

13 August 91

*talk to
Buckley 445-6658*

You'll probably see a "Minnesota 2000" effort cranked up here shortly by the Governor's office and the MN Business Partnership.

This will be an effort to get moving on the 'designs' of New American Schools (everything is in capital letters) to be eligible for funding under the program which Congress presumably will pass later this year. (Secretary Alexander and Senator Kennedy are still negotiating about it.)

Alexander will be here September 12 to talk to the MBP.

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It would seem to make sense to bring the charter-schools idea . . . and teachers and others interested in it . . . into the planning for these new demonstration schools (Minnesota will have 10). It may turn out that these will have to be big, fancy schools -- which the charter schools might not want to be. But it it's worth thinking about.

There's a first meeting of potential 'design teams' Wednesday August 21. At the moment the group is mainly public school organizations (state-wide, plus a couple of districts). It looks like it will be possible for some teachers interested in a charter school to be there.

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It looks increasingly likely a charter schools bill in the original Minnesota form, with the state as a direct sponsor, will be introduced in the California Legislature next session . . . and aggressively pushed by the state superintendent.

They are feeling real pressure there at the moment from voucher advocates who are mobilizing to go to the ballot in fall '92 with a constitutional amendment -- this time with major business support.

Honig (the state superintendent) and others in state government see the charter-schools idea as an alternative: as a way to generate innovate new schools and to catalyze the system, but within the general framework of public education.

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Nothing new on North Branch. I'll keep checking.

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Gene Mammenga may take an initiative next session here that relates to the charter schools idea.

He mentioned to the State Board of Education yesterday an idea/proposal in the new report from the National Governors Association . . . that teachers ought to be allowed to bargain on "education policy".

"Issues related to support for school improvement, authority and professional discretion can be negotiated through collective bargaining or through trust agreements or other nonadversarial means," the report says.

Gene also mentioned this to me, and I said it seemed to me the charter schools legislation has already gone a lot further down this very road, to teacher authority over the learning process.

He kind of acknowledged this is true. Where the NGA proposal would just teachers negotiate about it the legislation here would let teachers really decide it: They go at risk for their decisions.

The different of course is that the charter schools idea also makes the teachers accountable. The idea of bargaining about education policy gives the teachers authority without putting them at risk.

At any rate, if this idea appears in the '92 session it may provide some leverage.