republicans – 5 DFL) ... *all but one of the Senators on the Committee are from suburban or greater MN districts.*

CHARTER SCHOOLS BY LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

An updated list of charter schools by Legislative District with the names and contact information of State Senators and Representatives can be found [here](#). Again, we urge you to reach out to your Senator and Representative and invite to visit your school.

ASSOCIATION LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Beginning next week the Association will be doing legislative updates via a variety formats – on our website, e-newsletters, and conference calls as appropriate.

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As a member of this email list you will receive important and timely information, pertinent to charter school authorizers,
from the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS).

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