

Chartered Schools

Choices for Educators + Quality for All Students

November 17, 1988

Citizens League Report

Chartered Schools =
Choices for Educators + Quality for All Students

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I don't know when children stop dreaming. But I do know when hope starts leaking away, because I've seen it happen. Over the past 10 years, I've spent a lot of time talking with school kids of all ages. And I've seen the cloud of resignation move across their eyes as they travel through school, without making any progress. They know they are slipping through the net into the huge underclass that our society seems willing to tolerate.

At first, the kids try to conceal their fear with defiance. Then, for far too many, the defiance turns to disregard for our society and its rules. It's then that we have lost them--maybe forever...

-- Alan Page, from his remarks as he was inducted into the National Football League Hall of Fame.

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Executive Summary

Many teachers believe they know how to do a better job of educating their students. But they need to be freed from the constraints of an excessively rigid public school-management system to do it.

Parents concerned about the education of their children need and deserve a way to become involved in and informed about their children's schools. Informed and involved parents help make better schools.

Minneapolis and St. Paul have learned that school desegregation based solely on numbers and transportation produces neither sufficient integration nor assured access to quality education. We need a new approach to multicultural education that values quality as much as it does quotas, and that moves us closer to real integration as a community.

Most recent efforts at education reform throughout the nation are based on requiring the same system to meet tougher new standards. Minnesota, in contrast, has taken an incentives-and-opportunities approach, giving schools a reason and a way to become better.

The state should cling to this "Minnesota difference." It should stay on its innovative course by authorizing (not mandating), in Minneapolis and St. Paul, "chartered" public schools that empower teachers to develop high quality schooling opportunities, which include a commitment to integration. It should, throughout the state, allow teachers and school boards to talk about alternative structure for school governance, and consider the value of negotiating the terms for cooperatively managing the day-to-day operations of schools.

Chartered Public Schools

A chartered school is one granted a "charter" by either a school district or the state to be different in the way it delivers education, and within broad guidelines, to be autonomous. It need not be a school building. It may result in several schools in one building. It is the process of schooling and not the building itself that will differentiate a chartered school from a conventional one.

The chartered school concept recognizes that different children learn in different ways and at different speeds, and teachers and schools should adapt to children's needs rather than requiring children to adapt to the standard system.

A chartered school is a public school and would serve all children. Students would be integrated by ability level and race. Chartered schools could not select only the best and the brightest students or the easiest to teach.

Although chartered schools would have a freedom to pursue different educational routes, they would be operated by licensed educators, would meet accreditation standards, and would meet desegregation rules.

Cooperatively-Managed Schools

The idea of the cooperatively-managed school is that public school teachers, parents, administrators, and students working together in shared governance have a better chance of devising the right approach, and seeing it implemented than they would have in the rigid, top-down conventional school system.

The Legislature should:

Authorize creation of chartered schools by the Minneapolis and St. Paul School Districts in 1989 and by the State Department of Education by 1992. The schools would be open to students from other districts, but would be located in Minneapolis or St. Paul where educational inequities are most apparent. State funding would follow the students. Transportation aid would be provided. If it does not authorize chartered schools, the Legislature should require preparation of a plan to ensure school desegregation through such means as changing school district boundaries.

Allow school boards and teachers' bargaining units in all Minnesota districts to make a choice between (1) negotiating their own terms of management for individual schools; (2) adopting cooperative management of schools, or (3) retaining the current management arrangements.

Amend the enrollment options law to prevent a school district from closing its programs to nonresident students when those students would improve the district's racial balance.

Minneapolis and St. Paul School Districts should:

Grant charters for new public schools to improve the quality of education available for all students and offer chartered schools to further stimulate **interdistrict** movement of students.

The Minnesota Department of Education should:

Broaden its desegregation efforts to include rules for multicultural curricula (a process already underway), to provide assistance in development of a diverse teaching corps and to develop guidelines for multicultural teacher training.

II'

Take steps to ensure that comprehensive school information and information on parental involvement are available to parents and students, and that special efforts are made to reach populations less likely to pursue this information themselves.

Teachers should:

Propose plans to their school boards for cooperatively-managed schools in which operational decisions would be shared by teachers, administrators, and parents.

Consider joining with others to seek designation for a chartered school in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

School Boards should:

Concentrate on priority-setting rather than indulge in micro-management of schools.

The Board of Teaching should:

Strengthen teacher licensing standards by involving practicing teachers in the decision to license and by requiring successful completion of subject-matter tests, internship periods, and achievement of performance criteria.

Provide special licensing provisions to permit professionals from other fields to teach.

Introduction

The 1980s will be remembered, in part, for an awakening to the crisis of quality in American kindergarten-12th grade education. With the decade coming to an end, it is possible to point to emerging patterns of response by states.

The most familiar pattern is one of tougher standards: longer days or years, more tests for students and teachers, and higher academic requirements. It is essentially a strategy of regulation and mandates.

The Minnesota response is discernibly different. Here, recognizing a long tradition of support for educational excellence, the emphasis is on building incentives and opportunities for the system to improve.

The first step, offering the opportunity to parents and students to choose schools within the public system, is nearly in place. In 1985, the Minnesota Legislature gave high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to attend a post-secondary institution while still in high school. In 1987, the Legislature gave students, age 12 to 21, who had dropped out, or who were at serious academic risk, a chance to choose another public school. And the 1988 Legislature expanded this opportunity to all students, phasing the policy in over the next two years.

An environment of expanding opportunities also brings incentives for education providers to reconsider the quality of what they offer. The next policy issue for the state will concern the flexibility educators will need to build the quality and diversity that parents and their children will seek.

Our Assumptions

I. The overall system must improve further.

We respect Minnesota's tradition of doing better than average in educating its children, and we see evidence of a strong corps of dedicated educators who are concerned about quality for the future. However, we are certain that quality must improve if our children are going to be prepared for satisfying lives, socially and economically.

II. The opportunity to choose will lead, though subtly at first, to a greater demand for a wider range of learning opportunities.

We recognize that this assumption is controversial, and that it runs counter to a whole generation of effort to create a standardized, comprehensive system. However, it is more and more clear that, even

if there is a desirable core of learning for everyone, everyone cannot learn it in the same way, nor will students and parents ignore opportunities that offer specialization beyond the core requirements.

- III. Developing and communicating reliable and appropriate information about schools, and how to choose and benefit most from them, is an immediate priority needed to support the efforts of parents, students, and educators. This is particularly important for children from disadvantaged families.
- IV. The debate over better schools is moving closer to a discussion about "schooling" itself.

It is what happens IN the classroom ("schooling") that is even more critical than WHERE it is or WHO is there. We are late to recognize the obsolete character of school organization, which is patterned after a factory model with each teacher putting on the prescribed part. This model assumes a standard procedure in the classroom and a uniform product.

The American Federation of Teachers' president, Albert **Shanker**, uses a factory analogy to describe how same-style teaching will not work equally well on all kinds of students, from all backgrounds, with widely varying ambitions, ways of learning, parental support, life styles, and preschool preparation. Rather than expecting all students to adapt to the institution, we should make the changes to allow the institution to adapt to the students.

- V. The challenge is most urgent where students face the greatest difficulties in achieving academic success.

For many minority students in Minneapolis and St. Paul, schools are not providing quality education and equity of opportunity.

The question is not so much whether our schools reflect society; they do in a narrow geographic sense. It is whether we can use schools to build a better society. That our apparently weakest efforts show up where our most vulnerable children are is a deeply discriminatory situation that cannot continue. Doing better necessarily implies the boldness to do things differently.

- VI. **As** the system changes we should redefine, not just reaffirm, our commitment to integration through schools.

A system that merely transports students to sites and counts them to confirm balances is not sufficient.

We need a broader definition that emphasizes quality education. The definition must encourage more creative strategies. The definition must extend to considering income as well as race. We envision the creation of schools which, by design, would invite a dynamic mix of students by race and ability levels.

While the committee does not endorse a movement toward an all-minority school option--such as all-American Indian or all-Black--we empathize with the mood of some minority groups to try that if it proves to get a better result. The preeminent concern of minorities remains what it's long been: low quality results for their children. People of color want an arrangement that promises academic improvement. The committee certainly agrees that it makes no more sense to condemn the propriety of a de facto all-Black school in the inner city than a de facto all-White one elsewhere. It is low quality we should condemn.

The Next Step for State Policy

Our best prospects for better quality--and real progress toward integration--lie in a policy environment that permits first, teachers and parents to participate in the management of their schools, and second, the creation of new, high quality schools in the parts of the community most likely to serve disadvantaged populations.

We have reached a point where achieving equal educational opportunities for students from minority communities requires dealing directly with the quality of the education provided them. Continuing to balance schools' student populations by race and ethnicity remains desirable, but by itself is insufficient. Quality schooling must predominate. Quality schooling should become the route to desegregated schools and equity in educational opportunity.

The Minnesota distinction in this decade has been changing the environment so that people can make choices in education and take responsibility for them. It is not the mandates the state has made so much as the permission it granted.

With parents and students now able to choose schools, it is equally compelling that educators provide a fuller range of instructional possibilities. Without such options, choice is meaningless. We need a new flexibility and a vision that sees a school not as a building, but as a distinctive instructional option.

