



Celebrating Chartering @ 30 – MINNESOTA'S STORY

City Academy, St. Paul, became the first chartered public school in the country when it opened its doors on **September 7, 1992.** In a 2005 interview, founder and director Milo Cutter states that the reason for starting City Academy was *"To start a small high school. At the time there were very few options for students"* ages 16 to 21 who had dropped out or were at the risk of dropping out. The school was based on the ideas learned from students who participated in a pilot summer program.

The school opened with 35 students and three full-time teachers. Last school year (2020-2021), the school enrolled 150 students with a staff of 10 teachers.

With the assistance of the then St. Paul Mayor Jim Scheibel, the school found a home at a city recreation center on the eastside of St. Paul. In 1994, the school moved to another city recreation center on the eastside, which has since been its home for 28 years.

In 1993, the school began its 29-year participation in the YouthBuild program, which provides workplace experiences for students in the construction trades, while earning credits toward graduation. The school has also been continuously accredited since 1993 by AdvancedED. Since 1997, the staff have conducted Action Research Projects in collaboration with the University of Minnesota.

City Academy was originally sponsored by the St. Paul Public School District, then by the College of St. Catherine, and is now authorized by Innovative Quality Schools (IQS).

In 2000, during National Charter School Week, President Bill Clinton visited City Academy to recognize its success as the first chartered school in the nation. *"I'm here today because I want all of America to know about you – and through you, to understand what might be done in other communities with the charter school movement to give all our children the education they need, and the education our country needs for them to have in a 21st century information economy."*

In his remarks about the charter school laws, he stated, *"Now, the one problem we have had is that not every state has had the right kind of accountability for the charter schools. Some states have laws that are so loose that no matter whether the charter schools are doing their jobs or not, they just get to stay open, and they become like another bureaucracy. Unfortunately, I think even worse, some states have laws that are so restrictive it's almost impossible to open a charter*

school in the first place.

He continued, *"So the second point I want to make to the people, especially to the press folks that are traveling with us who have to report this to the country, is that not only has this first charter school in America, City Academy, done great, but Minnesota's laws is right. You basically have struck the right balance. You have encouraged the growth of charter schools, but you do hold charter schools responsible for results. That's what every state in the country ought to do."*

CONGRATULATIONS to the staff, students, and alumni of City Academy on 30 years of providing great educational opportunities to meet the needs of each individual student.

NEXT WEEK: Will the 2010 Session finally address the unfinished business of charter school facilities?



Copyright © 2022 Minnesota Association of Charter Schools, All rights reserved.

You were added to this list as a sample email to test out MailChimp.

Our mailing address is:

Minnesota Association of Charter Schools
161 St. Anthony Avenue, Suite 1000
St Paul, MN 55103

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

