



Celebrating Chartering @ 30 – MINNESOTA'S STORY

The most significant proposal in the 2001-2002 session **that did not get enacted** was legislation to allow chartered public schools to directly purchase and own facilities. The bi-partisan bill was introduced in both the House and Senate. In the House, it was authored by Rep. Alice Seagren (R) and Rep. Entenza (DFL). In the Senate, the bill was authored by Senator Pappas (DFL), Senator Olson (R), and Senator Kelly (DFL).

NOTE: *The issue of facilities and lease costs were raised in a February 2001 report that will be the subject of the next issue of **Celebrating Chartering @ 30 – MINNESOTA'S STORY***

The bill would have allowed chartered schools to purchase and own school facilities directly if they met certain criteria and received the approval of the commissioner. The bill also would have created Building Facilities Aid for those schools, which would have been separate from Lease Aid.

NOTE: *Over the last 15 years, MACS has proposed direct ownership for schools that meet certain criteria, state bonding for charter school facilities, and revamping Lease Aid to become Facilities Aid with differentiated aid for schools that own buildings versus those that lease.*

The 2003 session focused on building upon the changes enacted in the 2001 session:

It changed how the **Charter School Advisory Council** operated, clarifying that the commissioner appointed members and that members served staggered three-year terms. It also took away the Council's role to review charter school applications and recommend approval or disapproval.

The law also expanded the authority of sponsors and what organizations could sponsor schools. The Chamber of Commerce were approved as sponsor and the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce became the sponsor of Minnesota Business Academy.

The law also gave **sponsors the authority to approve additional sites and grade**

expansions beyond those in the original school charter.

There were also two accountability measures that were changed and three changes in funding for charters due to the state's financial problems.

Transportation - clarified that when a traditional district provided charter school students school bussing, that district controlled the scheduling and routes, the manner and methods, the discipline of pupils on the bus, and any other matter related to the transportation of those students.

Teacher Leave of Absence – clarified that a traditional district was not required to give a teacher more than a five-year leave to teach in a chartered public school, and any time beyond that was at the sole discretion of the traditional district school board.

- **Lease Aid** – lease aid was reduced from \$1,500 to \$1,200.
- **Integration Aid** – the ability for charters to apply for the aid portion of integration aid was eliminated.
- **Start-Up Aid** – charters in their first year of operation in FY2004 and FY2005 were made ineligible for the state start up aid.

All three of these funding changes were part of the legislature's cuts in education funding due to the state's financial situation.

NEXT ISSUE: Tuesday, July 12 – We hope you have a happy and safe 4th of July holiday.



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