We will need a boldness that permits a charter to such schools, whether or not local school boards choose to let the system open up in this way, particularly for areas of the community most in need of an improved result.

The ability to provide quality schools already exists. Some public school teachers are demonstrating a willingness to innovate. What is needed is the opportunity for teachers to provide new options in learning arrangements.

To initiate this opportunity, the report recommends taking the steps necessary for providing schools that are cooperatively managed by the teachers, administrators, and parents of students in each building. To widen the opportunities even more, the report recommends allowing

educators and others to begin new public schools to meet residents' demand for quality education, and to break down the inequity that now characterizes the educational opportunities for low-income, disadvantaged children. To complement the state policy of **student/parent** choice of schools, the report recommends assistance and information for parents and students to make wise education choices; this is particularly important for parents least able, or least likely, to directly seek out quality educational programs themselves. Each of these recommendations is explained, in detail, in this report.

Providing Cooperative Management of Schools

I. BACKGROUND

Widening teachers' opportunities to provide quality schooling starts with the degree of control they hold over how their school operates. Although a growing body of evidence indicates that successful schools depend highly on the role of their teachers, [1] in Minnesota and around the country, teachers' involvement in their schools' operation is limited. With some exceptions, most teachers are restricted from decision making regarding school organization, disciplinary procedures, academic standards, teacher evaluation, staff development, staffing needs and hiring decisions, and spending priorities. [2]

Teacher autonomy, opportunities for professional growth, advancement within teaching, and participation in decision making are acknowledged to be key to strengthening both the teaching role and the quality of instruction, and thus, learning opportunities. [3]

By law in Minnesota, school boards are obligated to negotiate with teachers' only on "terms and conditions of employment" such as grievance procedures, hours of employment, compensation, and fringe benefits. By law, school boards may confer with teachers, but are not obligated to negotiate with them, on educational policies other, than the teachers' terms of employment. These other policies are specified in law as "functions and programs..., overall budget, utilization of technology, the organizational structure, selection of personnel, and direction and number of personnel." [4]

Parents play a critical role in their children's formal education. Perhaps none of the committee's resource persons expressed this as succinctly as Dr. Ted **Sizer**, dean of education at Brown University and author of Horace's Compromise: "You want a good school? I'll give you a good **school...just** let me pick the parents."

Despite the importance of parental involvement in schools, most parents have little or no say in the decision making at most schools. Minnesota has been the vanguard for providing parents choice among public schools, but the extent of parental involvement is often limited to work on advisory committees or fundraising activities. Actual decision making occurs elsewhere. Although one intent of the Planning, Evaluating, and Reporting legislation of 1976 was to broaden the opportunity for community involvement, its emphasis over the years has largely focused on curriculum review.

[5]

Decentralized decision making in a school, which means extending decision making beyond the current administrators to include others with interests in the school, is being recommended to assist schools in good management practices and to broaden the base of political support for the schools. [6]

In cases where genuinely different decision-making arrangements have been implemented, learning has improved and teachers have reported feeling more ownership. As one example, a shared decision-making arrangement among teachers, parents, administrators, students, and community members at Hammond High School, Hammond, Indiana resulted in increased student attendance, higher levels of student achievement, and a significant reduction in student failures. [7]

II. CONCLUSIONS

- A The existing educational process restricts teachers' and parents' involvement in the operation of the school and permits school boards to step beyond their policy-making role.
Involving teachers and parents in school decisions can help build a strong sense of community and make the school more responsive to the needs of a wider range of people.
- B Teachers should be allowed to cooperate in the day-to-day management of their schools. Teachers are in a unique position to know what is in the best interest of the students. Increasingly, teachers have been voicing the desire to increase their autonomy and professionalism. In some cases, the bureaucracy of the district's central administration has superseded teachers' control over what happens in their classrooms.
- C School boards should be the policy makers of a school district, not the decision makers in individual schools. The role of the school board should concentrate on:
*setting policies and priorities,
*raising and distributing resources, and
*conducting evaluations and district planning.

Too often, school board members have become enmeshed with "micro-management"--concerned about the details of a school's operation to the detriment of overall policies that should govern the standards for educational performance.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. The Legislature should require all school boards and teachers' bargaining representatives to make a choice between negotiating their own terms of management for individual schools, such as cooperative management among teachers, administrators, and parents, or retaining current management arrangements. Some recommended provisions of agreements for cooperatively-managed schools are listed in the following paragraphs.

Most of these provisions come from a 1987 Citizens League report Cooperatively-Managed Schools: Teachers as Partners.

1. Teachers should propose, and school boards should act on, plans for cooperatively-managed schools in which operational decisions would be shared. Teachers would determine the extent of their participation in the decisions, which could include decisions regarding what subjects and teaching techniques are to be used, resource allocation, staffing, compensation and promotional opportunities, school schedules, and liability **insurance**.

Parents should be included in designing the management arrangement and be represented in the school's governance.

School boards, with the help of community members and parents, should set policies and priorities for all schools in the district. The school boards' involvement should be limited to policy making. These policies will help the educators know what the system expects them to achieve.

2. Teachers should be accountable for their performance and the educational achievement of students. Teachers must fulfill student performance goals (and other measures of successful performance) set by school boards or demonstrate why those goals are not met.
3. Cooperatively-managed schools should negotiate special agreements with school districts to recognize the new responsibilities. The special agreements are necessary to ensure that school boards, teachers, and administrators understand their new relationships and responsibilities. Some services are best run centrally, such as bus scheduling, food services, and cooperative purchasing. The agreements would spell out what **functions** should be provided centrally and what should be provided by the individual school.
4. Cooperatively-managed schools should receive the same funding as other schools in the district. State and local per-pupil dollars should be distributed in the same way to cooperatively-managed schools and noncooperatively-managed schools.

To further improve teacher education and licensing, the report recommended:

- * The State Department of Education should monitor the progress of the cooperatively-managed schools and report the results. The information is needed to determine the effectiveness of the new structure for teachers and students.

- * Colleges of education and the Minnesota Board of Teaching should strengthen teacher education by:

- a. increasing clinical opportunities for education students
- b. developing strong links with public schools by sharing staffing between K-12 public schools and teacher training institutions
- c. increasing attention to, and research in, effective teaching
- d. instilling in teachers the skills to become actively involved in managing their schools

* Teacher education should be flexible to recognize past professional experience when determining placement in teacher training programs.

* The Board of Teaching should strengthen teacher licensing standards by involving practicing teachers in the decision to license, and by requiring successful completion of:

- a. subject matter tests
- b. an internship period
- c. performance goals in schools. (Mentor teachers would evaluate interns and other teachers to ensure high professional standards, and to help meet student performance goals as set by the school board.)

Relicensure should depend in part on the results of these evaluations.

* The Board of Teaching should provide special licensing provisions to permit professionals from other fields to teach. Licensing procedures should be flexible enough to allow people who want to offer their particular expertise, on a limited basis, to teach in the public schools.

Building Additional Quality through Diversity

IV. BACKGROUND

Achieving quality is our main objective in discussing educational policy. The committee acknowledges that some excellent programs and teachers exist in both central city and suburban school districts. At the same time though, the committee believes: (1) inequities in educational opportunity exist, (2) not every educationally effective teaching/learning method has enjoyed widespread implementation, and that (3) further improvements are vital to ensure the short- and long-term health of our public school system.

Minority students have not enjoyed the same academic success as other students. Data from the central city school districts indicate that students who are Black, American Indian, or from Hispanic origins do not perform as well as White students, and tend to drop out of school with more frequency. (See Supporting Materials for additional details.)

Both the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts are approaching the point where the students of color, the "minority" students, will make up the majority of the student enrollment. Both districts are experiencing increases in minority student enrollment, and the trend is expected to continue, given birth rates and recent migration patterns. In Minneapolis, the number of White students is decreasing. In St. Paul, the number of White students is relatively stable.

Local and national information indicates that low-income students are generally less prepared to begin school and have lower success rates once in school. [8] The central city school districts are experiencing an increasing incidence of low-income students.

Moreover, education improvements are necessary for Minnesota students of all races, ethnic backgrounds, and income levels, in both urban and suburban schools. Nationwide assessments indicate that American students are not achieving necessary proficiencies. [9] Comparisons of Minnesota students' achievement with those in other developed countries show Minnesota lagging. Comparisons with other states on the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), a college entrance exam, show that Minnesota's students scored below students nationwide on the verbal test in 1987-88, and maintained only a narrow edge over students nationwide on the math test. [10]

Although Minnesota schools graduate a high percentage of high school students, both the number and percentage of high school dropouts statewide have increased over the last five school years. More than half of the dropouts in the metropolitan area dropped from schools outside the central cities in the 1986-87 school year. [11]

Traditionally, schools have valued most highly the students whose abilities are conceptual, symbolic, and abstract--book-learners --according to Professor John Goodlad, author of A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future and one of the most respected researchers in U.S. education today. Children whose abilities are different, who learn the tangible and the particular first, and who generalize later, are too often regarded as "not bright." This leads to sorting the children at the earliest age levels. The sorting proceeds in school as tracking, with the lower-track children receiving the less demanding programs.

The committee believes that options in learning arrangements are needed to change the way students are treated in the classroom, to change the interactions between teachers and students in ways that enhance learning, and to heighten the expectations placed on students. Only with these types of changes can students with the least likelihood of academic success under the traditional arrangements attain quality learning.

