

# **THE ANATOMY AND IDEOLOGY OF A CHARTER**

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## **Abstract**

A content analysis of charter school agreements was conducted in order to gain insight on their substantive contents as well as to discern any explicit or implicit ideological underpinnings. Charter agreements in Indiana were obtained over a three year period of time, shortly after the Indiana General Assembly sanctioned the creation of charter schools in the state. The analysis was illuminating, both in structural and ideological terms. The libertarian philosophy reverberated throughout the charters while the common school ideology was noticeably absent.

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## **Introduction**

A charter school is a public elementary or secondary school established by a state that is nonsectarian and nonreligious in nature (see, e.g., IC 20-5.5-1). The school is created through a contractual agreement between a private company and the state, or some entity authorized statutorily by the state. As of late 2006, there are about 4,000 charter schools in the United States operating in forty states and the District of Columbia according to The Center for Education Reform, a charter school advocacy group (The Center for Education Reform, November 14, 2006).

The charter school movement is part of a national trend that emphasized more choice elements in public education in the 1990s that still continues in the first decade of the twenty-first century (Spring, 2005). By way of illustration, charter school legislation was initially created in Minnesota in 1991. Since then, all states, including the District of Columbia, have done the same with the exception of Alabama, Kentucky, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia (Center for Education Reform, November 14, 2006). While there are many researchers that seek to ascertain the relative effectiveness of charter schools (see, e.g., Bomotti, Ginsberg, and Cobb, 1999; Bulkley and Fisler, 2003; Charter Schools Institute, State University of New York, 2002; Schneider, Teske, Marschall, and Roch, 1998; Ridenour, Lasley, and Bainbridge, 2001; Ladd and Fiske, 2001; Hess,

Maranto, and Milliman, 2001; and Zimmer et. al, 2003), as well as equity issues (see, e.g., Wells, 2002; Wamba and Ascher, 2003; and Heubert, 1997), insufficient attention has been given to the actual charter agreements and their substantive contents. Thus, a dissection of sorts will ensue to highlight the essential legal components of a charter school. Charter agreements in the state of Indiana are used for illustrative purposes.

### **Charter Schools in Indiana**

Charter agreements in Indiana were obtained in 2004; these agreements were made possible with the passage of charter school legislation in 2001 (IC 20-5.5-1). The purposes of a charter school are multiple under the law: to serve ~~A~~different@ learning styles and needs of public school students; to offer choices for parents and students where appropriate; to afford varying opportunities for educators; allow more academic flexibility in exchange for enhanced accountability; and to provide parents, students, citizens, and local governments with more opportunities for involvement in the public school system (IC 20-5.5-2).

Under this Indiana law, three different entities are permitted to create charter schools (public universities, public school districts, and mayors of consolidated cities (to date, the Indianapolis Mayor=s Office) (IC 20-5.5-3). Limitations that were established on university sponsors in terms of the number of charters permitted in a calendar year expired in 2005 (IC 20-5.5-3). To date, however, the only public university where officials have created charter schools is Ball State University. Officials at Indiana University, Indiana State University, and Purdue University have not chartered any schools as of yet.

In the charter itself, there are fifteen requirements. These include the following:

1. the charter must be a written document;
2. the charter must be executed by a sponsor and an organizer;
3. the charter must confer certain rights, franchises, privileges, and obligations on the charter school;
4. the charter must confirm the status of a charter school as a public school;
5. the charter must be granted for at least three years;
6. the charter must provide for a review by the sponsor of the charter school=s performance, including the progress of the charter school in achieving the academic goals set forth in the charter, at least once in each five year period of time while the charter is in effect;
7. the charter must specify the condition for revocation or renewal of the charter;
8. the charter must set forth the methods by which the charter school is held accountable for achieving the educational mission and goals of the charter school;
9. the charter must describe the method to be used to monitor the charter school=s compliance with applicable law and performance in meeting targeted educational performance;

10. the charter must specify that the sponsor and the organizer may amend the charter during the term of the charter by mutual consent;
11. the charter must describe specific operating requirements, including all of the matters set forth in the application of the charter;
12. the charter must specify a date when the charter will begin operations and have students in attendance;
13. the charter must specify that records relating to the school=s operation must be subject to the same inspection that pertain to other public schools;
14. the charter must specify that records provided by the charter school are subject to applicable state or federal laws; and
15. the charter must specify that the charter school is subject to the requirements of Indiana state law (IC 20-5.5-4).

