

**Colorado
Charter School Institute**

2015-2016 Annual Report

We believe that our **singular focus on public charter schools** translates into tailored customer service, a keen understanding of the unique needs of charter schools, a consistently transparent and collaborative approach to all issues, and the ability to better advocate for public charter schools' needs.

CSI
COLORADO



TABLE OF CONTENTS



Welcome

1



About CSI

2

CSI Portfolio At a Glance

3

CSI Portfolio by the Numbers

4

Authorization Cycle Outcomes

6



Road Trip

7

Legislative Changes

7

CSI Portfolio of Schools

8



Giving Back to Our Schools

15

Evaluating the Authorizer

16



CSI Staff

17

CSI Board of Directors

18

Looking Ahead

19

Messages from CSI's Board Chair & Executive Director

Without question, this past year would be described as a year of change for CSI stakeholders. The most significant change took place mid-year with a leadership change, and past Board Chairman Wayne Eckerling assuming the role of Interim Executive Director. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I can't thank Wayne enough for his efforts to keep CSI's business moving as we dealt with this formidable transition. During this process, I witnessed each board member's deep commitment to CSI as the entire board devoted countless hours to the Executive Director search.



Steve Schneider
Chair, Board of Directors

Our process was purposely inclusive as we asked both staff and school leaders to be involved in the interview process. After several comprehensive interviews, Dr. Terry Croy Lewis was selected as the new Executive Director of CSI. Dr. Lewis has worked in the charter school sector for over 20 years and has served in many roles including school leader, governing board member, founder and consultant. Prior to this position, Dr. Lewis served as the Vice President of School Quality and Support at the Colorado League of Charter Schools. While these leadership changes were unexpected, we are excited about our new leader, her executive team and structure, and more importantly, the relationships she is building with school leaders.

Regarding our Board of Directors, CSI ended the school year with three of our dedicated board members ending their terms, namely Alex Ooms, Pat Chlouber, and Cec Ortiz. Additionally, another board member, Kurtis Indorf, resigned from the board due an out of state employment change. We are especially grateful to each of these board members for their invaluable contributions and strong commitment to the organization during their time on the CSI board. While each of these board members will be sorely missed, our new Directors bring tremendous experience and expertise in charter and traditional public education, education reform policy, finance, and governance. New CSI board members include Luke Ragland, Yee-Ann Cho, Tom Brinegar and Antonio Pares.

As we begin the 2016-17 school year, our Board is eager to support the great work of our CSI staff and schools leaders. Our focus will be to connect even more with our charter schools to ensure that we are providing the quality leadership, guidance, and support our schools deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Schneider".

Sometimes we plan for our changes and sometimes they happen unexpectedly. For me, assuming the Executive Director's position wasn't something that I saw on my horizon a year ago, but I'm thrilled to have been given the opportunity to lead CSI in this next chapter. Throughout the last 8 months, CSI has been in a period



Terry Croy Lewis
Executive Director, CSI

of transition. Our focus has been on developing a new organizational structure which reflects a distributed leadership model and delving into creating a collaborative organizational culture. Thus far, we have made great strides in establishing a strong culture and we will continue to build upon the organizing principles and cultural norms that we have developed. Our goal is to maintain and nurture our highly effective team and hold ourselves to strong authorizing practices. In order to grow as an organization, we participated in a National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) review process in May/June which is explained later in this report. This review provided an excellent opportunity for us to reflect on our practices, discuss how we can improve our authorizing practices particularly from other statewide authorizers, and consider the review team's valuable insights and recommendations.

As we move forward, we'll maintain our focus on achieving CSI's goal of being a model authorizer. Moreover, we will continue to deliberate on how to best serve our schools as we strive to maintain autonomy for our schools, provide helpful technical assistance, ensure compliance, and develop productive relationships with our schools. Rest assured that our major initiatives this year are directly connected to these overarching goals and I look forward to doing this critical work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Terry Croy Lewis".

About CSI

Colorado adopted its original charter law in 1993, and the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI) was later created by statute in 2004. CSI is one of 49 authorizers but is the only statewide, non-district authorizer in Colorado. Governed by a board of nine members appointed by the Governor and Commissioner of Education, CSI currently serves a diverse portfolio of 40 schools across the state of Colorado serving more than 15,000 students. CSI is uniquely positioned to serve and promote charter school innovation in communities throughout Colorado and to be a leader in improvements in authorizer practices. CSI aspires to continue growing the quality of its portfolio of schools in Colorado and ensure future charter schools in response to the need for high quality, innovative school choices.