The committee talked of "structural" changes in the education system, because it saw change in structure as a means to achieve the goal of better quality education. The opportunity created by opening up new options in learning arrangements is the best and quickest way to produce the different schools that less-advantaged children need. Teachers in both the Federation of Teachers and the Education Association have called for changes to make these opportunities possible.

There is a growing sense in Minneapolis and St. Paul that policies and practices associated with desegregation goals should be reviewed. Despite the demonstrable compliance with the desegregation rule for most school sites in the central cities, there is too little evidence of real integration, either through joint presence in classrooms and activities, or in attitudes toward persons from different backgrounds.

Providing true educational opportunity to all children in the Twin Cities requires a broader approach than is available today. Viable, high quality schooling is fundamental to maintaining the health, diversity, and economic well-being of the two cities that make up this area's urban core. Due to the interdependence of the communities in this region, the rest of the metropolitan area stands to suffer without a successful and thriving metropolitan core.

The central cities' changing demographics are resulting in pockets of poverty in Minneapolis and St. Paul neighborhoods and schools. This is caused by a combination of public policies and private actions regarding housing patterns and availability, which in turn influence transportation policies, health care, and social service accessibility.

Although Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools contain exemplary programs, demographic changes are creating a situation in which it will be difficult to retain substantial numbers of concerned families--of all races--who can set the tone for effective school programs. School systems in which poverty is predominant do poorly on measures of academic achievement, as seen in many metropolitan areas around the country. [12]

The school desegregation cases brought before the U.S. Supreme Court and lower courts, since 1954, have dictated desegregation policies around the country. In Brown vs. the Board of Education, the court repudiated the "separate but equal" doctrine, rejecting facilities made separate by law.

In Minneapolis, racial balance practices have shifted from federal courts to state regulation. The Minneapolis schools operated under a U.S. District Court order to desegregate from 1972 through 1983. Since that court order was lifted, the district has operated under the desegregation rules set by the Minnesota Board of Education for all Minnesota districts. Although never under a court desegregation order, the St. Paul School District developed a comprehensive desegregation plan and is in compliance with state desegregation rules.

Racial and ethnic group desegregation in Minnesota school districts is governed by rules adopted by the State Board of Education in 1970. According to the state board rules, a school building is segregated when its proportion of minority students exceeds by more than 15 percentage points the proportion of minority students districtwide (for the grade levels represented in that building). For example, to meet desegregation rules, a kindergarten through sixth grade elementary school in Minneapolis could have no more than 62.4 percent minority children, because the minority enrollment for K-6th graders districtwide is 47.4 percent. Minority students are defined as: Black-American, American Indian, Spanish-surnamed American (including persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Spanish origin), or Oriental Americans. School districts with segregated schools must submit desegregation plans to the commissioner of education.

Informal, if not yet formal, comments from representatives of minority groups suggest that the "numbers" approach is not (by itself) a satisfactory answer. It does not ensure a real reduction in racism; it does not necessarily improve the prospects for higher quality outcomes; and it may even have the perverse effects of false assurance about these outcomes. People of color, as well as White people, have emphasized their disillusionment with a desegregation policy that relies on (and seems to settle for) transporting students to achieve numerical balances at school sites.

In addition to the desegregation rule, the State Board of Education recently proposed adopting a rule requiring all school districts to develop multicultural and gender-fair curricula. (See Supporting Materials section.)

St. Paul and Minneapolis are ahead of most other Minnesota school districts in this regard. Both have engaged curriculum changes to reflect contributions from other cultures. St. Paul operates a multicultural resource center which has served as a model for other school districts; specialists there assist teachers in programming multicultural curricula and gathering appropriate materials.

Although some suburban school districts are experiencing increasing minority enrollments, many have virtually all-White enrollments. Consequently, they have little responsibility in the area of desegregation. In fact, they can remove themselves from the desegregation issues, even in today's context of open enrollment, by disallowing incoming students. However, the potential for contributing to segregated schools exists, because of the state law allowing school districts to "close their doors" to open enrollment. According to research on desegregation court cases, public action that "makes desegregation more difficult may constitute an additional constitutional violation, even if that conduct is undertaken for nondiscriminatory reasons." [13]

Because of this potential, metropolitan school districts voting against allowing nonresident students to enroll under the provisions of the Enrollment Options Act are vulnerable, regardless of their stated intent. Past court cases have made clear that "the condition that offends the Constitution is governmentally caused segregation." [14] Even though the Supreme Court has stated that no single test can establish discriminatory intent, plaintiffs need only show that the defendants' conduct had a "natural and foreseeable consequence of causing educational segregation." [15]

We expect to see several formal proposals surface for the Legislature's consideration in 1989, which could change or add to the desegregation strategy the state now uses.

- A. One, introduced this fall by St. Paul Superintendent David Bennett, uses incentives to attract majority students into St. Paul and to attract minority students into the suburban districts around St. Paul. A summary of that plan is described in the Supporting Materials section.
- B. The State Department of Education has initiated several efforts to lower the barriers that tend to discourage voluntary desegregation arrangements among districts. To further student movement among districts, the department is facilitating meetings between groups of metro area school districts. These groups might seek an appropriation from the 1989 Legislature to finance joint school district desegregation efforts. Further details of these discussions are in the Supporting Materials section.
- C. A third idea, proposed by Dr. Merton Johnson, chair of the Bloomington School Board, relies on incentives for students to attend school in other districts. A brief description of this proposal is in the Supporting Materials section.

It became clear to the committee that: First, improved opportunities are needed for better learning at existing public schools, grades kindergarten-12. Second, new and innovative learning arrangements are needed to mitigate existing inequities in education.

The committee realized early in its work that it could not prescribe one ideal school. All members had different, yet legitimate, notions of what constitutes a good school. Instead of simply listing the characteristics of a good school, the committee sought to identify changes in the Twin Cities' educational system that would enable quality learning to thrive.

V. CONCLUSIONS

- A. High quality educational programs are needed for optimal student learning to retain, in the urban center, families committed to the community, high-achieving students of all races and incomes, and to attract students who live outside the central cities.
- B. Diverse programs are needed, because the needs of students are diverse. A single type of schooling can meet the needs of some, not all, students. The factory model of education has proven to be inadequate.
- C. School districts in the Twin Cities have implemented some excellent educational programs and have demonstrated their commitment to improvements; however, the number of diverse, quality educational programs is inadequate. The successful schools have not been expanded or replicated. Efforts to improve educational programs must be ongoing.
- D. To provide more quality learning opportunities for more students, a mechanism is needed to allow groups of teachers to develop better ways of teaching and interacting with students using different methods, technologies, and ways of organizing time. Innovative programs can and should be implemented by grade level, department, and school building.

This mechanism should further widen teachers' opportunities by opening the door for the creation of new public schools. This can be done within the existing public education system, but should be beyond the exclusive control of those who now determine whether to begin a new school. Such opportunities are particularly important in those areas where the inequity in educational opportunities is most apparent--where low-income children and students from disadvantaged backgrounds are concentrated.

In this report we refer to this mechanism as "chartered schools."

Chartered schools would be public schools in which educators provide innovative learning opportunities. Chartered schools could be entirely new schools, redesigned departments or grade levels within an existing school, or completely restructured existing schools. In this document, the term "chartered schools" means all these possibilities. A "school" does not necessarily refer to the "school building" in the traditional sense.

The committee's vision for chartered public schools is that they must, like any public school, serve all children. They will have to be integrated by ability level and race. They will not, like a private school, be able to select students based on ability.

They will involve parents and will help parents learn how to help their children with their schoolwork. They will emphasize the human factors so essential to students' success. They are especially needed for children at the earliest ages, as the first contact with schooling for children who come less prepared than most. They will provide options in learning arrangements for children who simply have different learning styles and requirements.

The chartered schools will be evaluated in part by the parents, in part by the students, and in part by a neutral accrediting agency, after they have a reasonable chance to develop a track record.

In this way, chartered schools will be accountable for meeting the needs of the children they serve. They will be schools that parents and students will be free to leave. It is possible that not every such school will succeed. Students in a school that is closed should have their choice of and help in transferring to another school. Teachers joining the staff of chartered schools should be able to go on leave from their regular positions, so that they can return to them if necessary.

To meet both academic and integration objectives successfully, chartered schools will need:

- * outreach programs to inform students, living both inside and outside the district, from a variety of income levels and races, about the school,
- * curricula designed to appeal to students who would make a diverse student enrollment,
- * programs and instructional approaches that encourage the interaction of students and promote integration. This might include replacing the traditional competitive learning techniques in the classroom with cooperative learning methods, whereby students work together to learn and teach one another, and
- * culturally- and racially-diverse staff.

1. The chartered schools must meet specific criteria.

Fundamental criteria are essential to establishing the schools as public schools and to prevent the creation of "elitist" schools.

These criteria are necessary to attain student enrollments that represent a mix of achievement levels, constrain operators against screening out certain students, and provide accountability. Schools that fail to meet the criteria within three years, or design a plan to enable them to meet the criteria, are subject to charter revocation.

a. The school's student enrollment could not be segregated. The school must have an affirmative plan for promoting integration by ability level and race.

