

Chair and Committee Members,

We appreciate the discussion today on Charter Public Schools and welcome the opportunity to share more.

To that end, I'm emailing to share the full written testimony Joey Cienian, Executive Director of the MN Association of Charter Schools planned to share (see attached). The section likely of most interest to this committee that there was not time cover, is a list of accountability measures our Association has passed into law over the most recent biennium. I've included that excerpt below. Please see us a resource and let us know if you have questions or would like to meet to discuss chartered public schools further.

Best,

Excerpt of Testimony:

It is also important to recognize that Minnesota's charter sector has not stood still. Over the past three biennium, we have worked in partnership with MDE, authorizers, and community partners to pass dozens of extensive and multifaceted bipartisan accountability and transparency reforms that are now being implemented statewide.

These include strengthened training requirements and conflict of interest provisions for boards and authorizers, gift bans for all board members and directors, nepotism policy requirements for boards and contracts, strengthened procurement requirements for purchases using state funding, new Affiliated Building Company guardrails around building ownership and conflict of interest, enhanced training and qualification requirements for school leaders, and strengthened clearer accountability for authorizers through the MDE evaluation process.

We have also established new protections related to contracts with commercial interests; Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) and Education Management Organizations (EMOs), strengthened board-level financial oversight requirements, and have given authorizers new authority to require additional financial expertise when schools face fiscal challenges and are under corrective action.

In addition, schools must now demonstrate clear market need and demand to start a new program or expand an existing one.

Finally, transparency is extremely important in our sector : we've passed laws requiring all charter contracts, school performance evaluations, notices of intervention, deficiency, concern, correction action, probationary status, or notices of intent to terminate to be available to the public and school communities in real time on authorizer's and schools' websites. Schools must also now distribute to the public and local parents - notices of interventions, correction actions, and probationary status from authorizer requests. These reforms are already helping identify and address issues in real time.

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