Our Vision

The vision of CSI is to be a national leader as a highly effective charter school authorizer by building a portfolio of high performing public charter schools through authorizing practices that promote a variety of successful and innovative educational designs, including an emphasis on schools that serve at-risk youth.



Our Mission

The mission of the Charter School Institute shall be to foster high-quality public school choices offered through Institute charter schools that deliver rigorous academic content and high academic performance in a safe environment and on par with the highest performing schools, including particularly schools for at-risk students.

Our Value Proposition

- ⇒ Statutory mission to authorize innovative and high-quality charter schools throughout Colorado
- ⇒ Strong, diverse, and stable board of directors appointed by the Governor and Commissioner
- ⇒ Charter-focused staff and systems oriented around efficacy and quality
- ⇒ Authorization systems that reward performance with diminished bureaucratic burdens
- ⇒ Annual evaluation system providing transparent accountability expectations and value-added analyses of school performance data
- ⇒ Strong advocacy focus

CSI Portfolio at a Glance



35
schools

CSI authorizes
35 charter
schools in
Colorado

15,075 students

Student membership on pupil count day exceeded 15,000, making CSI the 19th largest district (of 185).



18
localities

CSI schools can be found in 18 towns and cities across Colorado, from Durango to Granby and from Grand Junction to Calhan!

52.7% minority

52.7% of CSI's student population identifies as minority compared to the statewide of percentage of 45.5%.

project-based
schools

2

language
immersion
schools

3

Montessori schools

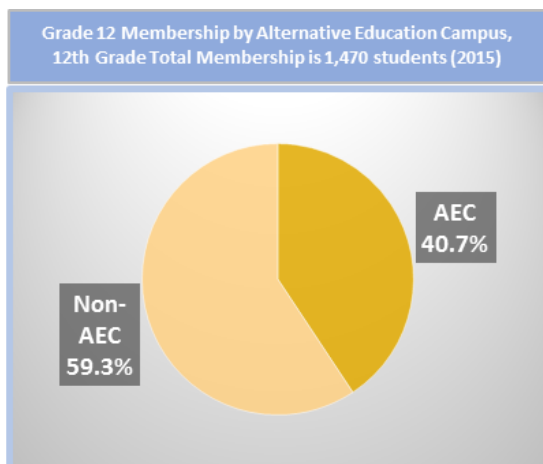
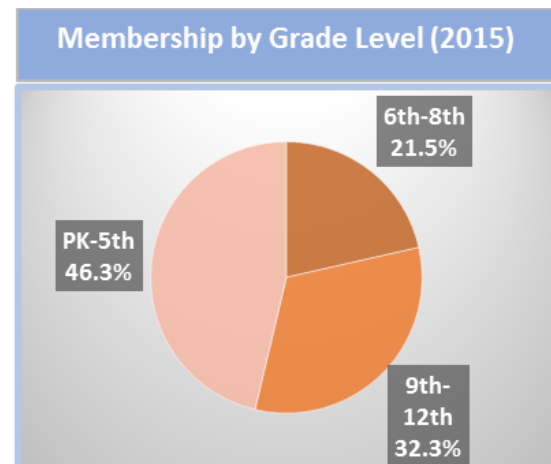
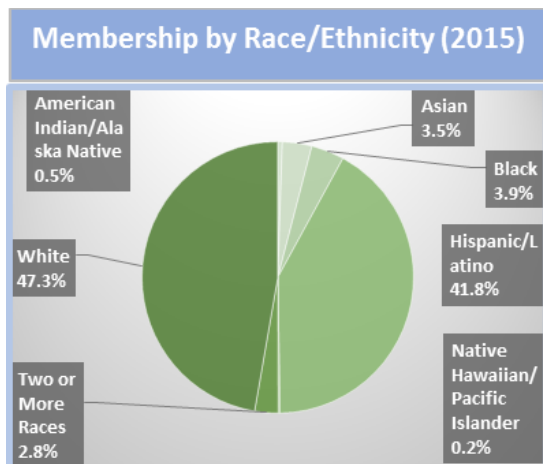
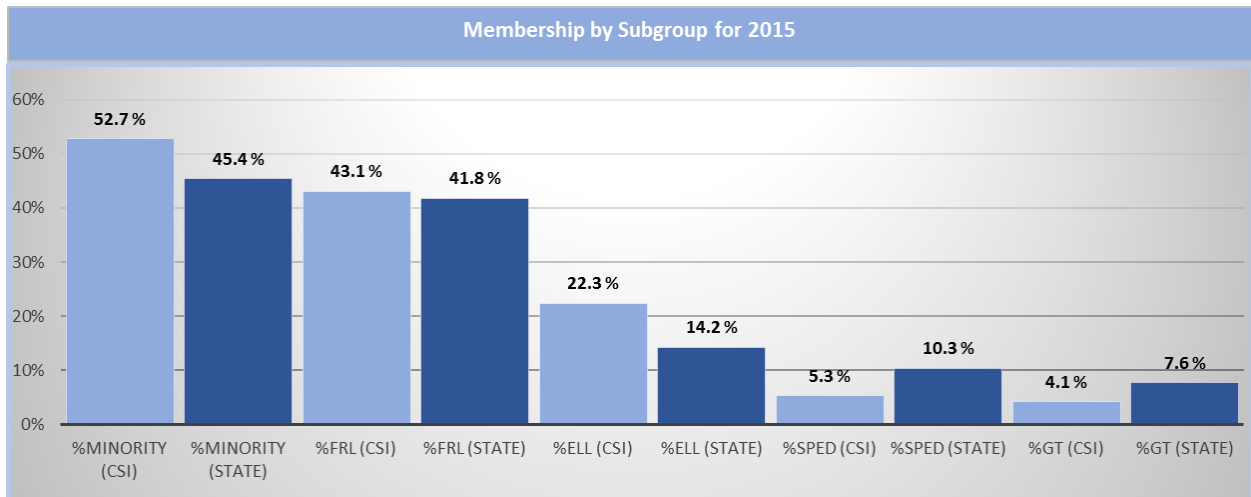
Alternative
education
campuses

