

SOUTHside FAMILY school

ACCREDITED BY NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

2740-1st AVENUE SOUTH
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February 11, 1991

Dear Elaine:

I goofed and double scheduled myself so I can't be at the Wednesday afternoon meeting. Here are a few concerns/thoughts about the issues:

1. Who decides who gets to be a school?

Ideally, whatever body is mandated should have a democratic sanction (elected) or else be representative, i.e., a group composed of an African-American, Native-American, Asian-American, a Spanish-speaking rep, an urban and rural rep, low-income, special needs, etc. The problem with this kind of inclusivity is, of course, endless debate about who still isn't included.

Having a non-profit contract to provide the service is a possibility as long as that nonprofit can provide a representative panel with oversight by its own duly elected board. I kind of liked Ted's idea about a cooperative established to run the thing but we'd need to hear more about how it would work.

Partly, I'm inclined to think it should be left the way it is and establish good clear criteria for what constitutes an adequate proposal (and have lots of paid help to provide technical assistance). Then we yell if the criteria aren't used or groups aren't getting a fair shake. The theory behind this is that it's better to hold the state responsible rather than have public criticism of an entity we helped create and manage.

2. School accountability.

I don't know enough about the outcome-based business to understand how that will be used to determine if schools are doing their jobs. I still think that having NCA accreditation might not be bad if we can get a "Chartered School" waiver for different staffing patterns. I figure that they want the business of getting those schools and they might be willing to bend if there are going to be many of them coming down the pike. Other than the staffing requirement, the NCA has a pretty good set of criteria which addresses a lot of concerns about parent involvement, individual student performance, school climate etc.



If NCA isn't an option, (or even if it is) there do need to be some criteria to assure that parents and students have a stake in these schools. Who makes decisions about curriculum, hiring, rules, etc? Are students, parents, the interested community, as defined, involved in a real way? Are kids learning basic skills and being treated fairly? How is this determined? This brings me to #3 below.

3. Governance

I don't see any point in having new schools unless they are more accountable than the ones we currently have. Family School has a parent board. Obviously, I think that's the best possible model but it probably won't fly as a requirement. How else can we build in accountability. Without scaring people, I think we should look at the Chicago school councils (1 principal, 2 teachers and 9 parents run each school).

I would like to be invited to any subsequent discussion groups. This is an important effort and I'm pleased to have been included.

Regards,



Flo (Fluffy)



February 7, 1991

Elaine Salinas
Urban Coalition
708 Third St. South
Suite 300
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear Elaine,

Thanks for sending a copy of the bill.

Most of it seems straightforward. My questions have to do with some of the implications through reference to existing law. I am unsure how these laws would affect the charter schools and their staff.

I am thinking of sub.12, (d), and its reference to chapter 179A. I wonder if the charter school will be able to set its own salaries? Would its teachers have to belong to the teachers retirement association?

I get the impression that, if the school meets its outcome agreements, there are no certification requirements except for the lead teacher. Is this the case?

Another question. Would this school be able to generate state aid year round?

I would be interested in knowing if any potential sponsors in the Twin City area has come forward expressing a willingness to negotiate with a potential entity.

Thank you for including me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jim Long". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Sincerely,".

PLYMOUTH CHRISTIAN YOUTH CENTER

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