It is in another section of the state=s law, however, where the ideological assumptions inherent in charter school formation are apparent and reflect the *raison d=etre* of the charter school movement in the United States over the last fifteen years. Under Indiana=s law, the purposes of charter schools include:

1. serving the different learning styles and needs of public school students=
2. offering public school students appropriate and innovative choices;
3. affording varied opportunities for professional educators;
4. allowing public schools freedom and flexibility in exchange for exceptional levels of accountability; and
5. providing parents, students, community members, and local entities with an expanded opportunity for involvement in the public school system (IC 20-5.5-2).

The initial law was replaced by Public Law 1-2005 in 2005 (IC 20-24), though the basic emphasis and substance concerning charter schools remains intact. In advance of examining specific charter school applications, it is essential to understand that the theoretical assumptions included in this law are part of the modern conservative political movement which, in many ways, has been heavily influenced by the ideas and writings of the Austrian economist, Friedrich Hayek.

### **The Modern Conservative Ethos**

One of the most prolific economists of the twentieth century was Friedrich Hayek. Hayek was a staunch defender of free market principles in the Austrian tradition. He was also an advocate of classical liberal, i.e., libertarian, principles. In his perhaps best known work, *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), Hayek articulated his vision of a free market economy:

It is now often said that democracy will not tolerate Acapitalism.@ If Acapitalism

means here a competitive system based on free disposal over private property, it is far more important to realize that only within this system is democracy possible. When it becomes dominated by a collectivist creed, democracy will inevitably destroy itself (1944, pp. 69-70).

In *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960), Hayek expresses his support for limited governmental powers:

Let us consider, first, the distinction between the coercive measures of government and those pure service activities where coercion does not enter or does so only because of the need of financing them by taxation. In so far as the government merely undertakes to supply services which otherwise would not be supplied at all (usually because it is not possible to confine the benefits to those prepared to pay for them), the only question which arises is whether the benefits are worth the cost. Of course, if the government claimed for itself the exclusive right to provide particular services, they would cease to be strictly non-coercive. In general, a free society demands not only that the government have the monopoly of coercion but that it have the monopoly only of coercion and that in all other respects it operate on the same terms as everybody else (pp. 222-223).

Inherent in this theoretical tradition is the common assumption that more freedom from governmental coercion will lead to a better output, in this instance a more optimum educational experience.

One of the more influential American economists in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is Milton Friedman. In *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), he advocates a system of publicly-funded vouchers for private school education. He believes that government intervention often has the opposite effect of that which was intended. Friedman opines:

If a balance be struck, there can be little doubt that the record is dismal. The greater part of the new ventures undertaken by government in the past few decades have failed to achieve their objectives. The United States has continued to progress; its citizens have become better fed, better clothed, better housed, and better transported; class and social distinctions have narrowed; minority groups have become less disadvantaged; popular culture has advanced by leaps and bounds. All this has been the product of the initiative and drive of individuals co-operating through the free market. Government measures have hampered not helped this development. We have been able to afford and surmount these measures only because of the extraordinary fecundity of the market. The invisible hand has been more potent for progress than the visible hand for retrogression (pp. 199-200).

The belief system inherent in this endorsement of the market economy was also apparent after World War II in American presidential elections, particularly in 1964,

1980, and 1984. Though Republican Barry Goldwater only carried six states in 1964 against Democrat Lyndon Johnson, he did articulate a conservative vision for governance which later triumphed in the two victories for Republican Ronald Reagan. In 1980, Reagan carried forty-four states and in 1984, he prevailed in every state except for Minnesota, the home of the Democratic nominee and former vice president Walter Mondale. Goldwater declared that:

...for the American Conservative, there is no difficulty in identifying the day=s overriding political challenge: it is *to preserve and extend freedom* (1960, p. 14)

This paradigm, now formally more than fifteen years old at least in an operational sense, is the base foundation of the growing charter school movement in the United States.

### **The Essential Anatomy of Indiana=s Charter School Applications**

Based on the applications received by Indiana=s two primary sponsoring organizations, the Indianapolis Mayor=s Office and Ball State University from 2001-2004, the basic components, *inter alia*, incorporated into charter school applications can be put in general categories:

1. mission/vision statement;
2. explanation of the need for the particular school;
3. summary of the goals of the school;
4. description of the founding group/governance structure;
5. list of community partnerships;
6. educational philosophy statement;
7. description of academic standards;
8. description of curriculum;
9. assessment/accountability procedures;
10. discussion of special education services;
11. description of school calendar;
12. discussion of student enrollment/demand;
13. budgetary/financial statement; and a
14. discussion of the physical facilities of the proposed charter school (see Ball State University, Office of Charter Schools, November 4, 2006; and Indianapolis Mayor=s Office, November 4, 2006).

