

For Immediate Release

Mike Swan
Operations & Communications Associate
Minnesota Association of Charter Schools
(651)-789-3090
mike@mncharterschools.org



Minnesota's Public Charters to be Celebrated During National Charter Schools Week

Minnesota, the birthplace of the public chartered school movement, is joining states across the country in celebrating **National Charter School Week, May 12-18**, through the telling of the charter school movement's story, and the stories of individual schools, students, families, and educators.

In anticipation of National Charters Schools Week, the MN Association of Charter Schools will hold its **Annual Innovation and Leadership Awards Luncheon on Thursday May 9th**, to recognize schools who are implementing innovative programs and practices called for in Minnesota's charter school law.

The nation's first chartered public school opened in St. Paul in 1992, and today the charter school movement in Minnesota has grown to 163 schools serving over 59,000 public school students across the state. According to Eugene Piccolo, Executive Director of the MN Association of Charter Schools, *"Minnesota's chartered public schools have continued to grow in enrollment year after year for 27 years by offering a wide variety of educational choices and opportunities for K-12 students, through innovative programs and methods, and by responding to the needs of students and their families"*.

Minnesota's charter schools have a diverse student population that come from different socio-economic statuses, racial and ethnic backgrounds, learning abilities, and life experiences. **60% of charter school students are from minority communities, 20% are multi-language learners, 54% qualify for free and reduced lunch programs, and over 14% are in special education.**

Minnesota's charter schools are founded and led by teachers, parents and community members and use the flexibility and autonomy given by law and the school's charter to create school cultures designed to meet the needs of the students who choose to attend the school. Charter school teachers are passionate about understanding the life experiences of their students and finding ways to motivate them to be successful. Charter school teachers are also passionate about the profession of teaching and are active participants in the governance and management of the school.

While all charter schools share a common heritage, each is unique in its culture, programming, and operations so much so that for almost three decades the adage has been ***"once you've seen one charter school, you've only seen one charter school"***.

The MN Association of Charter Schools, as a membership organization, advocates for charter school policy issues, supports charter school innovation, quality and accountability, and facilitates cooperation in Minnesota's charter school community to assure excellence in education for our students. For more information on Minnesota's public charter schools, please visit our website www.mncharterschools.org.