



# News Release

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## **11 AUTHORIZERS PUT “AT RISK OF SUSPENSION” TO CREATE FUTURE CHARTER SCHOOLS**

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LANSING – Eleven of Michigan’s 40 charter school authorizers were put At-Risk of Suspension by State Superintendent Mike Flanagan today, jeopardizing their ability to charter any future schools.

The authorizers named today had deficiencies in key factors of oversight of their charter schools. Michigan law gives the State Superintendent the responsibility to determine whether a charter school authorizer is not engaging in appropriate continuing oversight of its charter schools, and revoke future charter capability of an authorizer if the Superintendent deems it is not performing in such a manner.

“We want all public schools to provide a quality education for Michigan’s kids,” Flanagan said. “I am using the authority provided me in state law to push for greater quality, transparency, and accountability for those who aren’t measuring up as charter authorizers.”

The authorizers on the At Risk of Suspension list are being given until October 22 to remediate those deficiencies before Flanagan makes his final determination in November to suspend the authorizer’s chartering ability.

“If an authorizer were to be suspended, it would not be a death sentence, and we’re not closing down their existing charter schools,” Flanagan said. “They wouldn’t be out-of-business. They just won’t be able to open any new charters until their deficiencies are fixed and the academic outcomes of their schools are improved.”

Flanagan announced in July that he would establish rigorous principles for measuring transparency, academic and financial practices for charter authorizers – not individual charter schools, which already are under the same accountability system as traditional public schools – and to conduct a thorough review of each authorizer.

The factors Flanagan used for this At-Risk list are based on an authorizer’s “portfolio” of schools, which, with a few exceptions, includes more than one charter school. The factors include accountability, transparency, and fiscal governance that currently exist in law or in the state’s academic accountability system.

“These are the initial factors we used,” Flanagan said. “I’ve also directed the department to meet with authorizers on including an additional factor to take into account the academic improvement of their portfolio, before a final decision on suspension is made.”

Flanagan met with the authorizers and education stakeholders recently to get their input on the factors that would be used. Beyond this initial announcement, which measured an authorizer's oversight on its charter schools for the basic responsibilities in state law, Flanagan has committed to continue working with authorizers.

Flanagan and the authorizers agreed that future discussions will include developing a long-term accountability system that includes five key areas:

- Assurance and Verification (developed in collaboration with the Michigan Council of Authorizers and in accordance with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers principles)
- Charter School contract compliance checklist
- Fair market value of leases
- Coordinated transparency reporting around fiscal issues for ALL school districts in Michigan
- Academic improvement factors

The charter school authorizers At Risk of Suspension are:

Detroit Public Schools  
Eastern Michigan University  
Education Achievement Authority  
Ferris State University  
Grand Valley State University  
Highland Park Schools  
Kellogg Community College  
Lake Superior State University  
Macomb Intermediate School District  
Muskegon Heights Public Schools  
Northern Michigan University

Each of the named authorizer's charter school portfolio; that is, all of its charters schools considered as a whole, is in the Bottom 10 percent of the state's academic Top to Bottom list. They, likewise, have deficiencies in their contract and transparency requirements.

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Frequently Asked Questions:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/FAQ\\_for\\_At-Risk\\_Suspension\\_465048\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/FAQ_for_At-Risk_Suspension_465048_7.pdf)

Authorizing Agency At Risk for Suspension Summaries:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/At-Risk\\_Authorizer\\_List\\_Summaries\\_465046\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/At-Risk_Authorizer_List_Summaries_465046_7.pdf)