(Although these criteria would prohibit the establishment of schools designed for any single racial or ethnic group, the committee appreciates the complexity of this issue and suggests that the Legislature might wish to deal separately with voluntarily segregated schools established by minority groups.)

b. The school would accept students of all academic achievement levels, athletic or other extra-curricular abilities, handicapping conditions, proficiency in English, or previous disciplinary violations. To prevent "creaming off" the brightest students, chartered schools would have to enroll a cross section of students. However, schools could refuse students because of lack of space in the program, class, grade level, or building.

One exception would be schools organized specifically for students at-risk of failing in the traditional school setting. The instructional program might be uniquely tailored for students with specific needs. For these schools, students' eligibility could be determined by their previous school record or from preschool screening data.

c. The school could not charge fees or tuition for its core operating costs. Like existing public schools, the chartered schools would have the authority to charge fees in areas considered extra-curricular or supplementary to the program.

General education revenue would flow to the school in the same arrangement now used when students attend another district's school under Minnesota's Enrollment Options Program: The state aid would go to the school

in which the student is served. State aid would be subtracted from the district in which the student resides. (This does not preclude use of a venture fund, financed by public and private sources, for organizational or start-up costs.)

d. The school must be nonsectarian.

e. The school must meet accreditation standards within three years of its establishment. The Department of Education should choose the accreditation vehicle to ensure the school meets its goals.

2. Chartered schools must be operated by licensed educators.

The group applying for the authority to operate a chartered public school could include school teachers, administrators, or other licensed personnel, as well as people outside the education profession. However, the people teaching in the chartered school must be licensed educators. (This is not intended to preclude the use of teacher aides in the classroom.)

3. Students attending chartered schools would be eligible for transportation aid. Student transportation would be

provided under the same arrangements as the current system. Students from outside Minneapolis or St. Paul would have to transport themselves to the boundary line, from where the district would be responsible for delivering them to the school.

Low-income students who are unable to transport themselves to the district boundary should be eligible for state-provided transportation money, similar to that provided in the open enrollment law.

4. Chartered schools must meet desegregation guidelines. The

State Department of Education should require the chartered public schools to meet the same desegregation guidelines that govern other schools. The only exception would be those cases where a school specializes in voluntary educational programs specifically for disadvantaged students. (See the text below for additional discussion of desegregation.)

5. Groups receiving the public school charters could set up their innovative programs in existing schools or in buildings leased for this purpose. The building need not be

a school building in the traditional sense.

E. The state's desegregation policy should place primary emphasis on increasing the quality of educational outcomes, thereby committing us to a higher standard of desegregation, one that moves toward actual integration through assurance of high-quality opportunities for everyone.

Racially balanced schools do not necessarily meet the overarching concern for quality learning experiences. Consequently, a growing number of people of color, as well as many in the majority community, say they would consciously sacrifice further progress with desegregation to get higher quality, if that were the choice.

However, that is not the choice. Rather than roll back the gains made by desegregation over the last generation, or settle for that achievement, we should expand the commitment to go further, to do more. We should reject the minimalism that regards compliance with the racial-balance rule as a definition of success, and build instead toward a standard that sustains balance and emphasizes higher quality outcomes for everyone.

Over and over we have heard the appeal for "quality" first. It is not a plea just for quality offerings. It is a plea for quality outcomes. Quality outcomes depend on what goes on in the classroom: what teachers and students do together, how they do it, and how they treat each other.

The question is: how do we achieve that quality? We believe what is needed is the opportunity--which this report advocates with the idea of chartered schools--to create optional learning arrangements where the approach to learning may assume new or different forms.

One objective is to open the way for different kinds of classrooms to appear, in which different learning styles are recognized and valued, and in which those students' potential, too, can be fulfilled.

An orientation to differences in how students learn, combined with the right (and responsibility) of parents and students to choose the school or program that best fits, as well as, a different approach to appreciating different cultures, will build toward higher quality results for all students.

- F. A more sophisticated response is needed to achieve the ultimate goal of integrated schools--quality outcomes. Simply mixing certain percentages of different races and ethnic groups together in a school is inadequate.

Minnesota's desegregation rule remains necessary, but it no longer appears sufficient to the goal of integration. The dramatic growth in minority populations in our central cities (as well as in other urban areas around the country) poses new challenges for education, and for community building in general. Schools have always exposed minorities to the heritage of the dominant culture; the time has come for reciprocal requirements.

All children will profit from a multicultural commitment that promotes understanding of differences in background and perspectives. This commitment must overcome many barriers, not

the least of which is the nearly all-White nature of most suburban and rural schools, where we might wonder if students are emerging unprepared, culturally, for the more pluralistic world in which they **will** likely spend their adult lives.

The state's desegregation policy should promote a new, broader definition of the goals for integration, one dedicated to:

- * preparing all students for a more pluralistic society,
- * teaching tolerance and appreciation for differences in backgrounds, heritage, philosophy, and appearance,
- * making school more relevant for minority children via curricular changes that include the histories and cultures of people of color, and
- * increasing the learning opportunities for all students.

The definition of a quality education must include these outcomes, in addition to academic ones.

- G. Although desegregation rules focus exclusively on students' race or ethnic background, family income levels better determine children's preparation for school and academic success.

School segregation is measured solely by racial and ethnic composition. Parental income level is a more accurate predictor than race/ethnic group of students' success in school. Students from lower income families are far less likely to be ready to begin school, to take advantage of educational opportunities, and to face higher expectations from educators and others. They also have a smaller chance of finishing high school.

This is not to say we should ignore the Brown doctrine against facilities made separate by law for people of color. Instead, we should be at least as concerned about segregation by income as segregation by race.

The concern extends beyond students already in school to children who are unprepared to begin school when they reach the age of most kindergartners or first graders. Often, children from low-income families have not received the stimulation, social skills, or level of preparation received by other children. These children begin school with disadvantages that can impair their progress. This problem has implications for not only the educational system, but the health and social service systems as well.

Although specific suggestions for preschool intervention programs were beyond the scope of this committee's charge, it became clear that the lack of preparation can portend academic difficulties in the near- and long-term, and demands a public policy response. (As of the completion date of this report, a Citizens League research committee on early childhood education was in the final stages of its work.)

- H. Clearly, to the degree that students who have trouble academically are disproportionately minority students, high proportions of minority students will be perceived to pose a problem for central-city schools (and for central cities in general). What is less clear is the sensible remedy.

The concerns about concentrations of students should focus clearly on the challenges posed by those who have trouble learning in conventional settings, or who disrupt the learning opportunity of others, not on race per se.

The committee discussed several ways to mitigate this "concentration" problem, and the ramifications for minority students:

1. Balancing Racial **Mixes** Through Voluntary Incentives for Student Movement--Proposals are emerging that may offer incentives for more minorities to attend suburban schools and more suburban white students to attend central city schools. These are worthy, important efforts.

Nevertheless, focusing on race and hoping for a greater volume of exchanges between cities and suburbs runs a serious risk of stratification, with only the most highly motivated minority students participating. Such proposals must be carefully defined so as not to have the unintended effect of providing incentives for white families or middle class families to move to the suburbs. This could lead to an undesirable further segregation of people by housing patterns.

In a sense, both the education system and the problem are in a trap: if only success-oriented students respond to a voluntary exchange opportunity, we have not really addressed the problem that concentrations of students-with-difficulty represents; and if the more difficult students do show up in suburban districts, there is no assurance of the capacity to deal with the challenge they pose to a learning environment.

2. Redrawing Boundary Lines Among Districts--Similar difficulties plague the prospects for improvement through changing boundaries. Redrawing the lines among districts simply changes the situation from an inter-district to an intra-district problem. Nonetheless, this approach should remain among future possibilities.

Such strategies should stop short of dispersing minority students around the metropolitan area, particularly when the result would be small numbers of minorities isolated in a majority sea everywhere except Minneapolis or St. Paul. This dispersal is undesirable except under totally voluntary conditions.

The deconcentration argument masks the concerns of a growing number of parents in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Because disproportionate numbers of minority children experience difficulty in academic achievement, race tends to be seen as a proxy for low academic achievement. Parents become concerned that the teacher must give additional time and attention to the children having difficulty, to the detriment of other students.

However, this strategy of changing boundary lines would deal directly with the problem of concentrations of students by race or ethnic group according to the current definition of a segregated school. It would reduce the concentrations by spreading out these students among a variety of school districts, albeit with the attendant problems described above. It also would necessarily involve school districts outside the central cities in the solution.

3. Using Improved Schools and Optional Learning Arrangements-

schools. This report recommends a new kind of opportunity to start schools, to create diverse programs that respond to unmet needs. This implies not just different schools, but different arrangements in the classroom: changes in the expectations of students, and changes in the way students interact with each other and the instructors.

These measures, combined creatively with (1) incentives to bring about enrollments balanced by race and ability, and (2) programmatic changes to prepare students for their future in a more pluralistic society, may reduce the problems associated with concentrations of students.

I. No change in desegregation policy should be planned without careful consultation with the affected minority communities.

Whether the proposals involve voluntary movement, redrawing boundary lines, or introducing new strategies for higher quality, it is vital to develop them cooperatively with citizens who can bring the perspective of the minority communities to the effort. This means going beyond involving people of color in the educational staffs in the districts or Department of Education, to including leaders in the minority communities.

