



THE AGENDA TO FULFILL THE PROMISE – An Overview

When Minnesota’s charter school law was enacted in 1991 the underlying promise was that chartered public schools would have the autonomy and ability to be innovative **in exchange** for being accountable for student success and good stewardship of resources.

Twenty-seven years later that promise is still a work in progress.

While charter schools have been held accountable for student success and good stewardship of resources, public policies have not provided the autonomy, nor resources for charter schools to fulfill the innovative purposes outlined in the charter school law.

One measure of accountability is that 25% of chartered schools have closed, or never opened because they did not demonstrate results or fulfill their original promise. One measure of public policy not fulfilling its promise is the growing disparity in funding for charter school students.

Twenty-seven years later that promise is still a work in progress.

Today, there are three significant areas of public policy which need to be addressed to provide the latitude promised to charter schools.

- 1] Equitable Funding for Charter School Students**
- 2] A Rationale Policy Approach for Charter School Facilities**
- 3] The Latitude for Innovation – Accountability vs Autonomy**

1] EQUITABLE FUNDING FOR CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS

One of the fundamental misconceptions which exists relative to the original promise is that students attending chartered public schools should receive less funding than their counterparts who attend traditional public schools. This is not only a misguided belief - it is discriminatory.

The question needs to be asked: *Why should a public school student who attends a chartered public school receive less funding for their education than a public school student who attends a traditional public school?*

The Answer: *There is no reason.*

2] A RATIONAL POLICY APPROACH FOR CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITIES

While it may have made sense when the charter school law was enacted that charter schools, (*which were an experiment at the time*) to not allow directly own buildings using public funds, that policy 26 years later is illogical, irrational, and a fiscally irresponsible way to provide for charter school facilities.

The question needs to be asked: *Why do we have still have an illogical, irrational, and fiscally irresponsible system for providing facilities for chartered public schools?*

The Answer: *There is no reason.*

3] THE LATITUDE FOR INNOVATION – BALANCING ACCOUNTABILITY VS AUTONOMY

Chartered public schools were based on the idea of freeing up educators and schools from the strictures and conventions that had been placed over time on the public education sector to try new, different and innovative ways of: providing educational programming and services, teaching methods, ways of assessing student achievement and success, measures of institutional results, and professional opportunities for educators.

The question needs to be asked: *Why don't accountability systems align with the public policies that promote autonomy (self-governance) and innovation?*

The Answer: *There is no reason.*

CONCLUSION

We call on the Governor and the Legislature to enact policies to fulfill the promise to Chartered Public Schools made twenty-seven years ago to ensure equitable funding for students, appropriate cost-efficient facilities for learning, and the autonomy for schools to be the innovative laboratories for public education.

The Minnesota Association of Charter Schools has been and continues to be committed to putting forth ideas and legislation to fulfill the promise of chartered public schools established with the enactment of the nation's first charter school law

We offer **The Agenda to Fulfill the Promise** because we believe that our students, our families and our state deserve that the Promise be fulfilled.