The ideological assumptions are relatively easy to extract from the charter proposals examined. Inherent in the anatomy of the proposals is, in most cases, a fairly explicit statement of need that highlights the theoretical assumptions underlying the contemporary American charter school movement.

### **Content Analysis of Charter School Proposals in Indiana, 2001-2004**

Included in Appendix 1 is a compendium of needs statements of charter proposals from 2001-2004. Not all proposals were approved. In addition, where needs statements were replicated for multiple schools by a specific company, only one school is included for illustrative purposes. Since not all schools were approved, or have since ceased operations because the charter authorization was revoked, the schools' identities will not be compromised in this analysis. Otherwise, the statements are reproduced in verbatim, except where emphasis is added via the use of italics, bold print, or underlining. The focus of this evaluation, to reiterate, is to highlight theoretical assumptions which underlie the movement.

So much of the conservative market-based philosophy is evidenced in the charter proposals. The Hayek, Friedman, and Goldwater emphasis on choice, competition between public and private schools to improve education quality, and the tacit assumption that schools other than traditional public schools are essential in the quest to not only enhance the educational experience for students but also bridge the gap between the affluent and the indigent in academic achievement.

### **The Common School Ideology**

Horace Mann (1796-1859) is considered by many historians and education researchers to be the founder of the common school. In 1837, he left his law practice and became the first Secretary of Education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. During his tenure, he published twelve annual reports on aspects of his work in education and the relationship between education, freedom, and republican government (Cremin, 1957). In 1848, Mann resigned his position as secretary of education and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from the eighth district in Massachusetts. This filled the vacancy created by the death of John Quincy Adams (Grant, 1998). Later, in 1852, Mann became president of Antioch College in Ohio where he remained until his death.

According to Hayes (2006, p.27), the primary tenets in Mann's vision for common schools included the following:

- ! Foremost in his vision was the common school that should be free for all children in the community.
- ! He believed that the common school should teach a moral code based on Christian principles that could be agreed upon by all denominations. In doing so, the Bible would be used as the chief text.
- ! He advised that common schools teach students to love their country and to know and be able to use the common democratic principles that could be agreed upon by all political parties.
- ! He wanted to ensure that teachers understood that teaching was both an art and a science and that they would use varied techniques to meet individual student needs. It was his personal opinion that women were better suited than men to teach younger children. He also insisted that

teachers provide strong role models for children and that their personal conduct should be above reproach.

- ! He continued to strive for a system of certification for teachers, either by a local superintendent or by the state Board of Education. For Horace Mann, the best education for future teachers would be available at state-sponsored normal schools.
- ! He believed that corporal punishment should be abolished in schools and be replaced by more positive behavior management techniques.
- ! Schools should be organized by grades in which children of the same age should be grouped together. One-room schoolhouses in which all age levels were taught simultaneously would be replaced by larger buildings housing a number of grade levels.
- ! In terms of the management of the common schools, Horace Mann sought a prominent role for state government. For him, the state should be primarily responsible for developing a common curriculum in the areas of language arts, mathematics, science, history, music, art, and physical education. Although principals and superintendents would be responsible for the day-to-day management of schools, the state government would be responsible for overseeing all phases of school life.

These ideas, espoused during the mid-nineteenth century, provided the basic plan for public education in the United States (Mann, 1969).

In Mann's own words:

Education must be universal. It is well, when the wise and the learned discover new truths; but how much better to diffuse the truths already discovered, amongst the multitude! Every addition to true knowledge is an addition to human power; and while a philosopher is discovering one new truth, millions may be propagated amongst the people. Diffusion, then, rather than discovery, is the duty of our government. With us, the qualification of voters is as important as the qualification of governors, and even comes first, in the natural order. Yet there is no Sabbath of rest, in our contests about the latter, while so little is done to qualify the former. The theory of our government is, not that all men, however unfit, shall be voters, but that every man, by the power of reason and the sense of duty, shall become fit to be a voter. Education must bring the practice as nearly as possible to the theory. As the children now are, so will the sovereigns soon be. How can we expect the fabric of the government to stand, if vicious materials are daily wrought into its frame-work? Education must prepare our citizens to become municipal officers, intelligent jurors, honest witnesses, legislators, or competent judges of legislation, in fine, to fill all the manifold relations of life. For this end, it must be universal. The whole land must be watered with the streams of knowledge. It is not enough to have, here and there, a beautiful fountain playing in palace-gardens; but let it come like the abundant fatness of the clouds upon the thirsting earth (Mann, 1969, pp.55-56).

