



# *School Law FYI*

JUNE 2018

## ***Charter School Grant Drives New Resources and Trainings***

### **FEDERAL CHARTER SCHOOL GRANT**

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Education awarded the State of Wisconsin a five-year, \$95-million grant to support the development and expansion of charter schools in the state. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI), charged with administering the grant, announced this week approval of 26 awards totaling \$17 million to charter schools across the state to help them plan, open, and expand. To support these and other charter schools, DPI has contracted with the Wisconsin Resource Center for Charter Schools (WRCCS), a statewide center housed within CESA 9, to provide technical assistance to individuals and organizations involved with charter school development.

### **CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCES**

WRCCS is partnering with several organizations that work with charter school authorizers and governance boards to develop resources and provide trainings focused on three primary categories: governance board development, authorizer development, and charter school development. Tess O'Brien-Heinzen, an attorney at Boardman & Clark LLP, has worked with WRCCS, DPI, and other charter school stakeholders to develop charter school contract benchmarks and model charter school contracts. The Innovative Schools Network (ISN) has developed authorizer best practices and a model charter school application process. All of these resources are available to charter school authorizers (including school districts), charter school leaders, and governance boards on the WRCCS website, which is listed below.

### **SUMMER TRAININGS**

In addition to resources, WRCCS will be offering 44 free professional development sessions this summer via seminars and online webinars taught by the individuals involved in developing and implementing the charter school resources including Boardman & Clark LLP, ISN, Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB), and CESA 9. Some of the topics addressed will include: the charter application process; authorizer training for school districts; authorizer best practices; model charter contracts; governance board training; charter school strategic planning; the charter school climate and equity in charter schools; enhancing community in the online classroom; and mental health supports for students and staff. Charter school grant recipients will be required to attend a number of these trainings.

## FAQs

In addition to resources and trainings, WRCCS is publishing a Model Charter School Contract Frequently Asked Questions document (FAQ). The FAQ is maintained and updated by WRCCS and Boardman & Clark LLP, and is intended to provide general guidance for authorizers and governance boards as they navigate the process of developing a charter contract. A link to the FAQ is on the WRCCS website.

## FALL WRCCS CONFERENCE

WRCCS will be hosting a conference on Tuesday, September 25, 2018, at the Fairfield Inn in Weston, Wisconsin for new charter school grantees and any other individuals or groups interested in networking with other charter school professionals. This conference will include presentations by DPI and individuals involved in developing and implementing the model charter contract, best practices and the model application process.

## CONCLUSION

Through the federal grant awarded last year, DPI is working to develop, strengthen and expand the charter school program in Wisconsin. Authorizers (including school districts), charter school governance boards, and others interested in starting or replicating a charter school will benefit from accessing the resources and information on the WRCCS website, attending the free trainings that WRCCS is offering this summer, and attending the WRCCS conference in September. To find out more information about WRCCS and to access the resources and training dates and registration information, go to: <http://www.wrccs.org/>.

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