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Contact: Stephanie Grisham

(480) 707-7434

stephanie@larsonpr.com

Maine Has Nation's Top Ranked Charter School Law

Annual National Report Released Today Includes Quality and Accountability

Washington, DC – In 2011, Maine became the 42nd state to enact a public charter school law, taking advantage of lessons learned in other states during the past two decades. Because of its relatively strong alignment with the model law developed by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS), Maine's new law was the top ranked charter school law in the country, according to the NAPCS' annual ranking of state charter school laws.

In its third year, *Measuring Up to the Model: A Ranking of State Public Charter School Laws* analyzes the country's 42 state charter school laws. Each state is scored on how well it supports charter school quality and growth, based on the 20 essential components from the NAPCS' model charter school law, which include comprehensive monitoring and data collection, equitable access to funding and facilities, and no caps.

The 10 states with laws shown to best support the growth of high-quality charter schools are: Maine, Minnesota, Florida, New Mexico, Massachusetts, Indiana, Colorado, New York, California and Michigan.

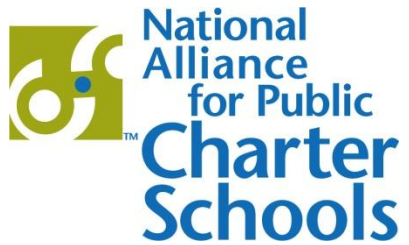
The Maine Legislature showed strong, bipartisan support for the education reform possible with public charter schools, which are afforded increased flexibility in operations for increased accountability for student outcomes. "Maine policymakers benefited from experience gained from 20 years of public charter schooling, while adapting the model to Maine's unique circumstances," said NAPCS Vice President for State Advocacy and Support Todd Ziebarth.

According to Roger Brainerd, Executive Director of the Maine Association for Charter Schools, "The creation of new, innovative public school options will benefit many Maine students, particularly those who are struggling in their current school. As Maine begins to implement this legislation, all stakeholders, from lawmakers in Augusta to citizens in cities and small rural towns, should become familiar with the power and potential of the charter school model to leverage improvement throughout our public education system, as community support is essential to bringing the promise of autonomous, accountable public charter schools to fruition."

Across the country, 2011 was a significant year for positive charter school legislation. Along with Maine leaping to the front with its new legislation, progressive policy changes helped New Mexico make a big jump from 20th to fourth; Indiana from 25th to sixth; and Rhode Island from 37th to 26th.

Conversely, Georgia's ranking dropped seven spots, slipping from seventh to 14th. In addition, South Carolina fell six spots from 19th to 25th. And four states dropped five places: Missouri (13th to 18th), Oklahoma (22nd to 27th), Connecticut (24th to 29th), and New Jersey (26th to 31st).

"There were a lot of shake-ups on the list this year. Most notably, Maine's new charter law is ranked number one after passing a strong charter law that is aligned with the NAPCS' model charter law, although it is yet to be seen



how the implementation or enforcement of the law plays out," says Ursula Wright, interim president and CEO, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. "While we see an increasing number of states creating favorable policy environments for high-quality charter schools, we acknowledge there is still a lot of work to be done."

As lawmakers prepare for the upcoming legislative sessions, the rankings provide clear indications of where some states excel and others come up short in their charter school laws. The report also offers a roadmap for how governors and legislators can take action to strengthen charter school laws.

The complete analysis can be downloaded at the National Alliance for Public Charter School's website: www.publiccharters.org/charterlawrankings2012. See detailed state-by-state summaries and color-coded maps of how states measure against each component at the <http://charterlaws.publiccharters.org>.

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About the National Alliance

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools is the leading national nonprofit organization committed to advancing the charter school movement. Our mission is to lead public education to unprecedented levels of academic achievement by fostering a strong charter sector. For more information, please visit our website at www.publiccharters.org.