J A revamped desegregation policy must also attempt to resolve the conflict between choice and desegregation.

The open enrollment law enacted by the 1988 Legislature heightens this conflict in Minneapolis, where essentially only the White students will be denied the intra-district enrollment options available to all other students across the state. The strategy should work toward achieving integration while expanding educational choices for all parents and children.

We understand the importance of preserving racial balance and do not expect the rule, which now restricts the movement of majority students, to be easily changed. The only alternative to removing the restriction is to create more options from which

these parents and students may choose. This has essentially been the policy in St. Paul. The emergence of additional high-quality options in the city where those families live can greatly diminish the demand to transfer to suburban districts.

However, we are equally concerned about the reverse of this conflict: where minority students are denied the opportunity to freely attend school outside the central cities. In no case should any district erect barriers to the enrollment of a student from a population group clearly under-represented in the school's or district's enrollment pattern.

- K. As the state provides new education resources, the Legislature should target a substantial portion of these resources to those students having the greatest struggle achieving academic success. Increasing the level of these students' educational outcomes ought to be the most important objective. This includes helping prepare preschool aged children for school.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. The Legislature should authorize the formation of chartered public schools (1) by September of 1989 through joint committees set up in the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts, and (2) by September of 1992 through special authority of the Department of Education.

The committee recommends locating chartered schools in the central cities, because that is where the inequity in educational opportunities is most apparent; the low-income children and students from disadvantaged backgrounds are concentrated there. Also, the central cities offer the best potential for providing access to a diverse student body.

Although the schools' location would be limited to within Minneapolis and St. Paul, students from outside Minneapolis and St. Paul could attend. Applicants from outside the central cities would also be eligible to apply for charters.

1. Minneapolis and St. Paul School Districts should each establish committees to grant charters. The Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts should each establish a joint labor/management/citizens committee to approve proposals for public school charters. The school board would not be involved with the day-to-day operational decisions for the school, once approved. However, schools receiving charters from the joint committees would have the option of retaining centrally provided services such as student transportation, planning, or supply and equipment purchases.
 - a. Membership of joint committees. The joint committee shall include equal numbers of teachers, administrators, and community members. Teacher unions would appoint the

teacher members, the school boards shall appoint the management representatives, and parent/community organizations shall appoint the community representatives.

- b. Joint committee approval of chartered school proposals.
The joint committee would have authority to approve a chartered school proposal with a majority agreement among its members. The joint committee should judge the proposals on how well they meet the following provisions:
- i. Does the proposal incorporate a governance structure for joint decision making, including teachers, administrators, parents, and community members in the school's operation?
 - ii. Does the proposal identify desired learner outcomes and specify methods of evaluation?
 - iii. Does the proposal call for school-based budgeting, allowing the individual school to govern how its allocated budget is spent?
 - iv. Does the proposal use educationally effective strategies such as cooperative learning, use of technology, experiential learning, or innovative organizational arrangements such as a longer school day to meet the demand for nontraditional school hours?
 - v. Does the proposal include strategies to employ faculty members with diverse backgrounds, experience levels, age, gender, cultures, and race?
 - vi. Does the proposal include a plan to achieve a desegregated mix of students that reflects the makeup of the student population in the district?
 - vii. Does the proposal have a plan for a metropolitanwide marketing strategy, to ensure that information about the program is available to all students?
 - viii. Does the proposal have an affirmative plan for parental involvement?
- c. Facilitating the schools chartered by the joint committees.
- i. Create a cabinet-level position. To provide a cooperative partnership between the chartered schools and the school district, each district
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should create a cabinet-level position with the sole responsibility of assisting chartered schools. This post would facilitate the chartering effort by training teachers and ensuring that the centrally provided services are funneled to the school sites.

ii. Provide financing for planning costs. The Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts should work with corporations and foundations in the metropolitan area to finance competitive planning grants for applicants interested in designing chartered schools. The districts and financing organizations should establish criteria to evaluate applications for the grants.

iii. Provide financing for start-up costs. The Legislature should appropriate money to finance the implementation costs of the chartered schools in the first year. These costs might include providing staff development and training on joint decision-making, providing time for teacher participation and conferences, purchasing materials, or creating a position to facilitate chartered schools. The start-up costs would vary greatly from school to school. As one example, the Minneapolis School District estimated costs of \$57,700 for start-up staff development and equipment purchases in the first year of its Public Academy pilot project.

The fund would be distributed on a competitive grant basis. A joint committee of teachers, administrators, parents, and community members should be appointed by the State Department of Education to award the grants. The joint committee would establish guidelines for awarding the grants. Grants could be awarded on the basis of such objective factors as: the proportion of at-risk students the program is designed to serve.

2. The Legislature should grant authority to the Minnesota Department of Education to license chartered public schools, effective September 1992. This opportunity should be available regardless of the joint committees' track record. The three year delay would allow the central city districts time to demonstrate the workability of the joint committee chartering process within the existing districts.
 - a. The department's role in chartering public schools should be administrative. As the chartering entity for new schools, the department would determine the eligibility of the proposed school or program, and would act as the conduit for the distribution of school financing.

The department would simply determine whether the application for the charter meets specific criteria that defines the chartered schools as public schools. (See the criteria listed on page 15.) It would not make a discretionary judgment of the worth of, or need for, the proposed program; the department would not judge proposals for charters as the districts' joint committees would.

- b. The group receiving the charter would control the operation of the chartered public school. After the department's determination is made, it would not play a part in the school's operation.

Groups running the schools would organize themselves in a manner consistent with state law (as nonprofits, cooperatives, or for-profits) and adopt bylaws and elect directors accordingly. Teachers could organize through teacher unions or other professional organizations, but would not be employees of the school district. They should be allowed to take leave from their regular positions to teach in the chartered schools.

All decisions regarding allocation of resources would be made at the chartered schools. The Department of Education would provide the financing from the state to the chartered schools in much the same way as the department would act as the conduit of funds for the proposed state school for the arts. All chartered schools would be eligible to apply for state-provided financing for start-up costs.

- B. The State Board of Education should broaden its strategies for desegregating schools by adopting initiatives that reinforce, statewide, an appreciation for cultural differences and contributions, including providing:
 1. Rules for multicultural curricula--Schools need curricula that embrace the historical differences and contributions of diverse cultures, and more accurately reflects the world's many cultures. The rule governing multicultural curriculum, now pending before the Minnesota State Board of Education, should be adopted.
 2. Assistance in the development of a diverse teaching corps-- This is recognized as a nationwide problem because of smaller numbers of minority students entering the profession. The state board should work with school districts to develop innovative programs for attracting and retaining teachers who are persons of color. Although detailing the specific hiring and retention programs is

beyond the scope of this report, such programs have been developed in other parts of the country and for other professions. Some of the programs to attract potential employees have included tuition forgiveness programs, business exchange programs, early identification of and assistance for students with potential for the profession, and loan repayment reductions.

3. Guidelines for multicultural teacher training.

All these changes are necessary for school districts around the state to prepare students to live in a pluralistic society. Their importance must not be underemphasized. In fact, they are arguably more important for those districts in which the student enrollment is virtually all-White. These students will be least prepared to function in a global society and economy that is increasingly populated by people of color.

C. The 1989 Legislature should take one of two actions to address the desegregation problem. Either:

1. Authorize approving chartered public schools to improve the quality of education for all students and encourage student movement among districts as described above, or
2. Require the Commissioner of Education to prepare a plan for the 1991 Legislature's review to reduce concentrations of minority students through means such as reconfiguring school district boundaries.

The committee recommends that the Legislature act on the first of these two choices. In doing so, however, the committee acknowledges that the second course of action would be better than no action at all. Because of the immediacy and seriousness of the desegregation problem, the Legislature must take steps in 1989. Waiting will only exacerbate an already untenable situation and make a reasonable solution more difficult to attain.

Chartered schools provide the best opportunity for a change in the schooling of students--the way students are treated, the expectations placed on them, and the interactions between teachers and students. However, if the Legislature determines that this course of action is inadequate, it should require the Commissioner **of** Education to prepare a plan to reduce the concentration of minority students.

The Legislature should make the final decision on proceeding with any such plan. Implementing the plan means the state would be superseding the authority of the existing school districts. Because this removes control from a local district, the recommendation is intended as a last resort. The Minnesota Legislature has historically accorded local control to individual school districts. It has been reluctant to unilaterally mandate mergers or other boundary changes.

The broad-scale change of redrawing boundaries would likely encounter significant political barriers. Few existing school districts would be willing to dissolve. The upheaval would affect parents and students as well as educators and school boards. Boundary changes that lead to larger districts, and larger schools, will likely exacerbate the undesirable characteristics of large schools, thereby detracting from quality instead of enhancing it.

Moreover, redrawing school district boundaries would concentrate all efforts on the "numbers game," and divert attention from the primary goal--quality. The true objectives of integration, preparing students to live in a pluralistic society, and teaching an appreciation of racial and cultural contributions and differences, could be lost.

