



# THE NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS RESEARCH LIBRARY

## THE ORIGIN OF CHARTERS

When Minnesota passed the nation's first charter public school law in 1991, it was hard to foresee how quickly the idea would spread. This landmark legislation blazed a trail for others to follow – and now 44 states and the District of Columbia have charter laws.

At its core, the charter idea is about improving education for all students. It's a strategy that:

- Welcomes and encourages new ideas;
- Empowers students, families, educators, and communities;
- Propels innovation and opportunity; and
- Rewards results and encourages schools to be more responsive and adaptive.

## HISTORY MATTERS

Each state has a unique story as to how charters came to be. Our goal is to capture these stories, preserve them, and make them digitally available to anyone interested in learning about the charter school movement's important history. We know history enables us to learn from the past and better shape our future. Properly archived and shared, the history of the charter schools movement will be an invaluable asset to present and future leaders working to ensure all kids have access to a quality education.

## NOW IS THE TIME

Twenty-five years into the charter schools movement, many of the founders and key players have moved on in their careers, retired, or even passed away. That's why we believe it is imperative that the historical records and primary source materials of these pioneers are identified and preserved lest they get discarded and forever lost.

## NEXT STEPS

To build awareness and support for the Library, we are identifying and reaching out to the original thinkers and doers who made charters a reality. While the Library is a national initiative, we are focusing our efforts state-by-state. The initial partner states are Colorado, Michigan, and Minnesota, with plans for California next. For each state, we will:

- Identify and solicit commitments from key people and organizations;
- Partner with an Institution that specializes in archiving historical works (for example, in Michigan, we partnered with the Clarke Historical Library at Central Michigan University; and in Minnesota we partnered with the Minnesota Historical Society);
- Gather, archive, and digitize original source materials, and record oral histories; and
- Promote the Library, share the charter story, and influence the future.

## GET INVOLVED!

If you are interested in joining us and supporting the formation of the Library, please email us at [Info@CharterInstitute.org](mailto:Info@CharterInstitute.org) or call us at **(989) 317-3510**.