Mann envisioned children from different social classes, religious backgrounds, and races attending the same schools for a common purpose. The common school would equip children to be productive citizens in a society with a republican form of government. In so doing, equality of opportunity would be afforded to all children regardless of their plight. In addition, children would embrace diversity and learn to interact with each other in a civil and respectful manner. To many education researchers (e.g., Spring, 2005; Hayes, 2006), the common school ideology is currently besieged by contemporary conservatives.

### **Whither the Mann Philosophy?**

The examination and analysis of charter school proposals in Indiana illustrates underlying assumptions inherent in the choice movement, whether it is focused on choice in both the public and private sectors, such as voucher proposals, or in the public sector only in the case of charter school proposals. The basic premise that market-based competition will enhance education for all is antithetical to the vision articulated by Mann. According to Hayes, it is probable that Mann would have been troubled with the school choice movement, especially with regard to voucher plans. It is likely that he would have concluded that choice would run counter to what he was trying to accomplish via common schooling (2006, p.164).

Spring (2005) believes that A[c]hoice, privatization, charter schools, and multicultural education put the final nail in the coffin of the common school. Conservative big-business groups gained the most from the educational policies of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations, but the religious right=s concern with school choice was attracting a wide range of support from liberals to profit-making educational corporations. The basic idea of choice runs counter to the common school ideal of having all children receive a common education that inculcates a common culture and common moral and political values@ (pp.456-457). A study conducted by two political scientists, John Chubb and Terry Moe, in 1990 supported the conservative notion that choice would promote education reform in the United States. Chubb and Moe (1990) concluded that a major hindrance to student achievement is the sheer existence of large bureaucracies that stifle local decision making processes. This echoes a conservative belief system that dates back to the 1930s; to Chubb and Moe, rigid bureaucracies do not allow teachers and principals to exercise their professional judgment in order to assure higher student achievement. Instead, bureaucratic inertia and rigidity deny the requisite flexibility needed by professional educators to meet the needs of their students. They conclude that schools that had to compete in the open marketplace would have less bureaucracy, would be more responsive to students, and the existence of this competition would result in higher student achievement.

Thus, in the early part of the twentieth century, the adherents to the common school paradigm find themselves very much in a defensive posture. The content analysis of charter school proposals in a midwestern American state illustrates the theoretical basis of a growing conservative free-market movement in the United States.



While it is true that ninety percent of school-aged children in this country attend free tax-supported schools, there is every reason to believe that the conservative theoretical assumptions evidenced in this analysis will be utilized to promote a much more extensive agenda than is presently the case and that the Mann vision may soon be considered a utopian historical relic. Such a scenario would undoubtedly result in the very injustices that Mann so adeptly sought to remedy.

### **The Defensive Posture of Education Policy in the Early Twenty-First Century and Beyond**

According to Brosio (1985), a Marxian view of education would suggest that the kind of free market principles espoused by charter school advocates are destined to fail:

For Marx, the central question always was: How did it happen that the bourgeois revolution of the early modern period failed to achieve its proclaimed aims and why, despite legal guarantees of freedom and rights, did the market economy and division of labor cause domination of the majority by the minority? A domination which was *de facto*, in spite of the *de jure* guarantees? Marx sought to discover what prevented everybody from achieving a status of humanity which could have been realized in the light of the wealth of the society that already existed@ (p.80).

Yet charter schools, at least for the moment, are popular to advocates of school choice, less bureaucracy as they perceive it, and alternative mechanisms of traditional public education. They are not likely to disappear in the short term. Thus, the perplexing and relatively omnipresent reality persists. Should ideology, whether it be the Mann vision or the free market one, prevail in public policy, or should some sort of compromise be manufactured to contend with the current realities in American education trends?

To illustrate this point, consider the words of Barack Obama (2006):

Unfortunately, instead of innovation and bold reform of our schools...what we've seen from government for close to two decades has been tinkering around the edges and a tolerance for mediocrity. Partly this is a result of ideological battles that are as outdated as they are predictable. Many conservatives argue that money doesn't matter in raising educational achievement; that the problems in public schools are caused by hapless bureaucracies and intransigent teachers' unions; and that the only solution is to break up the government's education monopoly by handing out vouchers. Meanwhile, those on the left often find themselves defending an indefensible status quo, insisting that more spending alone will improve educational outcomes (pp.160-61).

