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CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE

REPORT TO THE HOUSE AND SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEES

JANUARY, 2014

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 2013-14 school year CSI supports 28 schools throughout the state. These schools serve over 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.

Stakeholder meetings:

During 2013 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.

The discussion with school leaders and school boards focused on CSI's progress towards its strategic objectives and identifying areas for improving services and efficiencies. One area of note is the reduction of a 1% fee historically levied on CSI schools to support their "Assistance Fund" which was made possible by CSI's solid financial position. CSI would like to thank the Colorado Legislature for enacting changes at the request of CSI

and its schools to make this change that increases the funds that flow directly to the schools.

During the meetings, CSI staff also updated schools on the implementation of a robust annual review of schools' academic, financial and operational progress and compliance. The performance frameworks for this review were developed with local and national support and expertise. CSI schools were integrally involved as stakeholders in this process providing feedback and insight. CSI also presented its 2013 strategic plan and discussed areas for improvement in communications. CSI staff also discussed its strong internal financial position and increasingly efficient authorization and support operations. CSI also discussed its longer term goals and objectives focusing on ensuring that all schools meet state performance expectations for achievement and growth, ensuring fiscal sustainability, achieving model authorizer status and delivering high quality support services to all schools.

Respectfully submitted,



Ethan Hemming
Executive Director