Acknowledging these difficulties, the commissioner's plan could be any one of several options such as:

- i. Dividing the central city districts into geographically-logical shares among the contiguous surrounding districts. This would, in effect, distribute the responsibility for desegregation among all school districts adjacent to Minneapolis and St. Paul.
 - ii. Merging the contiguous districts surrounding Minneapolis and St. Paul into those two districts. In this arrangement the suburban areas would also be responsible for desegregating schools, while the central cities' experience with multiple cultures would be retained.
 - iii. Reconfiguring the metropolitan area school districts into five districts, each with a proportionate share of students by race and income categories.
 - iv. Appointing a metropolitan education advisory board consisting of educators, human service professionals, and community leaders to develop a desegregation plan for the metropolitan school districts. Working with community leaders, and through a series of community meetings, this board would develop grassroots-oriented responses to aid desegregation. At the same time, this board would make it clear that failure to implement these measures would invoke mandatory participation in a regionwide desegregation plan.
- D. The Legislature should amend the enrollment options law to prevent a school district from closing its programs to nonresident students when those students would improve the district's racial balance. The only exception would be when the district did not have the physical space to accommodate additional students.

Preparing All Parents and Students

VII. BACKGROUND

Parents and students need assistance and information to make wise school choices; this is particularly important for parents least able or least likely to directly seek out quality educational programs themselves. Comprehensive information about schools and their programs is lacking. Without additional help for parents and students, enrollment options will be effective only for those persons who have the expertise to use them, or the ability and stamina to find out about them.

The overall number of students taking advantage of the various enrollment options available is small, but increasing steadily. More and more minority students are participating. For example, in Minneapolis during the 1987-88 school year, 555 students participated in the post-secondary enrollment options program, an increase of 45 percent over the 1986-87 school year. Nearly 23 percent of these participants in 1987-88 were minority students, compared to 18 percent the year before, according to the school district's data.

In addition to the lack of information on schools, more comprehensive assistance for disadvantaged families is minimal. Some programs like Head Start and the Urban Coalition's Smart Start have assisted these parents. Yet, additional help is needed not only in providing information about schools, but also in guiding parents through interactions with the educational system.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

- A. The state should be responsible for ensuring that adequate information about schools is available for residents to make sound educational choices. Parental freedom to choose public schools is inadequate without accessible, useable information about the schools. The 1988 Legislature's enactment of the enrollment options program for all school districts by 1991 expands the opportunity for parents to request and select from diverse educational programs. However, comprehensive information on existing schools and programs is unavailable today.

This information might include:

- systems for communicating with parents
- availability of advanced placement classes

- instructional methods and average/range of class-sizes at various grade levels
- method for assigning students to schools within the district
- percentage of fulfilled parent choices of schools
- elementary specialists within the schools (e.g., specialists in visual arts, world languages, etc.)
- electives within the high schools
- special education services and percentages of students enrolled

- B. The state should ensure that special outreach efforts are conducted for disadvantaged students and their families, who do not characteristically seek or respond to information from school authorities. Some parents are inhibited by or ambivalent toward large, bureaucratic systems of any type. Nontraditional communications are needed to ensure that opportunities for educational excellence are available and known to all parents, principally those in lower socio-economic levels.

Without improved communications about educational opportunities and parental involvement, the state's initiative to expand choice of school for parents and students will fall short of its objectives for some families. Those students who could arguably benefit the most from different learning arrangements will be unaware of these arrangements and how to take advantage of them.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. The Minnesota Department of Education should work with community service agencies to reach all parents with information about education opportunities and parental involvement. This applies not only to information about the variety of educational programs available, but also to the need for ongoing dialogue between parents, students, and teachers.

Instead of relying on individual schools or districts to provide information to parents, the department should:

1. Identify and use information networks existing in various ethnic and racial communities. As one example, the department might work through the Urban Coalition's "Smart Start" program in Minneapolis as one contact with disadvantaged students from Black, Hispanic, and American Indian families.
2. Develop, in concert with existing community organizations, information on schools and effective parental involvement, and tailor it for delivery through the different information networks. Parental involvement in both preschool activities and K-12 education must be encouraged as crucial to a child's success. For example, research on parental involvement in Head Start programs (preschool intervention programs for low-income children) indicates that involving parents in Head Start as participants engenders the most beneficial, long-term results.

- B. The Department of Education should, either through in-house resources or outside help, ensure that comprehensive school information is available to parents and students. This means researching data parents need to make good education program decisions, gathering the data, assembling it for distribution, and marketing it.

Research Background

Supporting Materials

- A. Although the quality of education in Minnesota has been good, the education system faces new and difficult challenges.

Because quality schools contribute in large measure to the economic health, employment opportunities, and quality of life in the cities of which they are a part, people are concerned about the ongoing performance of their schools.

1. Research on performance in mathematics, reading, and cognitive ability by students in Minneapolis, Sendai, Japan, and Taipei, Taiwan, indicates that U.S. students lag behind students from these other countries at elementary grade levels. [16] Minneapolis first and fifth graders were found to spend the lowest percentage of time engaged in academic activities when compared to similar students in Japan and Taiwan. [17]

According to a 1986 assessment of mathematics proficiency by U.S. students, the gains in performance over the past decade have been confined largely to lower-order skills. The generally low performance of high school students indicates only "moderately complex skills and understandings," which is considered insufficient for advanced study in secondary schools. [18]

The Second International Survey of Mathematics Achievement conducted in 20 countries in 1981-82 resulted in ranking Japanese 13-year-olds and high school seniors first or second in almost every skill test, and similar American students in the 8th to the 18th position on these tests. Japan is currently engaged in a major education reform movement dealing with diversification and decentralization of education. [19]

2. Although on college admission tests Minnesota students generally score at or slightly above other U.S. students, over time test scores have declined. The decrease in Minnesota test scores was greater than the decline in the nation as a whole. [20]

For the first time in over a decade, the 1987-88 college-bound juniors in Minnesota scored lower on the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSATs) verbal tests than the national average. The mean verbal test score for Minnesota

juniors was 40.1, compared with the national mean score of 40.4. On the math test Minnesota juniors scored slightly above the national average, with a 46.5 mean score, compared with the national mean score of 45.0. However, the difference between the Minnesota and the national mean scores (1.5 percent) was the lowest of the past decade. [21]

3. The public schools are not meeting the needs of all students.

- a. Both the number and percent of dropouts statewide have increased over the last five years. In 1982-83, about 7,650 students dropped out of school statewide, the equivalent of 2.1 percent of the 7-12 grade enrollment. By 1986-87, the number of students dropping out climbed to 9,431, or 2.8 percent of the 7-12 grade enrollment. However, school districts with above average dropout rates tend to be in urban areas and/or have above average numbers of minority students.

In the metropolitan area encompassed by the Metropolitan Educational Service Unit, 5,597 10-12 grade students, or 6.6 percent of all 10-12 graders, dropped out. About 46 percent (2,589 students) were enrolled in Minneapolis or St. Paul; 54 percent were enrolled in other metropolitan area districts. [22]

To provide an alternative to the traditional high school, the 1987 and 1988 Legislatures enacted legislation for Area Learning Centers. These centers are designed for secondary students who are likely to drop out and for certain adults reentering the work force, such as dislocated homemakers. Twelve such centers now exist in the state.

- b. Tests administered by the Minneapolis School District indicate that minority students are performing better over time, but still considerably **less** than White students.

For instance, in reading and language arts in 1986, the median ranking for White students was at the 67th percentile, and the median ranking for Hispanic students was 52nd, Asian students 57th, Black students 37th, and American Indian students 42nd. Each of the minority groups showed improvement over the median rankings from five years earlier, but all were still lower than the median White student ranking. [23]

In St. Paul, minority students also scored consistently lower than White students on the district's high school competency testing. Testing of ninth and tenth graders in March and April of 1988 provided the following results:

St. Paul Public Schools
High School Competency Testing Program
Percent of Students Passing
Spring 1988

	<u>Test</u>	
	<u>Reading Math</u>	
American Indian	71	58
Asian	45	40
Black	57	39
Hispanic	70	59
White	82	74

Source: "High School Competency Testing Program Report of Results," St. Paul Public Schools, July 1988.

- c. School drop-out rates for some minority groups far exceed the drop-out rates for White students.

Percentage of Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Grade Drop-Outs by
Racial/Ethnic Category In Minneapolis
1987-88

American Indian	37.5%
Black	22.9%
Hispanic	17.1%
Asian	6.9%
White	12.7%

Source: "Student Statistical Report 1987-88," Minneapolis Public Schools.

- d Studies in the St. Paul School District show that Indian, Black, and Hispanic students lose disproportionately more credits than White and Asian students. Credit failure increased for minority students every semester between 1983 and 1986. [24] Besides tallying students' credit deficiencies, researchers interviewed students who lost credits and concluded that the prospects for educational success among minority students will not improve unless "all other school related factors (are) substantively" changed. Students said that besides their own motivation, the single most important factor in their academic success is a "teacher who cares, motivates, and teaches all students in a way that each can understand the subject." [25]

4. State residents want improved schools.

- a. Although parental satisfaction with public schools in the Twin Cities is generally good, and no comprehensive study has surveyed school district residents' satisfaction or how satisfaction varies among districts, few residents believe the schools are the best they can be.

Minnesotans' first priority for schools would be increased emphasis on basic reading, writing, and math skills, followed closely by improvements in learning to think, solve problems, and make decisions, according to a dialogue and survey conducted by the Minnesota Department of Education in 1984.