4

Early colleges



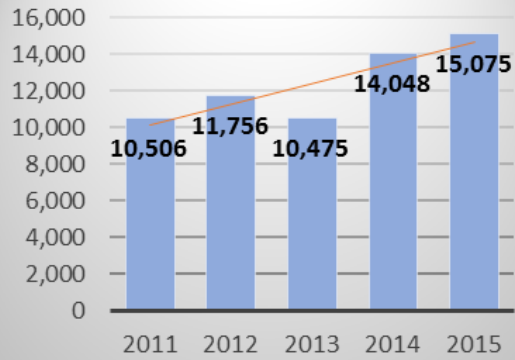
CSI Portfolio by the Numbers



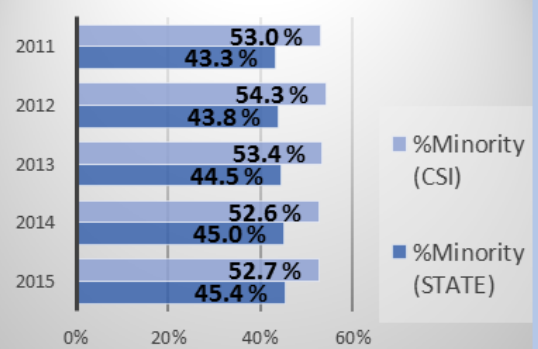
An alternative education campus (AEC) is a state designation given to schools serving a population where at least 90% of students meet one or more “high risk” indicators. CSI authorizes four AECs during the 2015-2016 school year.

Note: 2015 data was obtained from the 2015 Student October Count that took place during the 2015-2016 school year.

