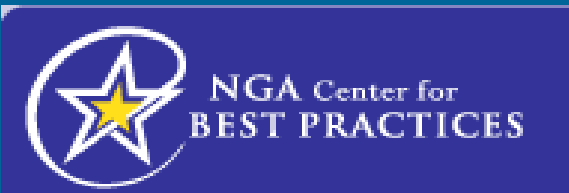


State Leadership for High Quality Charter Schools

An Initiative of
**The National Governors Association
Center for Best Practices**
and
The Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota

With Funding from the US Dept. of Education's Charter Schools Program



U. S. Department of Education
Ensuring educational excellence for all Americans

Project Overview

■ Four Primary Objectives:

1. Increase the number of states with charter school laws that promote the development of more high quality charter public schools.
2. Improve the implementation of state charter laws.
3. Increase public understanding of charter schools, especially among low-income communities and communities of color.
4. Increase the number of high quality charter schools serving low-income communities and communities of color.

Project Overview

■ Three Key Activities:

- Provide technical assistance and support to states that have prioritized policy work aligned with one or more of the four objectives.
 - Competitive application process
 - Six states selected:
 - Arizona
 - Colorado
 - Delaware
 - Nevada
 - New Mexico
 - New York
 - Host a Cross State Policy Institute to address states' prioritized policy issues and concerns.
 - Disseminate best practices related to policy development through Issue Briefs and national communication channels.
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Arizona

■ Program Goals:

- Develop and implement a charter school renewal process.
 - Refine periodic charter school review processes.
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Arizona

■ Key program activities:

- Explore multiple facets of renewal, including timeframes, available data, and statutory and contractual requirements.
- Evaluate quality, quantity, and relevance of current information collected.
- Establish and codify a renewal process that supports the continuation of high quality charter schools.

Arizona

- **Policy implementation challenges:**
 - Capacity of the Charter Board to meet statewide demand for services.
 - Legal and statutory challenges related to implementing the renewal process.
 - The evaluation of student academic achievement in the renewal process.

Colorado

■ Program Goals:

- Review current policies of and recommend new policies for the Division of Charter Schools in the CO Dept. of Ed.
- Establish guiding principles and standards for the creation, support, and growth of charter schools, including the authorities of charter authorizers.
- Consider best practices for increasing the quality of charter schools in identified high need communities.

Colorado

■ Key program activities:

- Make new administrative policy recommendations for the Division of Charter Schools in the Dept of Ed.
- Identify and disseminate best practices for charter authorizers; advise revisions to state statutes governing charter authorizer authorities.
- Establish best practices for the creation of high quality charter schools in high need communities (including opportunities for CMO replication).

Colorado

■ Policy implementation challenges:

- Limited (unclear) capacity of the Colorado Department of Education to provide the level of support required for high quality charter school sustainability and growth.
- Political and philosophical divisions.
- Charter school opposition in areas of the state with stable or declining enrollment in district schools.

Delaware

■ Program Goals:

- Develop charter renewal process with clear expectations and measurable performance outcomes.
- Create regulations for district schools to convert to charter schools.
- Develop Public Relations and Recruitment Training Module for charter school boards.

Delaware

■ Key program activities:

- Compile and review renewal/conversion practices used in other states; identify best practices.
- Propose changes to legislation or regulations based on review.
- Conduct a Governor's Summit on Charter Schools to increase public awareness.

Delaware

- **Policy implementation challenges:**
 - The general public is unaware of charter schools' achievements.
 - Limited capacity of the Delaware Department of Education to provide the level of support required for high quality charter school growth.
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Nevada

- **Program Goals:**

- Strengthen state charter school legislation.
 - Increase public understanding of charter schools.
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Nevada

■ Key program activities:

- Compile and review current charter school legislation in other states; identify best practices for Nevada (related to ensuring quality, financing, authorizing, and professional certification/licensure).
- Propose changes to current charter law based on review.
- Establish a statewide website (and other broad communication strategies) to disseminate information about charter schools.

Nevada

- **Policy implementation challenges:**
 - Perception of weak charter school legislation in the state.
 - Limited state level capacity to provide needed support and assistance to charter schools.
 - Strong charter opposition in two largest counties.

New Mexico

■ Program Goals:

- Increase the number of high-quality charter schools operating in under-served communities.
 - Increase knowledge among under-served communities about the public charter school option.
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New Mexico

■ Key program activities:

- Conduct public forums in Native American communities and pueblos (in partnership with tribal leaders).
- Coordinate post-forum charter school site visits.
- Conduct community survey to explore perceptions of public school choice options.
- Research and clarify options for BIA/BIE schools to convert to Charter schools.

New Mexico

- **Policy implementation challenges:**
 - Complexities of effectively aligning this work with Native American and pueblo leadership and communication traditions.
 - Lack of accurate charter school information among the public (e.g., misperceptions about teaching religion, charging tuition, student application processes).
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New York

■ Program Goals:

- Improve the overall quality of charter schools in the state by following a multi-step process.
 - Increase access to high quality charter options for ELL students.
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New York

- **Key program activities:**

- Establish statewide standards of charter school performance within a 3-tiered system (low, average, and high performing).
- Recommend incentives for charter schools to achieve higher levels of performance.
- Identify charter schools whose ELL population is not at, or approaching, parity with the school district in which it is located, and identify specific and tailored strategies to increase ELL population within the school.

New York

■ **Policy implementation challenges:**

- Multiple authorizers and other charter organizations with somewhat different missions attempting to develop a common set of statewide standards.
- Significant differences in traditional school district structure (and receptivity to charter schools) in different parts of the state.
- Achieving our goals in a way that supports the continuation of autonomy for charter schools.