Obama critiques both sets of assumptions. Money is a critical factor in public policy making. This helps to explain why the most popular schools of choice@ are, in fact, well-funded suburban school districts. Yet at the same time, he is critical of the manner in which many public schools are managed. Therefore, perhaps the Mann vision can

still be embraced in a diverse republic while simultaneously understanding and embracing the premise that reform is absolutely essential in the delivery of public education all across the country. This, coupled with the reality that poverty does matter in education (Kozol, 1991), may assist in promoting the needs and interests of young Americans today and in the foreseeable future.

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**Appendix 1**  
**Charter School Proposals in Indiana, 2001-2004**  
**Selected Statements of Need**

School A

Because all students learn differently, \_\_\_\_\_ fulfills an important role in the current educational environment. It has developed a program that assesses each student, determines strengths and weaknesses and then provides a one-to-one student/teacher ratio to use the child's strengths to improve areas of weakness. \_\_\_\_\_ has researched a multitude of educational curricula and teaching methods, enabling its staff to have the resources to meet each student's individual learning styles. \_\_\_\_\_'s philosophy on education is that it is pertinent for all children to have a strong base in reading, writing and arithmetic because this is the root to learning all other subjects. Children have a wide variety of interests in additional subject areas (e.g., science, history and foreign language) but do not have the opportunity to enjoy them because they struggle with the basic skills. Along with addressing student's individual needs it is very important to recognize that all children need a sense of success. Children have resilience, but this can be destroyed with repeated failures. \_\_\_\_\_'s goal is to develop a program that combines addressing a student's academic needs while fostering his/her social and emotional growth. If these needs are addressed successfully, \_\_\_\_\_ will have provided a well-rounded individual who will be an asset to the community.

School B

At its core, the proposed \_\_\_\_\_ Charter School is about opportunity. Opportunity for: students to obtain a top-notch education that will prepare them for success in life; families to be engaged in their children's education; teachers to use their talents in a school-setting that rewards ingenuity; and, the Indianapolis community to have a new public school that will serve as a shining example of the success that can be achieved when a community comes together with a well-defined mission and singleness of purpose. Our proposal is not about criticizing the Indianapolis public schools. We cannot ignore the fact, however, that too many of our students are being left behind. As no single school system can be expected to be all things to all people, our goal is to provide a high-quality alternative to which the families of our city will have access. Still, the need for this school is clear.

School C

Our small classes, dedicated teachers, individualized attention to each student, mandatory parental involvement and availability of family services on-site, and extensive partnership network, together with the strong resources provided by our corporate supporters, will allow us to offer a far higher quality education than presently available in traditional public school setting in our City.

#### School D

Throughout the past 10 years, there has been a large number of inner city schools that have been closed and schools have been combined to create a larger student/Teacher ratio. This in itself can be a problem for a student to learn. Parents/Guardians that could afford the tuition based schools, transferred to those schools. But what about the middle to lower income Parents/Guardians that could not afford it? These individuals cannot be forgotten. If given a chance, we find in today=s society, that there are several middle to low income students that have risen above their environment to become not only productive but outstanding! They received the chance that will give any student that enters its doors. As history shows us, they also return to the community in which they were raised to give back what was given to them.

#### School E

\_\_\_\_\_ will meet the needs of the community by offering a second language-based curriculum in Chinese and German that is currently unavailable in the community (Spanish and English are available). With the growing internationalization of Indianapolis and the globalization of communication, Indianapolis needs to provide diverse options for individuals to assimilate into the global community. A second-language based curriculum offers students an opportunity to see the value in understanding and living with people of different nationalities; it gives them a conduit to experience life in someone else=s shoes...This education will give the students the necessary tools to finish high school or become a CEO of a Fortune 500 company.