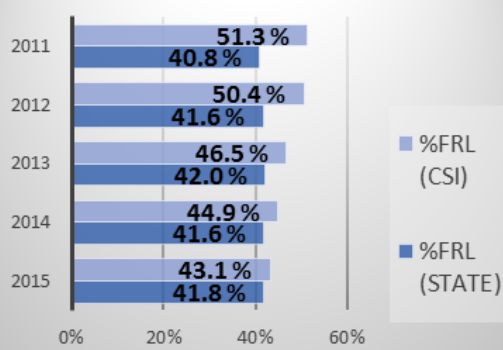
CSI Membership over Time



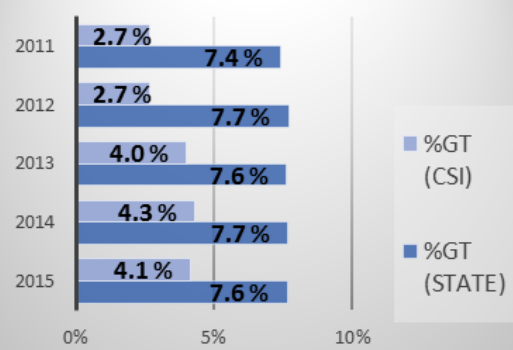
Minority over Time



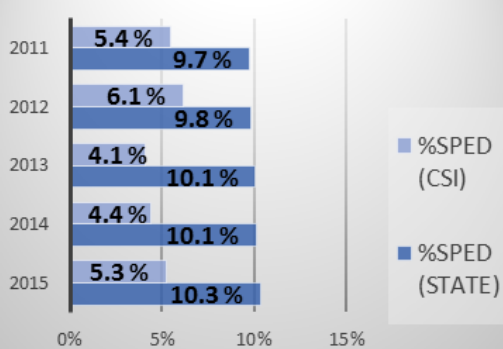
Lunch Eligibility over Time



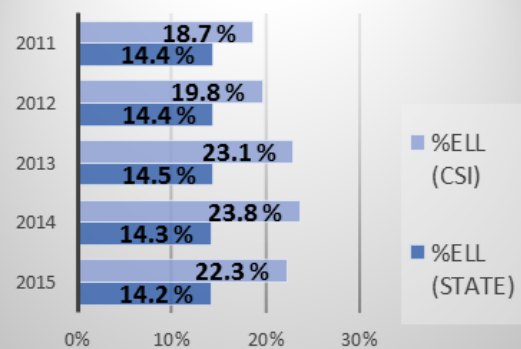
Gifted and Talented over Time



Students with Disabilities over Time



Language Proficiency over Time



Authorization Cycle Outcomes

In addition to the three schools CSI welcomed into its portfolio for 2015-2016, CSI's 2015-2016 authorization cycle brought about changes to the future of CSI's portfolio. CSI approved 2 new schools, 2 transfers, 2 expansions, 1 replication, and 9 renewals during its 2015-2016 authorization cycle.

Unchanged for the 2015-2016 year is the primary method for evaluation of a school wishing to transfer, expand, replicate, or be renewed—CSI utilizes the CSI Annual Review of Schools (CARS) accreditation system, which evaluates at a school's academic, financial and organizational performance. The primary method for evaluation of a new school application is the New School rubric, which evaluates the quality of the application, whether the proposed school fills a need in the community, and ultimately the proposed school's likelihood of success across academics, finance, and operations.

New Schools

The following are new schools that applied to CSI for authorization to open in Fall 2017 and were approved.

Monument View Montessori Charter School
Fruita | PreK-6

TriCity Academy
Englewood | K-8

Transfer Schools

The following are existing charter schools that sought to transfer authorization from their geographic district to CSI and were approved.

Indian Peaks Charter School
Granby | K-8

Global Village Academy— Northglenn
Northglenn | K-8

Expansion Schools

The following are existing CSI charter schools that sought to expand their school and were approved.

Mountain Middle School
Durango
Currently serving grades 6-8
Expanding to serves grades 4-8

Salida Montessori Charter School
Salida
Currently serving grades K-8
Expanding to serve grades Pre-K– 8

Replication Schools

The following are existing CSI charter schools that sought to replicate their schools and were approved.

Colorado Early Colleges—Aurora
Aurora | 9-12



Renewal Schools

The following are schools that sought to renew their existing contract with CSI as their contract term ended June 30, 2016 and were approved. The renewal application requirements differ by school accreditation rating; schools with higher accreditation ratings had fewer submission requirements while schools with lower accreditation ratings had additional submission requirements for the renewal process. Renewal contract terms were based on school performance. Schools received a new contract term ranging from a one year to five years.



Community Leadership Academy/Victory Prep Academy
Commerce City | PreK-12

Early College of Arvada
Arvada | 6-12

Frontier Charter Academy
Calhan | K-8

High Point Academy
Aurora | PreK-8

Mountain Middle School
Durango | 6-8

New America School—Thornton
Thornton | 9-12

Stone Creek Charter School
Edwards, Gypsum | K-8

The Pinnacle School
Federal Heights | K-12

T. R. Paul Academy of Arts and Knowledge
Fort Collins | K-5

Road Trip

CSI made a significant change to its use of school visits — beginning in January 2016, CSI initiated a series of school visits designed to get a better sense of school support needs across the portfolio, highlight some current CSI services, and provide another opportunity for communication between CSI and schools.