- b. Minneapolis parents have expressed dissatisfaction with the public schools. In a survey of Minneapolis adults, 41 percent indicated the public schools were not good enough to convince them to stay in Minneapolis, and nearly half of that group said the public schools were a reason they would consider moving to the suburbs.

About 14 percent of those surveyed indicated they planned to move to the suburbs within five years. Among the most frequently cited reasons for moving was better schools. [26]

- c. As a result of a group of American Indian parents voicing dissatisfaction with the public schools, the 1988 Legislature created a Native American Indian Council. This 15-member council is to study ways to achieve Indian control of education through Indian public schools, urban Indian school districts, or other means.

In Minneapolis, a group of American Indian parents and education officials issued a report in the fall of 1988 calling for additional recruitment of Indian educators, a better relationship between the district and Indian community, and improved continuity in the Indian educational program. The report suggests developing an Indian magnet school.

- 5. An increasing number of families in the metropolitan region are headed by single parents, many of whom are low-income. The number of single-parent families in the region increased 75 percent from 1970 to 1980. The median income of single-parent families in 1979 was \$9,800, compared with \$24,900 for the total population. [27]

In the metropolitan area exclusive of Minneapolis and St. Paul, female-headed families increased from 5.6 percent of all families in 1970 to 9.5 percent in 1980. During that same time period in Minneapolis, the percentage of female-headed households increased from 15.7 percent of all families to 20.7 percent. In St. Paul, the percentage increased from 13.7 percent to 18.1 percent.

- B. Merely adding more dollars to the existing educational system, without receiving improved outcomes in return, is insufficient to bring about long-lasting opportunities for all students to receive the best educational opportunities.

- 1 Financing education is a high state priority. The largest share of Minnesota's state budget goes to schools. Revenues from the state to school districts totaled \$3.09 billion in 1987-88, accounting for 62.4 percent of all school revenues. [28]

The share of spending on instructional activities declined in the 1970s but rebounded in the 1980s, according to the Minnesota Legislative Auditor. [29] The number of staff people per student has increased between 1976 and 1987, particularly among special education staff.

2. Minnesota's spending per student is greater than the national average. Since 1983, the operating expenditures per student have consistently been six percent above the national average. Operating expenditures per pupil unit grew 21 percent (in constant dollars) between 1975-76 and 1985-86. For capital outlays in education, Minnesota's per capita expenditures have exceeded the national average by 21 percent over the past ten years. [30]

On spending per resident, Minnesota ranks fifth among the states at \$745 per capita. This amount includes state assistance to individuals and private schools (the equivalent of \$159 million out of the total \$3 billion). [31]

3. Adding revenues to reduce class size may be simplistic, and by itself not necessarily beneficial. A 1986 study, prepared by Education Research Services, Inc., summarized 100 class size studies from 1950 to 1985. Among its findings about the benefits of smaller class sizes is that smaller classes will not of themselves result in greater academic achievement, and that few, if any, pupil benefits can be expected from reducing class size if teachers continue the same instructional methods and procedures in the smaller classes that they used in the larger classes. [32]

C. Changing demographics in the central cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul will have increasingly greater impacts on the school districts.

1. The percentage of minority students in the central city schools is increasing.

Minority Percentage of Total Enrollment

	Minneapolis	St. Paul
1982	35.4%	31.1%
1984	37.9	33
1986	42.6	36.6
1987	45	37.7

Source: "Desegregation Policy Analysis," January, 1988, and "7 County Metropolitan Area Enrollments," February, 1988, Minnesota Department of Education.

2. Elementary grade levels have the highest percentage of minority students and reflect the likely future makeup of student enrollment.

The elementary grades in both Minneapolis and St. Paul have higher concentrations of minority students than the secondary grades.

Percent Minority in Minneapolis Student Enrollment by Grade Level

<u>1987-1988</u>	
K-6:	47.44%
7-8:	47.4%
9-12:	39.15%

Percent Minority in St. Paul Student Enrollment by Grade Level

<u>1986-87</u>	
K-6:	37.17%
7-8:	40.57%
9-12:	34.27%

Source: "Desegregation Policy Analysis," Minnesota Department of Education, 1988.

3. Currently, both the Minneapolis and St. Paul School Districts are in compliance with the desegregation rules, but could experience difficulties if minority enrollments continue as projected. The fear is that the Twin Cities will follow other metropolitan areas around the country, where high concentrations of low-income, minority students caused families with the financial wherewithal to move to suburban locations or enroll in other schools.

The Minneapolis School District estimates that minority students will be in the majority by the end of the decade.

The State Board of Education rules say:

segregation occurs in a public school district when the minority composition of the pupils in any school building exceeds the minority racial composition of the student population of the entire district, for the grade levels served by that school building, by more than 15 percent.

Although variances to a school district's desegregation plan may be granted for educational reasons, none has been requested to date.

In addition to the rule on desegregation, the State Board has issued a rule related to multicultural curricula, which could be implemented following the outcome of a public comment process in November, 1988. The rule would require each Minnesota school district to establish a plan that ensures a "multicultural and gender fair curriculum."

Each district would be required to show how people of color, women, and handicapped people were involved in developing the plan. The plan would include the goals of the curriculum and its content, timelines for implementation, a process for evaluating the plan, and a program for staff training. All districts would be required to have plans by June 1990. [33]

4. The central city schools are experiencing an increasing number of low-income, disadvantaged students.

Nearly 44 percent of Minneapolis' 39,286 students in 1987-88 were eligible for free or reduced lunches (one measure of students' economic background.) This increased from 41 percent in 1986-87, and 39 percent in 1985-86. Nearly one-third of Minneapolis' student enrollment belonged to AFDC families. [34]

In St. Paul, 44 percent of the 32,975 students were eligible for a free or reduced lunch in 1987-88.

5. The Minneapolis School District gained more AFDC students in the first period of 1986-87 than it lost--a net increase of 543. Although each grade level experienced a net increase in the number of AFDC pupils, the largest percentage gains occurred in the elementary grade levels. A plurality of incoming AFDC pupils came from outside Minnesota.

Of the 3,050 students who withdrew from the Minneapolis School District in 1986-87, a plurality went to surrounding school districts. Less than five percent of the students withdrawing from the schools were AFDC students. [35]

6. Research indicates that school performance is closely correlated with the family income of children. [36] Most low-income students perform at lower levels than middle- or high-income students.

The St. Paul School District's results of standardized tests in elementary and secondary grades indicate that students from lower income neighborhoods score consistently lower on reading, math, and language basic skills tests than students from middle-income and upper-income neighborhoods. [37]

In addition, children from middle- and high-income families were found to have better academic performance, present fewer behavior problems, and have fewer absences than low-income children in a survey of Ramsey County families conducted and analyzed by the Wilder Foundation in 1988. The study found differences in academic performance occur primarily in the secondary grades. [38]

Nonetheless, there are examples of poor or minority schools where achievement is high, despite the problems of poverty and racism. [39] Restructured schools in East Harlem, serving primarily low-income, minority students resulted in

dramatic increases in students' academic achievement. There is evidence to suggest that children from all backgrounds and income levels would have a better chance of learning under non-traditional teaching/learning methods. [40]

- 7. "Low income" does not automatically mean "minority." However, the number of minority families that are low income is disproportionately high, according to census data.

One measure of students' economic background is whether they qualify for a free or reduced price lunch at school. In the Minneapolis School District in 1987-88, 30 percent of the students participating in the free or reduced price lunch program were White students, and 70 percent were minority students. [41]

- 8. Minnesota's nonwhite and Hispanic populations have been growing rapidly at a time when the majority population grew slowly, according to the Minnesota State Demographer. [42]
 - a. The White population grew about two percent between 1980 and 1985 in the state, while the nonwhite population grew more than 30 percent.
 - b. Between 1980 and 1985, the Asian and the Black populations have experienced large population increases (50 percent and 35 percent, respectively) resulting from a combination of high birth rates and in-migration. The American Indian population increase has been smaller (15-20 percent) but still significant and is due largely to high birth rates. The increase in the Hispanic population is estimated at 23 percent.
- 9. Suburban school districts are experiencing some increases in the number and percentage of minority students, but by far the largest increases are in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Racial-Ethnic Enrollment in Public Schools
1971 and 1986

<u>County</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>'86 Racial-Ethnic Z</u>
Anoka	348	1,996	4.0
Carver	18	134	2.0
Dakota	423	2,146	4.6
Hennepin	9,790	22,357	17.3
Mpls.	8,555	16,859	42.6
Balance/Henn.	1,235	5,498	6.1
Ramsey	5,360	13,678	20.5
St. Paul	4,999	11,801	36.7
Balance/Rams.	361	1,877	5.4
Scott	34	207	2.3
Washington	188	811	3.1

Source: "Racial-Ethnic Enrollment Trends in the Twin Cities Area Schools, 1985-1986," Metropolitan Council, October 1987.

10. Segregation of schools by race results from a combination of factors beyond the control of schools. The region's development pattern, the availability of low-income housing, location of jobs, access to social services, the dynamics of racism, and other factors have contributed to the neighborhood patterns now in existence.

