

# THE NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS FOUNDERS LIBRARY

## KEEPING CHARTERING ORIGINS AND HISTORY ALIVE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY!

When Minnesota passed the nation's first charter public school law in 1991, we didn't know how quickly the idea would spread. This landmark legislation blazed a trail for others to follow – including 44 states, the District of Columbia, Guam and even beyond U.S. borders.

The National Charter Schools Research Library will keep the core chartering idea alive through the stories of chartering pioneers documented by their own works and oral histories. They share in their historic words how the chartering idea is about improving education for *all* students by:

- Welcoming and encouraging new ideas;
- Empowering students, families, educators, and communities;
- Propelling innovation and opportunities; and
- Rewarding results and encouraging 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 schools 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 inform the future of chartering for present and future leaders working to ensure all kids have access to a quality education.

## THE TIME IS NOW

Twenty-five plus years into the charter schools movement, many of the founders and key players have moved on in their careers or retired. That's why it is imperative that the historical records, primary source materials, experiences, and lessons learned from these pioneers are identified, preserved and recorded, lest they get discarded or pioneering stories are left untold.

## NEXT STEPS

To build awareness and support for the Library, we are launching a national web portal through the National Charter Schools Institute to make accessible digitized documents and recorded oral histories from pioneers around the country. 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, organizations, and funders;
- Gather, archive and digitize original source materials and make them available beyond state borders through the national web portal;
- Create oral histories by recording the stories of each state's chartering pioneers;
- Partner with an institution that specializes in archiving historical works (*for example, Clarke Historical Library at Central Michigan University and Minnesota Historical Society*); and
- Promote the Library, share the charter story, and influence the future.

## GET INVOLVED!

We are building the Library with key leaders around the country! We thank our **National Library Advisory Committee**: Ted Kolderie and Hon. Ember Reichgott Junge (Minnesota); Hon. Peggy Kerns, Governor Bill Owens, and Alex Medler (Colorado); Dr. Howard Fuller (Wisconsin); Governor John Engler and Dr. James Goenner (Michigan); Hon. Gary Hart and Eric Premack (California).

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