In the early spring of 2016, Ryan Marks, who was serving as the Director of School Support at the time, was able to visit most CSI schools over the course of about six weeks. Throughout those six weeks, Ryan drove more than 1,500 miles, visited 31 schools, and, most importantly, spent a good bit of time talking with school leaders. During these visits, Ryan and leaders spoke about the current CSI Menu of Services and the then recent changes and updates to enhance school supports for CSI schools. However, most of the conversations focused on exploring where/how administrative and compliance burdens could be reduced,

tiered, or eliminated, where/how technical assistance and support could be increased, and ways in which communication between schools and CSI could be improved. Through these many thoughtful and candid conversations, school leaders identified many opportunities and areas for growth for CSI in order to better support CSI schools while continuing to serve as a high-quality authorizer. Across the portfolio, school leaders expressed a desire to have access to additional and

**“Ryan drove
more than 1,500 miles,
visited 31 schools,
and most importantly,
spent a good bit of time
talking with school
leaders...”**

tiered training and in-person training when appropriate. School leaders also would like to see more personal communication and contact with CSI staff and better understand the various roles and responsibilities of CSI staff. Many school leaders also voiced excitement around the idea of forming a stronger community within the portfolio and providing support and access to and sharing of resources, and the idea of an Angie’s List for CSI really seemed to resonate. There were also many conversations around the ability to access information and improve communication through updates to the CSI website and newsletter and school leaders almost universally expressed a desire for an improved CSI Calendar.

As you can see through the implementation of the Regional Meetings and the recent updates to the CSI Calendar, we have taken this feedback seriously and look forward to continuing the conversation and improving our practices.

Legislative Changes

The 2016 legislative session yielded a number of positive changes for charter school operations, finance, facilities, and authorizer accountability.

Operations and Finance

- ⇒ With the passage of SB 16-208, charter schools that convert from a district-authorized school to a CSI-authorized school continue to receive adjusted per pupil revenues (including at-risk per pupil revenues) and at-risk supplemental aid using the funding formula that applied prior to the conversion.
- ⇒ Charter school networks must now only submit one financial audit. (HB 16-1422)
- ⇒ Leaders of “performance” charter schools must now only report UIP requirements once every two years. (HB 16-1440)
- ⇒ All meetings of **three** or more members of a CSI school governing board at which any public business is discussed is declared an open, public meeting as opposed to the previous threshold of **two** or more members. (HB 16--1422)

Facilities

- ⇒ An additional \$3 million was secured for the Charter Capital Construction Fund, resulting in \$25 million appropriated for the 2016-17 fiscal year.
- ⇒ A charter school must now only be in operation for **three** years to be eligible to apply for a BEST capital construction competitive grant program, as opposed to the previous **five**-year requirement. The three-year requirement also applies to traditional public schools. (SB 16-072)
- ⇒ HB 16-1422 added “maintenance” to the permissible uses of capital construction dollars.

Authorizer Accountability

- ⇒ HB 16-1422 expanded the grounds upon which a district’s exclusive chartering authority can be revoked to allow for challenges based on various best practices of quality authorizing, which are the same best practices a school district must demonstrate to obtain exclusive chartering authority.
- ⇒ A CSI school that receives permission from a school district to operate within the boundaries of the school district continues to be a CSI school regardless of any subsequent actions taken by the school district. (HB 16-1422)

CSI Portfolio of Schools

CSI's portfolio of schools experienced many changes in the 2015-2016 school year, with the addition of three schools being one of them. CSI's portfolio increased to 35 charter schools as we welcomed two newly opened schools, New Legacy Charter School and Salida Montessori Charter School, as well as an existing school, Crown Pointe Academy, which transferred from another authorizer.

Below is a profile of each of the schools authorized by CSI during the 2015-2016 school year. Accreditation ratings are symbolized by the colors below.

Distinction	Performance	Improvement	Priority Improvement	Turnaround	Not operating as a CSI School
-------------	-------------	-------------	----------------------	------------	-------------------------------

** Schools have asterisks in the 2014-2015 school year to signify that the prior year's accreditation rating was retained due to the state legislated "pause" year.