#### School F

Indiana=s historically strong manufacturing base has for generations provided high wage employment opportunities requiring lower levels of education. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain quality jobs without strong technical and reading skills. Southeast residents have traditionally worked in the area factories that did not require a high school education. Consequently, those living in this geographical area have the lowest educational attainment in the city. Many residents now face limited sustainable career opportunities, binding them to subsistence wages. Less than half of adults in the southeast catchment area have a high school diploma and this attainment rate is not improving as current students drop out in similar numbers as their parents. Literacy rates are very low and for many families,

education has not been a primary goal. In fact, there is a prevalent >anti-education= sentiment in the area. Given these facts, the SE community faces a clear and urgent educational crisis and has in turn, elevated education to the highest priority of community planning and programming. For the neighborhood to truly experience revitalization, residents know they have to demand the absolute best for their children and that overall educational attainment levels must improve.@

#### School G

A\_\_\_\_\_ will meet a critical need for alternative education for the benefit of behaviorally and academically at risk children who are talented or interested in the performing arts. These will be children, of whom there are hundreds in our community, who often exhibit signs of educational boredom in traditional classroom settings and who may be party, as well, to acting out their behaviors.... While the Indianapolis Public Schools, in whose district we lie, do afford a limited number of students with musical interests a concentration in academics and the arts through magnet programs, these options are insufficient in number to satisfy the demand and are further, albeit necessarily, limited to those children who qualify first, through the lottery system. In this era of declining school budgets and forced cutbacks in programs which lie outside of core academic competencies, charter schools able to fill the remaining need are much needed indeed. This is especially true when we examine the testing data for these students.@

#### School H

ASchools are a reflection of the society in which they exist. In the 1800's the one-room schoolhouse served the needs of a primarily agrarian population, and the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic adequately prepared students to be productive citizens. At the beginning of the 1900's, as the population moved to the city and we moved into the industrial age, the factory school was designed to prepare students for lifelong occupations in the factories of America. As the 21<sup>st</sup> century dawned, we entered the Ainformation age,@ and students need to be prepared with new skills and the ability to adapt to new technologies and a global society. Equipping the factory school of yesterday with the technology of today has been generally unsuccessful in producing students prepared for tomorrow. We have designed a new model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The model is being successfully implemented in the \_\_\_\_\_ in Union Station with significant measurable value-added gains in achievement for all student groups.@

#### School I

AThe families living in numerous areas of Indianapolis are increasingly demanding a choice in their children=s schooling. Frequently dissatisfied with their zoned public school, often unable to pay tuition for private schools, parents are, in ever increasing numbers, enrolling their children in charter schools or other public schools of choice.

Responding to this demand for choice, \_\_\_\_\_ will be established as an academically intense college preparatory middle school. The school will function as a public charter school, serving upper elementary-and middle school-aged students residing in some of the city=s most needy areas.@

#### School J

A\_\_\_\_\_ will serve urban and suburban children on Indianapolis= Northwest side, with a focus on Pike and Washington township school districts and the north/northwest areas of the Indianapolis Public Schools. The \_\_\_\_\_ will be the first, public classical school in the Indianapolis area, offering a unique opportunity and choice for Indianapolis parents and children. The classical model, which includes rigorous academics and small learning communities, has been highly successful throughout the country. Many classical charter schools are demonstrating excellent results within diverse urban settings.@

#### School K

AEstablishing the charter school gives parents a choice in public education. The charter school Board is excited by the flexibility of a charter school in defining curriculum, school culture and ethics and the use of technology.@

#### School L

A...there is a need for greater accountability of the school for students= success. Too often public schools lack rigorous accountability for their students= success. Despite good intentions, the highly regulated, bureaucratic nature of public schools often undermines rigorous accountability. Indiana=s standards, ISTEP, and GQE mandate increased accountability for each school=s educational product. As a school of choice, our charter school will clearly be subject to market forces and state expectations. It will succeed only by offering a program that attracts a student body large enough to maintain it and that educates those students at least to the standards expected by the state.@

#### School M

AOne of the fundamental purposes of charter schools is to offer families an opportunity to choose the school their child attends. Charter schools are public schools, are publicly funded, and must not discriminate in the admissions process. In exchange for autonomy and freedom from burdensome rulesBrules that often have little to do with enhancing the quality of educationBcharter schools are held accountable for results. Failure to deliver on results will result in revocation or non-renewal of the charter. \_\_\_\_\_ embraces this idea of total accountability for results. Charter schools not only offer families choice within public education, but must compete for students within a free market context, and thus must work diligently to

