



Unleashing education from convention

Monday, March 8, 2021

TO: Senator Chamberlain and Senate Education Committee Members

RE: S.F. 1386 – Charter School Authorizer Corrective Action Requirements

The Minnesota Association of Charter Schools supports S.F.1386 and urges the Senate Education Committee to include the provisions of this bill in the Omnibus Education Bill.

The necessity for the changes outlined in the bill are the result of real situations involving authorizers who have not responded to, or addressed in a timely manner, needed changes in their oversight procedures based on the MDE evaluation of authorizers as defined in MN Statutes 124E.05 Subd.5. In the most egregious case, one authorizer did not respond to or address the needed changes for multiple years. This legislation will put an end to the unlimited amount of time an authorizer has to respond to and address issues.

The result of an authorizer not responding to making needed changes to their procedures has been a penalty on charter schools rather than the authorizer. Currently when an authorizer is in corrective action, a charter school authorized by that authorizer cannot seek to add a pre-school program or expand grades beyond those in the school's original charter contract.

This legislation will do four things; 1) Limit how long an authorizer has to respond to and make necessary changes to its procedures as identified in the evaluation by MDE, 2) Strengthen the authority of the Commissioner to take action against the authorizer, 3) Place the penalty on the authorizer, not the schools, and 4) Give a charter school the ability to change authorizers when the authorizer has not complied with the requirements outlined by the Commissioner.

We believe that this legislation is one of the steps that needs to be taken to enhance the accountability and transparency of authorizing.

Again, we urge your support of S.F. 1386 and urge it be included in the Omnibus Education Bill.

Eugene Piccolo
Executive Director