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CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE

REPORT TO THE HOUSE AND SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEES

JANUARY, 2012

Report rationale:

Pursuant to legislation passed during the 2009 legislative session, the Charter School Institute (CSI) is required to make an annual report to the Education committees of both chambers on the findings of the annual meeting between the CSI school Boards and the Institute Board of Directors. The statute requires this annual discussion to take place prior to December 1 annually and include the level of funding received by CSI to provide the administration and oversight for the schools chartered by the Institute.

CSI Background:

CSI was established in 2004 and awarded its first two charters in 2005. Our mission is to foster a portfolio of high performing school choices throughout the state of Colorado. Our vision is to be a national leader and model authorizer of charter schools practicing the principles of school autonomy and accountability. CSI is unique in that we serve as an authorizer and also as district and local educational agency for certain purposes for our schools. Thus, we provide support, guidance and compliance to our schools along a spectrum of functions and services.

During the 2011-12 school year CSI supports 22 schools throughout the state. These schools serve approximately 10,500 students in brick and mortar as well as online multi-district schools.

Under law the Institute operates by retaining 3% of the state share funds that are allocated to the schools to provide authorizer oversight and administrative support for the schools. In addition to this administrative fee the Colorado Department of Education may retain up to 1% of state share funds in order to provide assistance to CSI and the schools.

Meeting outcomes:

During 2011 the Institute Board and Executive Director visited the major areas of the state where the CSI schools are located in order to discuss the items required under statute. These meetings were conducted in Avon, Colorado Springs and at the CSI offices located in Denver. A majority of the schools were represented at these meetings.

During the meetings with school leaders, the discussion centered on CSI's strategic plan. The overarching aim is for CSI to move to a performance management model that will ensure that its operations are efficient, effective and transparent. CSI schools have been

integrally involved as stakeholders in this process. CSI presented an overview of the objectives that will drive the implementation of the strategic plan and summarized them as follows:

- Develop and sustain effective governance and leadership
- Design and develop efficient business practices and services
- Implement best practices for authorization and business services
- Improve the annual school performance evaluation process
- Build a virtual resource center to support schools

CSI also discussed its longer term goals and objectives focusing on ensuring all schools meet state performance expectations for status and growth, ensure fiscal sustainability, achieving model authorizer status and delivering high quality support services to all schools.

The discussion with schools also included the topic of the funding provided to schools (including better understanding the use of the 3% and 1% respectively). In regard to the funding discussion, CSI believes that these administrative amounts should be examined on an annual basis to ensure that the schools have sufficient funds to operate and that CSI has sufficient funds to meet its statutory mission and obligations. The outcome of this year's meetings was a general agreement that CSI, CDE and the schools will review these administrative fees.

Respectfully submitted,



Ethan Hemming
Interim Executive Director