



## Celebrating Chartering @ 30 – MINNESOTA'S STORY

In last week's installment of *Celebrating Chartering @ 30 – Minnesota's Story*, we laid out the other criteria that the 1988 Citizens League Report: ***Chartered Schools = Choices for Educators + Quality for All Students*** proposed for charter schools – one of which was that charter schools must meet desegregation guidelines. The Report then noted that the objective and definition of desegregation needed to be expanded beyond the dealing with race.

*"The state's desegregation policy should place primary emphasis on increasing the quality of educational outcomes, thereby committing us to a higher standard of desegregation, one that moves toward actual integration through assurance of high-quality opportunities for everyone.*

*The question is: how do we achieve that quality? We believe what is needed is the opportunity— which this report advocates with the idea of chartered schools – to create optional learning arrangements where the approach to learning may assume new and different forms.*

*The state's desegregation policy should promote a new, broader definition of the goals of integration, one dedicated to:*

- *Preparing all students for a more pluralistic society,*
- *Teaching tolerance and appreciation for differences in backgrounds, heritage, philosophy, and appearance,*
- *Making school more relevant for minority children via curricular changes that include histories and cultures of people of color, and*
- *Increasing the learning opportunities for all students.*

*The definition of a quality education must include these outcomes in addition to academic ones.*

*Although desegregation rules focus exclusively on students' race or ethnic background, family income levels better determine children's preparation for school and academic success.*

*The concerns about concentrations of students (minority students) should focus clearly on the challenges post by those who have trouble learning in conventional settings, or who disrupt the learning opportunity of others , not on race per se.*

*A revamped desegregation policy must also attempt to resolve the conflict between choice and desegregation."*

**COMMENTS:**

1] It is important to note that the Report proposed that *'Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts should grant charters for new schools to improve the quality of education for all students and offer chartered schools to further stimulate interdistrict movement of students.'*

2] Quality education was to be measured by more than academic test scores. The charter school law embodies this concept in the purposes of charter schools; *"to measure learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes; and establish new forms of accountability for schools."* These are areas that have lagged because for the last two decades the focus of government policy has only been on academic outcomes measured through standardized tests.

3] While the hope of the authors of the Report was that the conflict between choice and desegregation would be resolved in a revamped desegregation policy, 33 years later it is still not fully resolved. In fact, the conflict between choice and desegregation is a central issue in the Cruz-Guzman Case which is now working its way through the court system.

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