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**Charter Schools Successfully Execute Innovative Practices and Win**

**St. Paul, MN, January 20, 2017:** The Minnesota Association of Charter Schools, St. Paul, presented the First Annual Charter School Innovation Awards to five winning schools, across five categories on Tuesday, December 6, 2016. According to the Association’s Executive Director, Eugen Piccolo, “The MN Charter School Innovation Awards are designed to remind everyone of the original purposes of chartered public schools to unleash educational innovation so that students have the best opportunities to fulfill their potential and empower teachers.”

The awards were presented to the following schools for their excellence in innovation, among the following categories:

1. Community School of Excellence, St. Paul, The Asian Penguins Club, Increased Learning Opportunities for Pupils
2. Community of Peace Academy High School, St. Paul, College Culture Program, Different and Innovative Teaching Methods
3. Avalon Charter School, St. Paul, Empowering Teachers Model, Different and Innovative Forms of Measuring Outcomes
4. Yinghua Academy, Minneapolis, Online Advanced Chinese: Meeting the Needs of Immersion Students, New Forms of Accountability for Schools
5. Minnesota New Country School, Henderson, Teacher-Led School, New Professional Opportunities for Teachers

Winning schools were awarded a cash prize of $1,000.00, a Charter Schools Innovation Awards banner, and will be highlighted throughout the Association’s social media platforms, and a school visit, hosting notable community leaders.

This is the first of its kind Chartered School award, and the second round, which has an application period of Monday, December 12, 2016 through Friday, February 3, 2017; winners for the Second Annual Charter School Innovation Awards will announced during National Charter School Week in May 2017. This annual award is sponsored by our generous funders, The Labrador Foundation.



**(Pictured from left to right: Wenjuan Wang, Susan Berg,** Yinghua Academy, **Stuart Keroff, Bao Vang*,*** Community School of Excellence,**Jim Wartman,** MN New Country School**, Chufue Lo,** Community School of Excellence**, Carrie Bakken, Tim Quealy,** Avalon Charter School***,* Sadie Fischer, Tim McGowan, and Cara Quinn,** Community of Peace Academy High School)

**Minnesota Association of Charter Schools:**

The Minnesota Association of Charter Schools, as a membership organization, advocates for charter school policy issues, supports charter school innovation, quality and accountability, and facilitates cooperation in Minnesota’s charter school community to assure excellence in education for our students. Further information about the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools and the Annual Charter Schools Innovation Awards can be found online at: <http://www.mncharterschools.org/>.

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