For instance, most of the publicly subsidized housing in the region is located in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The Metropolitan Council reports that of all subsidized housing units in the metropolitan area, 26 percent is in Minneapolis, and 21 percent in St. Paul. By contrast, all of Hennepin County exclusive of Minneapolis contains 24 percent of the subsidized units in the region. [43]

For the most part, the poorest communities in Minneapolis in 1980 remained poor in 1984, and the wealthiest in 1980 remained wealthy in 1984. Those communities with the lowest median family incomes in 1980 continued to have the lowest incomes in 1984. (These are the latest dates for which comparative data are available.)

Low-income families are concentrated in certain communities in Minneapolis, notably the Phillips, Near North, and Powderhorn communities. In general, these communities also contain the highest shares of publicly-owned and subsidized housing. [44]

- D. Desegregation proposals are likely to be discussed in the 1989 Legislative session. Several have already emerged.

Saint Paul Superintendent David Bennett's desegregation proposal consists of the following measures:

Provide incentives, in the form of post-secondary tuition grants, to students who opt to participate in the desegregation program.

Provide incentives for school district participation by allowing the district losing the student to claim full state aids on the student, and providing to the receiving district the equivalent of the average full cost of educating a student plus 20 percent.

Work jointly with suburban school districts to recruit minority teachers at organized career fairs at predominantly minority colleges.

Develop voluntary exchange programs between districts for faculty and students.

Develop staff training to prepare suburban teachers to deal with issues of multicultural education.

Establish three state-sponsored magnet school programs outside of St. Paul to attract inner city students, and three inside St. Paul to attract suburban students.

Improve racial balance in housing through efforts of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and the Metropolitan Council.

Through the State Department of Education's efforts, education officials in metropolitan school districts have conducted intradistrict meetings to discuss potential desegregation efforts. The following proposals are being discussed within these groups:

Staff Development--Districts would jointly plan training for teachers who would teach in interracial classrooms and with multicultural curricula.

Student Service--Districts would plan community service projects for students outside their home districts. These projects would help develop intercultural experiences as well as leadership skills and a sense of community.

Staff Exchange Program--Districts would work with each other on a plan to exchange staff positions between suburban and central city school districts. For the first year, it is envisioned that 30 suburban teachers/administrators and 30 central city teachers/administrators would exchange positions, for a minimum of one quarter.

The State Department of Education has also created internal and external advisory groups to assist the development of equal opportunities for all students. It hopes to work with the Metropolitan Council to address segregation created through policies in housing, employment, transportation, and other governmental policies.

Dr. Merton Johnson, chair of the Bloomington School Board, has proposed using monetary incentives to voluntarily move students between districts. This plan, similar in some respects to that proposed by Dr. Bennett, would offer grants that would be redeemed at post-secondary institutions. Suburban students attending school in the central cities and minority students attending suburban schools would receive the grants. Transportation tax credits would also be provided. Priority would be given to high-achieving students or those from upper-income families, with the intention that more difficult learners would attend school close to home and parental support.

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Work of the Committee

Charge to the Committee:

The committee worked in response to the following charge from the Citizens League Board of Directors:

School Structure in the Metropolitan Area

Considerable controversy exists over whether the overall structure, within which elementary and secondary schools operate in the Twin Cities, are satisfactorily serving the needs of all students, regardless of residence, family income, or racial and ethnic background. Changes now under way in the size and **mix** of population, along with the growing support for parents' prerogative to choose schools, call for school structure that is adaptable to these changes.

The committee should examine the history and assumptions underlying the way education is organized and delivered today; and evaluate the adequacy of this approach to the needs of students for the future. It should explore a wide range of alternative approaches to organization and structure, which are consistent with community values and show potential for higher quality results.

The committee shall determine whether and how the existing school structure in the metropolitan area contributes to helping all students-- low achievers, average achievers, and high achievers--reach their highest performance potential.

The central question for the committee is: Should the delivery of education be reorganized so that all students have access to the highest possible quality program? The committee will also consider: What changes should be made in the charter of school districts, if they are to remain as the principle "teaching" organizations? What different roles are suggested for boards? For administrators? For teachers? How are effectiveness and adaptivity affected by maintaining present boundaries between districts? How does the distribution of students, for purposes of desegregation, impact helping all students reach their highest potential?

Committee Membership:

Under the leadership of John Rollwagen, chair, and Donn McLellan, vice chair, 44 Citizens League members participated actively in the deliberations of the committee. They are:

Mina Adamovich	Robert Lindquist
Robert Andrews	Duane Mattheis
Angela Bohmann	Truman Mohn
Kambon Camara	Walt Munsterman
Curtis Carlson	Verla Nelson
Reed Carpenter	Donald Newell
A. Stoddard Crane	Ruth Anne Olson
Nancy Devitt	Lorraine Palkert
J. Thomas Finucan*	Karen Panton
William Fuhrmann	Daniel Peterson
Ray Harris	Paul Riddle
Roger Jenni	Larry Sawyer**
Max Jodeit	Dennis Schapiro
Ellery July	James Scheu
Cynthia Kelly	Stephen Schewe
Edward Knalson	Larry Sundberg
Sherri Knuth	Louise Sundin
Ted Kolderie	Paul Taylor
Steve Larson	Peter Vanderpoel
Anne LeDuc	Ellie Webster
Bill Linder-Scholer	Dale Weeks
Steven Lindgren	T. Williams

*Supported the recommendations of the report, but believed that nonpublic schools should have been included in the committee's deliberations.

**Disagreed with the final recommendations of the report.

Committee Meetings/Resource Speakers:

The committee met for the first time on February 16, 1988 and concluded its work on October 25, 1988. A total of 30 meetings were held. As a part of the study process, the committee heard from the following resource speakers:

Will Antell, manager, Equal Educational Opportunities, MN Department of Education
Robert Astrup, president, Minnesota Education Association
Donna Bening, parent
David Bennett, superintendent, St. Paul Public Schools
Denise Carnell, parent
Ted Cunio, superintendent, White Bear Lake Public Schools
Julie Doble, teacher, St. Paul Open School
Susan Eyestone, parent and served as legislative chair for the state PTA
Jon Harper, education director, Hennepin County Adult Corrections
Ray Harris, president, Ray Harris Co. Inc., committee member, and director of Chiron school project

Carl Holmstrom, superintendent, St. Louis Park **Schools**
Chris Huber, superintendent, Spring Lake Park Public Schools
Peter Hutchinson, vice president of public affairs, Dayton Hudson Corporation
Lynne Irving, director, Ombudsman Educational Services
Erling Johnson, member, State Board of Education
Merton Johnson, chair, Bloomington School Board
Roger King, vice-president, GRACO, Inc.
Ted Kolderie, senior fellow, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, and committee member
Lowell Larson, superintendent, Richfield Public Schools
Steve Larson, president, Anoka-Hennepin Education Association, and committee member
Jim Long, director, Plymouth Youth Center
Audi Lussier, parent
Tim Mazzone, associate professor, University of Minnesota College of Education
Joe Nathan, project director, Spring Hill's Regional Issues Forum
Rep. Ken Nelson (DFL-Minneapolis), chair, House Education Committee's Finance Division
Charles Nichols, chair, Minneapolis Urban League Board of Directors
Karen Olson, independent science consultant
Gary Orfield, professor of political science, University of Chicago
Ron Otterson, executive director, Center School
Sandra Peterson, president, Minnesota Federation of Teachers
Perry Price, education director, Minneapolis Urban League Street Academy
Margie Reed, student, St. Paul Open **School**
Sigurd K. Rimestad, superintendent, Taylors Falls **School** District
Larry Sawyer, director of government relations, General Mills, committee member and director of Public Academy project in Minneapolis **School** District
Ted Sizer, professor of education, Brown University
Chuck Slocum, executive director, Minnesota Business Partnership
Rosa Smith, assistant director of curriculum instruction, St. Paul Public Schools
Rosella Stroman, Urban Coalition's "Smart Start" program
Harry Vakos, interim director, Minnesota Association of School Administrators
flo wiger, special assistant to the provost, University of Minnesota
Barbara Zohn, president of the Minnesota PTA
Jonette Zuecher, parent

In addition, members of the committee visited J.J. Hill Elementary School in St. Paul, a magnet school designed for gifted and talented students. The committee viewed a videotaped presentation by Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers.

Detailed minutes were kept of each committee meeting. A limited number of copies of the committee's minutes and background materials are available from the league office.

Assistance to the Committee

Citizens League staff assistance to the committee was provided by Jody Hauer, Curt Johnson, Joann Latulippe, and Dawn Westerman.

WHAT THE CITIZENS LEAGUE IS

The Citizens League has been an active and effective public affairs research and education organization in the Twin Cities metropolitan area since 1952.

Volunteer research committees of League members study policy issues in depth and develop informational reports that propose specific workable solutions to public issues. Recommendations in these reports often become law.

Over the years, League reports have been a reliable source of information for governmental officials, community leaders, and citizens concerned with public policy issues of our area.

The League depends upon the support of individual memberships and contributions from businesses, foundations and other organizations throughout the metropolitan area.

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Karen Himle

Herbert C. Johnson

William Kelly

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Susan Laine

Todd Lefko

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Dean A. Lund

Allan E. (Pat) Mulligan

Joe Nathan

Charles A. Neerland

Daniel K. Peterson

Wayne G. Popham

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