provide a top-quality educational experience for all students.@
<p>School N</p> <p>Accelerated schools often have student populations with many students in at-risk situations. The model differs from traditional remedial approaches that often involve less challenging curricula and lowered expectations. Instead, accelerated schools offer enriched curricula typically reserved for gifted-and-talented students. The schools create &gt;powerful learning= environments that encourage students and teachers to Athink creatively, explore their interests, and achieve at high levels.@ Accelerated schools involve the whole school communityBparents, students, teachers and staffBin a continuous, data-driven reform process that is centered around the school=s visions.@</p>
<p>School O</p> <p>Although the _____, as a public school, will be open to any student who chooses to attend, with the permission of their parents the target audience of prospective students are those who are at risk of not completing high school.@</p>
<p>School P</p> <p>As a school of choice for parents and students in Indianapolis, the _____ is being established with a clear focus on whom it will serve. It would be disingenuous to suggest that the _____ can provide an attractive option to all parents in the target area. A parent of a student who is Asucceeding@ (by whatever measurement of success) will not, typically, choose to send his or her child to another school. For those parents and students, though, who are struggling with economic disadvantage, limited English proficiency, and less than desirable family dynamics; the _____ will offer an attractive choice to traditional public and private education.@</p>
<p>School Q</p> <p>Charter schools enhance the African-American community. This community is enhanced when charter schools curriculums are tailored to meet the particular needs of at-risk children of the community. This community is enhanced also because competitive pressure is thrust upon public schools to out perform, or, as a minimum, to perform as well as the charter schoolBalso functioning with limited resources. Because of traditional funding formulas, public schools and charter schools are in competition for the same market. Until now the public systems had no competition, hence, there was little incentive for these schools to raise their levels of expectation and performance when resources are limited....When there is healthy competition the ground is fertile for education to become better for all the students.@</p>
School R



AThe Board has researched the performance of American students in the areas of math and science as compared to the performance of students around the world. The Third International Mathematics and Science Study by the United States National Research Center reported in December 2000 that the typical American student is testing well below international averages in math and science are performing below the international average and well below students in other developed countries. In addition, recent reports on the performance of Indianapolis= public school students in the areas of math and science demonstrate a need for innovative educational approaches to improve our students= performance in these two areas as compared to state and national averages. Reports indicate that more than a third of Indiana=s 8<sup>th</sup> graders failed the math portion of the ISTEP in the most recent cycle, and students in urban portions of the state, performed at an even lower level.@

#### School S

AMany Americans believe that our nation is in deep moral and academic decay. Our students are continually bombarded with conflicting messages about how they should live their lives and what they should believe, and moral deficiencies are regularly reflected in their behavior. These factors have a direct affect on the ability for students to concentrate on academic, personal, and emotional development. Parents are also seeking options. The traditional methods of educating students, while effective in their own right, are at times unable to reach the diversity of students in need of education today. Experts have long recognized that students have different learning styles and therefore are in need of different forms of teaching presentations....Charter schools are about choices. So often, parents, because of a lack of resources (financial or otherwise) do not have choices.@

#### School T

A\_\_\_\_\_s third main goal is to provide a real choice among education opportunities for students, parents, and teachers. The availability of choice is an important element in educational accountability that promotes higher standards throughout the system. Those students whose families prefer a rigorous early education may choose \_\_\_\_\_, while remaining free to return to the regular public schools in the district of their residence if they become dissatisfied. This mechanism puts emphasis on the needs of the students, and helps to ensure that these needs are met in either regular public schools or \_\_\_\_\_. The accountability that choice encourages will also help maintain strong public support for public education as a whole.@

#### School U

ATraditional school districts have put a tremendous amount of resources into examining and attempting to deal with the dropout phenomena, including developing strategiesBlargely unsuccessfulBto cut the dropout rate. In contrast, few if any funds

have been allocated towards developing a truly effective plan to encourage drop-ins@Bstudents who might want to return to school if presented with a viable option to graduate. @

#### School V

AThe purpose of \_\_\_\_\_ is to provide rural students with a top-quality educational program using a place-based approach. With careful attention to the social dynamics and cultural values of the rural setting, the \_\_\_\_\_ seeks to instill students with self-confidence, practical skills, pride of place, and excellent academic abilities through differentiated instruction, strong parental support, and continuous interaction with the local community. Students will be equipped to excel in their academic, personal, and social lives long after their attendance at this school. @

#### School W

Alt is an unfortunate fact that within today=s young adult population, there exists a substantial number of school age children who are either high school dropouts or are perilously close to becoming one. This is not an indictment of the traditional public or private educational institutions, but merely a statement of present condition. With this in mind, the purpose of the \_\_\_\_\_ will be to serve as a tuition-free, open enrollment, school primarily serving students who have either already dropped out of or who are dangerously close to dropping out of high school. The program will include, but not be limited to, standard academic curriculum, supplemented with vocational training and placement, and with much needed instruction in basic, intermediate, and advanced life skills. It will provide a meaningful, individualized, self-paced, and flexible educational experience leading to a high school diploma (not a GED) and full-time employability for those academically at-risk students, ages 16 years and up. @

