

Encouraging charter schools

A charter school is a public school chartered by a local school district and approved by the Minnesota Department of Education. It is financed with public funds and reports to the chartering school district once a year. It is distinctive in being controlled by educators with a majority on its board. A measure passed by the 1991 legislative session permitted eight charter schools to be established. Four are in operation and a number more are seeking contracts from their local school boards. Typically, educators in a school district will apply for a charter to operate in that school district.

Charter school educators state their mission as meaningful and cost-effective change in public education — increased student achievement and graduation rates through improved student attitudes toward themselves, their schools, and their communities — structures that draw on and nurture the considerable talents of Minnesota's educators, parents and students and ways for them to assume more powerful roles in school design, governance and policy making. A charter school is individual with a program meeting a special need of the local school district. Through open enrollment students can come from other school districts if the charter program is appealing. It is another example of Minnesota's pioneering spirit in providing choice within the public school system, as does open enrollment.

Sen. David Durenberger has introduced legislation that would make the program available nationally. It has received favorable comment in such publications as the Washington Post which said: "What is clear is that Minnesota and dozens of other places are beginning to offer interesting case studies for the debate over school choice that has remained largely theoretical."

Minnesota school districts should encourage this innovative and promising experiment. The Mounds View school district established a learning center for high-risk students which has had success. Educators in that program now seek the greater freedom and flexibility a charter would offer. In one vote the Mounds View board declined the educators' application, four to three, but a change in the membership of the board indicates an application will now be approved.

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The question some were mull night, as word came of the num have filed for the board and co one wants to run and/or serve so many problems facing pe boards, city councils and scho that it seems like an exercise i member of one of those bodies.

"I think everybody needs to back. . .," VanHooser told m sounding 'serving your communi I ran originally and some peop that."

Problems facing the city of many and VanHooser couldn't p thing that convinced him not to cumulative," he said. "The new s

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By Minnesota Attorn

Who gets to tak

Your resume boasts a top-notch education, excellent experience, fine references, and noteworthy community involvement. But, is this enough? Job hunters should be aware that employers are increasingly looking at another "employment indicator" to judge you as a potential employee — your credit report.

Employers using credit reports contend that knowing how an applicant handles bills, loans and other financial obligations help predict whether he or she is likely to steal, sell company secrets, or act irresponsibly on the job.

Is this practice legal?

In 1970, Congress passed the Fair Credit Reporting Act to give consumers specific rights in dealing with consumer reporting agencies. The act protects you by requiring credit bureaus to furnish correct and complete information to businesses to use in evaluating your applications for credit, insurance, or a job.

Employers needn't inform job seekers about a credit check when they apply (though many do so on application forms). But when rejecting someone "either wholly or partly because of information contained" in a credit report, the law says a company is supposed to let that person know and identify the agency sup-

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