

## Minnesota

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Minnesota has a long history of supporting the development of charter schools and the expansion of public school choice. Since the nation's first charter school opened in St. Paul in 1992, the state has realized steady charter school growth; over 37,000 students currently attend Minnesota's 149 charter schools. Charter schools are afforded high levels of autonomy, flexibility and independence and receive equitable funding from the state. Minnesota's charter community is expanding and parent demand for charter schools remains strong.

In recent years, however, the state has faced issues with charter school quality and authorizer effectiveness. In order to address the need for greater accountability in the charter sector, the Minnesota State Legislature enacted a "second generation" charter law in 2009 and statutory revisions mark the most significant legislative changes since 1991. Minnesota's nation-leading law now includes safeguards to strengthen authorizer accountability, increase school quality and clarify charter school board responsibilities. The state is establishing new authorizer oversight systems, developing initiatives to clarify performance expectations, identifying best practices and providing assistance to ensure opportunities for choice and innovation are balanced with high-quality results.

The Minnesota Department of Education is requesting \$49,815,448 over the next five years to continue this challenging work to increase charter school quality and authorizer accountability. Minnesota's Federal Charter Schools Program Grant Project will:

1. increase the number of high-quality charter schools in the state;
2. establish a charter school accountability framework to increase academic performance and decrease the achievement gap;
3. improve the capacity of authorizers to effectively authorize, monitor and hold accountable charter schools; and
4. disseminate promising and innovative practices of high-quality charter schools to each LEA in the state.