#### School X

A\_\_\_\_\_=s purpose is to create a learning environment designed to develop each child=s personal best; to support each child=s search for knowledge; to encourage each child=s curiosity about the world around us; and to foster each child=s creativity. \_\_\_\_\_ creates an inclusive community where students, parents, staff and the community are partners in the educational process and achievement of all children. @

#### School Y

AThe purpose of the proposed charter school is to provide Gary parents and children a high quality academic option within the public schools. Our goal is to create a school based on a rigorous curriculum that will allow children to succeed in high school and beyond. We seek to create a school which will be a pre-high school college prep program which combines academic achievement with leadership skills and opportunities. @

<p style="text-align: center;">School Z</p> <p>AThe purpose of the _____ is to inspire student success through an innovate curriculum and creative teaching. The school aspires to rigorous standards of academic achievement with the expectation that our students will become life-long learners, while encouraging development of solid character, citizenship, and environmental stewardship. _____ will embrace diversity in its students, adapt to special needs, and expect our students to take responsibility for their education with the strong support systems of family, school, and community.@</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">School AA</p> <p>AThe purpose of the _____ has several components: 1. It is to raise the bar of educational expectations in Indianapolis by creating a unique school that combines educational excellence with business practices; 2. It is to strengthen the _____ community by offering families both in and out of the neighborhood a new educational option for their children...and, 3. It is to compete with both public and private schools and, through competition and example, encourage improvement in all schools.@</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">School AB</p> <p>AThe purpose of _____ is to provide another educational choice for our community in a positive, child-centered atmosphere that encourages the development of life-long learning. We believe that all children should have the option to attend our school, and we are excited about not having tuition be a barrier for families. Our School philosophy is based on the beliefs of Maria Montessori, Constructivism, and Schemata Development. We will use these beliefs to create an environment where learning happens naturally based on the learning styles of the individual child. By the use of many Atools@, including technology and mastery, we will nurture the child through our eight constructs: social, emotional, physical, moral, intellectual, aesthetics, creative, and Aschool success.@ This encompasses the total education of the whole child.@</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">School AC</p> <p>A_____ is established to serve students who are Aat-risk,@ whether because of economic, educational or social disadvantage. The _____ provides a choice in the array of public education alternatives available to parents and children to better suit their individual needs.@</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">School AD</p> <p>A_____ is recommitting to the highest standards of education rather than settling for minimum basic skills. We want to instill core values of honesty, respect, tolerance, fairness, self-discipline, integrity, citizenship and responsibility as a foundation upon</p>

which our school will be built. The \_\_\_\_\_ will be located within the urban center of the Fort Wayne Community School District and in an area designated as a business enterprise zone. It is a predominantly low-income neighborhood with a large minority population. We seek to address the needs of the community by providing excellent learning opportunities in a secure environment where the focus is on the student. We have come together to form a charter school that will provide children/students of Fort Wayne, Indiana with an opportunity to succeed in a multicultural/diverse world. We will provide students with the educational tools, books and equipment that are necessary to learn at an accelerated pace. The best methodologies and learning techniques will be applied to achieve core curriculum standards and state requirements set forth by the State of Indiana. \_\_\_\_\_s curriculum will focus on mathematics, science and computer technology to give students a strong base for further educational achievement.@

#### School AE

A\_\_\_\_\_ is being created to serve youth at risk of not completing their high school education. This puts them at risk of not securing employment and being able to lead life as a participating and contributing member of our society. There are various subpopulations that fall into this overall category, including expelled and suspended youth, persistently truant youth, drug and alcohol dependent youth, teen mothers who are responsible for their child/children or who are pregnant, youth who have fallen so far behind academically that they see no hope. The purpose of this school is to provide an opportunity for each student to earn high school credits and fulfill the requirements for graduation. Support services will be provided that will enable at risk students to be successful educationally.@

#### School AF

A\_\_\_\_\_ will provide a progressive educational alternative for students in the greater Lafayette area, including strong art and music programs. Students will achieve academic excellence by partnering with teachers to meet educational goals. Teachers will adapt their curricula to meet the individual learning styles of each student. Students will actively participate in educational goal setting and assessment, and they will learn citizenship through classroom and community outreach activities.@