The "District Accreditation" rating within each school's profile refers to the geographic district's accreditation rating and can be used as a comparison point to the school's accreditation rating.

School Name	Animas High School						
Year Opened/Transferred	2007-2008	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	9-12					**	TBD
School Model	Project-based learning	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Durango	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Durango 9-R	299		10.7%		7.4%	
District Accreditation	Accredited	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Rural	1.0%		8.0%		10.4%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	Caprock Academy						
Year Opened/Transferred	2007-2008	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-12					**	TBD
School Model	Classical	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Grand Junction	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Mesa County Valley 51	773		26.6%		17.7%	
District Accreditation	Accredited	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Urban-Suburban	1.2%		6.9%		3.1%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	Colorado Early Colleges - Ft. Collins						
Year Opened/Transferred	2012-2013	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	6-12					**	TBD
School Model	Early College	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Fort Collins	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Poudre R-1	761		18.5%		14.6%	
District Accreditation	Accredited	ELL		Special		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Urban-Suburban	0.4%		2.2%		3.3%	
Original Application	Replication						

School Name	Colorado Early Colleges - Parker						
Year Opened/Transferred	2012-2013	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	9-12					**	TBD
School Model	Early College	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Parker	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Douglas County	419		0.0%		18.6%	
District Accreditation	Distinction	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	0.0%		0.5%		2.6%	
Original Application	Replication						

School Name	Colorado Springs Charter Academy						
Year Opened/Transferred	2010-2011	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-8					**	TBD
School Model	Core Knowledge	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Colorado Springs	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Colorado Springs 11	483		34.2%		30.8%	
District Accreditation	Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Urban-Suburban	0.2%		4.1%		0.4%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	Colorado Springs Early College						
Year Opened/Transferred	2007-2008	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	9-12					**	TBD
School Model	Early College	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Colorado Springs	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Colorado Springs 11	639		30.5%		35.4%	
District Accreditation	Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Urban-Suburban	6.4%		0.9%		1.1%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	Community Leadership Academy (Elementary)						
Year Opened/Transferred	2011-2012	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	PK-5					**	TBD
School Model	Core Knowledge	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Commerce City	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Adams County 14	563		85.4%		95.0%	
District Accreditation	Priority Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	68.0%		4.4%		2.5%	
Original Application	Transfer School/Expansion						

School Name	Crown Pointe Academy						
Year Opened/Transferred	2015-2016	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-8		TBD				
School Model	Core Knowledge	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Westminster	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Adams County SD 50	468		47.0%		62.2%	
District Accreditation	Priority Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	16.2%		8.8%		9.4%	
Original Application	Transfer School						

School Name	Early College of Arvada						
Year Opened/Transferred	2008-2009	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	6-12					**	TBD
School Model	Early College	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Arvada	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Adams County SD 50	341		44.6%		63.3%	
District Accreditation	Priority Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	29.0%		6.5%		7.9%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	Frontier Charter Academy						
Year Opened/Transferred	2011-2012	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-8					**	TBD
School Model	Core Knowledge	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Calhan	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Calhan RJ-1	66		62.1%		10.6%	
District Accreditation	Accredited	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Small rural	0.0%		1.5%		15.2%	
Original Application	Transfer School						

School Name	Global Village Academy - Colorado Springs						
Year Opened/Transferred	2013-2014	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-8					**	TBD
School Model	Language Immersion	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Colorado Springs	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Colorado Springs 11	416		54.8%		64.7%	
District Accreditation	Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Urban-Suburban	19.2%		3.6%		0.2%	
Original Application	Replication						

School Name	Global Village Academy - Fort Collins						
Year Opened/Transferred	2013-2014	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-8					**	TBD
School Model	Language Immersion	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Fort Collins	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Poudre R-1	314		44.9%		45.9%	
District Accreditation	Accredited	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Urban-Suburban	13.7%		3.8%		2.5%	
Original Application	Replication						

