



News Release

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Michigan Wins Federal Grant to Ensure Quality Charter Schools

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LANSING – Charter school operations that open new, replicate or expand high-quality, high-performing charter schools will be eligible to receive up to \$1 million in development funding through a federal grant awarded to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE).

The U.S. Department of Education recently awarded MDE with a five-year grant of over \$47 million through the federal *Expanding Opportunity Through Quality Charter Schools Program – Grants to State Entities* competition. It is one of eight organizations the U.S. Department of Education awarded funds to in the first year of this \$77.8 million program.

“When new charter schools are planned to open, we want to ensure that they design themselves from a model of successful charter schools,” said Interim State Superintendent Sheila Alles. “These federal grant funds will help these new schools, and the students they serve, have the best opportunity for success.”

MDE’s grant application had the highest score of any of the 15 grantees in the national competition. State departments of education and non-profit state education organizations were eligible to apply. If multiple entities within a state applied, only the highest point scorer (if eligible for funding) would receive the grant.

Each application was peer reviewed by three unrelated individuals. Michigan received the highest point total of approved applications for funding with a composite score of 108.67 out of 125.

Michigan will receive \$47.2 million over five years to start new, replicate, or expand high-quality, high-performing charter schools. It has been two years since MDE has been awarded a federal charter school grant. Prior to that, MDE had received these grants for over 15 years.

With this year’s approved application, MDE has strengthened and increased the expectations of charter school boards that apply for and receive funds from this grant. Each applicant is eligible to receive up to \$1 million, and must have a charter school contract in place to apply.

Schools can receive a \$250,000 bonus if they meet additional criteria, like expanding or opening a high school, or open a new charter school where there currently is limited access for high-quality schools. Bonuses also are available if grantees have a primary focus on new or expanding high school programming that provide for Early Middle College opportunities; have Career and Technical Education experiences; or add early childhood components.

MDE, in conjunction with key stakeholders, will do an at-risk assessment of each applicant prior to recommending them for peer review. This will allow for technical assistance to the new charter school development team and school board prior to opening, allowing for a strong start and improving success and sustainability.

The state will do site visits to all awardees to verify that the grant is executed appropriately, and the charter school board and grant manager will receive grant training around the use and implementation of the federal funds.

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