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Two More Charter School Authorizers Approved by Minnesota Department of Education

Seventeen Charter School Authorizers now meet the nationally recognized rigorous state law that brings increased oversight to Charter Schools

(Roseville, MN) – Seventeen charter school authorizers have now been approved by the Minnesota Department of Education, including two new charter school authorizers approved by Commissioner Brenda Cassellius on April 22, 2011.

The two approved charter schools authorizers are:

- Project for Pride in Living
- University of Minnesota Duluth

“The new charter school laws passed in 2009 were designed to ensure a high quality education for all students who attend Minnesota charter public schools,” said Commissioner Brenda Cassellius. “Each of these authorizers meets nationally recognized standards of quality and accountability, and all have agreed to take on responsibility of holding the charter schools they authorize accountable to high quality expectations contained in their charter contracts.”

Under new law passed by the 2009 Legislature designed to increase charter school quality and accountability, approved authorizers agree to take on a greater role in overseeing the charter schools they authorize.

Nine organizations remain eligible to earn the Commissioner’s approval to operate as charter school authorizers. The organizations not approved have until May 20, 2011 to resubmit their applications that address identified deficiencies in their applications. Notwithstanding proposed changes to current law to extend the approval deadlines, all authorizers seeking to earn approval must be approved by the Department by June 30, 2011.

Previously approved authorizers are:

- Anoka Technical College
- Audubon Center of the North Woods
- Chisago Lakes Public Schools
- Concordia University of St. Paul
- Fraser
- Friends of Education
- Innovative Quality Schools

- Minneapolis Public Schools
- Northfield Public Schools
- Novation Education Opportunities
- Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
- Pillsbury United Communities
- Student Achievement Minnesota
- University of St. Thomas
- Volunteers of America – Minnesota

Minnesota's charter school law received the 2009 Award for Excellence in Improving Policy from National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA). In addition, Minnesota was recently ranked first in the nation for strong charter school laws from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

The 2009 law puts in place more robust oversight responsibilities in the areas of capacity and infrastructure, the application process, contracting, ongoing oversight and evaluation, and renewal of charter schools. It shifts the Department's focus from approving individual charter schools to approving charter school authorizers, which in turn will be responsible for approving charter schools and holding them accountable.

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