



## Charter School Leadership Program Grant

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) awarded Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) the Charter School Education and Leadership Training Pilot Program (CSLP) grant in September 2019. SMSU was tasked with preparing future charter school leaders by offering specialized training that emulates K-12 administrative licensure programs, including program components such as a leadership curriculum, a mentorship component, and an advisory board to oversee the program.

### Key Facts about the Program

- Total number of participants served: 29
- Number of students affiliated with CSP subgrantees: 5

### Objectives

SMSU's program objectives included the following:

- Develop and establish a sustainable charter school leadership program and curriculum.
- Assemble a team dedicated to the charter school leadership certificate program.
- Assemble an advisory council to guide the charter school certificate program and other advancement opportunities.
- Build a presence as an industry expert by establishing a charter school leadership mentoring program.
- Educate charter school leaders about SMSU's educational advancement opportunities.
- Guide program growth through data-driven decision-making.

### Key Program Components

- **Curriculum:** SMSU developed a 19-credit certification program that is completed over the course of three semesters (summer term, fall term, and spring term). The curriculum closely aligns with the K-12 Principal Licensure Program, and includes classes like Instructional leadership, Technology Integration, Human Resources and Financial Management, and Leadership Mentorship. At the end of the program, participants can transfer up to 12 credits toward the K-12 principal's license, or the full 19 credits toward a master's degree with an emphasis in charter school leadership.
- **Program Advisory Council:** SMSU created an advisory council made up of charter school experts and other members such as SMSU leaders, a Minnesota Association of Charter Schools representatives, instructors, and authorizers to help guide the charter school certificate program. There are currently 11 members and meetings take place quarterly.

- **Mentorship:** All students enrolled in the certificate program work with an on-site mentor that helps them complete various activities aligned with principal competencies. The three SMSU adjunct faculty also oversee the relationships between mentors and students, including holding check-ins with the students, asking about their relationship with the mentor, and helping them design their activities to ensure they develop entry level proficiency in the principal competencies.

## **Professional Charter Leadership Networking Program**

In addition to the Charter School Leadership Certificate Program, SMSU also developed a Professional Charter Leadership Networking Program intended to mentor and train future charter school leaders on relevant leadership topics. This program has served over 40 future charter school leaders, at least five of whom went on to complete the CSLP.