

State Laws Supporting Educational Alternatives

HOW TO FIND LAWS FROM ANY STATE

You can use a search engine like www.google.com to search. Enter the name of the state and laws, for example, Minnesota laws. This takes you to several ways to get to the state's statutes and they usually have a means of searching by key words or a statute number. In Minnesota, use: www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/statutes.htm and enter the numbers referenced above. You will get a copy of the law about that subject. An alternative search is with www.law.cornell.edu/topics/state_statutes.html or www.prairienet.org/~scruffy/f.htm.

Be aware that state departments of education often write regulations about how the law is to be implemented. For that information, contact the department for a copy of the procedures or how to find it on the web.

Even more innovative laws are in the works. Joe Graba and Ted Kolderie plan for new kinds of less-regulated schools accountable to parents. We plan to introduce at the next legislation session: to make area learning centers site based management programs with control over staffing, budget and program and another bill on alternative licensing provisions.

How to get bills introduced and passed:

Talk to the chair of the education committee or a member of it about your ideas. If they like it, they will have a bill drafted and will introduce it. You can work to convince other legislators that it is good for kids. Another way is to have your state department of education introduce it as part of their legislative package. It helps to have a legislative consultant or lobbyist help with the process of getting laws introduced and passed.

MINNESOTA LAWS THAT SUPPORT LEARNING ALTERNATIVES AND CHOICES

Open enrollment gives students choices of schools to attend beyond their district schools. Students may enroll in schools other than their own district with certain restrictions.

124D.03 **Enrollment options** program.

Attending college or trade schools while still in high school for all or part of the day. This gives students the right to attend college or other post secondary programs and gain high school and college credit. The high school pays the tuition. Some students have gained two free years of college credit by the time they graduate from high school.

124D.09 Post-secondary Enrollment Options Act

135A.101 Post-secondary Enrollment Options

Establishing area learning centers. These centers serve at-risk students and can gain additional state aid by offering more hours of instruction than the standard school year. Centers are to receive not less than 90% of the revenues they earn.

123A.09 Designating and approving a center

124D.128 Learning year program to provide instruction throughout year.

124D.68 Graduation incentives program. Defines types of qualifying students.

126C.05 & 123A.05 Education funding: Definition of pupil units, 90% requirement.

Establishing Charter schools. Provides for new types of schools run outside of district and contract provisions. Entrepreneurial educations can start their own schools with much freedom from local and state laws and rules.

124D.10 **Charter Schools**

124D.11 Revenue for a results-oriented **charter schools**

Establishing contract schools. These are nonprofit private schools that contract to serve at risk students and gain state aid for their work.

124D.68 Graduation incentives program

126C.05 Education funding: Definition of pupil units.

Experimental Schools This provision provides a board waiver for innovative programs so that state rules do not get in the way.

127A.05 Commissioner of children, families, and learning, subd 4.

The above numbers are for Minnesota laws. These might form the basis for your state passing a similar measure. We fought for these and have gotten them amended to better serve program needs.