School Name	High Point Academy						
Year Opened/Transferred	2006-2007	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	PK-8					**	TBD
School Model	Core Knowledge	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Aurora	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Brighton SD 27J	751		48.1%		72.2%	
District Accreditation	Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	21.0%		6.8%		2.0%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	James Irwin Charter Academy						
Year Opened/Transferred	2013-2014	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-5					**	TBD
School Model	Core Knowledge	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Colorado Springs	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Colorado Springs 11	312		56.7%		51.6%	
District Accreditation	Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Urban-Suburban	12.8%		4.2%		1.0%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	Montessori del Mundo						
Year Opened/Transferred	2014-2015	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	PK-6					**	TBD
School Model	Dual-Language Montessori	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Aurora	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Adams-Arapahoe 28J	267		74.2%		90.6%	
District Accreditation	Priority Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	41.2%		7.5%		0.0%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	Mountain Middle School						
Year Opened/Transferred	2011-2012	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	6-8					**	TBD
School Model	Project-based learning	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Durango	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Durango 9-R	180		5%		7.2%	
District Accreditation	Accredited	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Rural	0%		6.1%		8.3%	
Original Application	New/Expansion						

School Name	Mountain Song Community School						
Year Opened/Transferred	2013-2014	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	PK-8					**	TBD
School Model	Waldorf	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Colorado Springs	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Colorado Springs 11	310		33.2%		26.8%	
District Accreditation	Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Urban-Suburban	1.0%		8.4%		0.3%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	New Legacy Charter School						
Year Opened/Transferred	2014-2015	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	9-12					**	TBD
School Model	Alternative Education Campus	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Aurora	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Adams-Arapahoe 28J	85		98.8%		89.4%	
District Accreditation	Priority Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	43.5%		2.4%		0.0%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	Pikes Peak Prep						
Year Opened/Transferred	2010-2011	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-12					**	TBD
School Model	College Prep	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Colorado Springs	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Colorado Springs 11	342		68.7%		38.3%	
District Accreditation	Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Urban-Suburban	8.8%		7.9%		0.0%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	Ricardo Flores Magon Academy						
Year Opened/Transferred	2007-2008	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-8					**	TBD
School Model	College Prep	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Westminster	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Westminster District 50	351		82.6%		97.7%	
District Accreditation	Priority Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	71.8%		6.6%		0.0%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	Ross Montessori School						
Year Opened/Transferred	2005-2006	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-8					**	TBD
School Model	Montessori	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Carbondale	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Roaring Fork RE-1	262		20.6%		21.4%	
District Accreditation	Priority Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Rural	15.6%		5.0%		5.0%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	Salida Montessori Charter School						
Year Opened/Transferred	2015-2016	Accreditation	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-8	Rating					TBD
School Model	Montessori	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Salida	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Salida SD R32J	73		39.7%		11.0%	
District Accreditation	Distinction	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Rural	0.0%		2.7%		0.0%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	Stone Creek Charter School						
Year Opened/Transferred	2006-2007	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-8					**	TBD
School Model	Core Knowledge	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Avon/Gypsum	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Eagle County RE 50	291		13.7%		29.9%	
District Accreditation	Accredited	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Rural	17.9%		12.4%		5.2%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	The Academy of Charter Schools						
Year Opened/Transferred	2014-2015	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-12					**	TBD
School Model	College Prep	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Westminster	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Adams 12 Five Star Schools	1819		17.9%		38.8%	
District Accreditation	Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	7.8%		5.7%		6.5%	
Original Application	Transfer School						

School Name	The New America School - Lowry						
Year Opened/Transferred	2014-2015	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	9-12					**	TBD
School Model	AEC	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Aurora	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Adams Arapahoe 28J	527		71.5%		93.0%	
District Accreditation	Priority Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	70.6%		2.8%		0.0%	
Original Application	Transfer School						

School Name	The New America School - Thornton						
Year Opened/Transferred	2013-2014	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	9-12					**	TBD
School Model	AEC	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Thornton	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Adams 12 Five Star	409		62.3%		91.0%	
District Accreditation	Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	35.5%		5.9%		0.0%	
Original Application	Transfer School						

School Name	The Pinnacle Charter School Elementary						
Year Opened/Transferred	2006-2007	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-5					**	TBD
School Model	Core Knowledge	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Federal Heights	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Adams 12 Five Star Schools	1006		66.8%		80.4%	
District Accreditation	Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	55.2%		5.6%		2.1%	
Original Application	Transfer School						

School Name	The Pinnacle Charter School Middle						
Year Opened/Transferred	2006-2007	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	6-8					**	TBD
School Model	Core Knowledge	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Federal Heights	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Adams 12 Five Star Schools	554		63.0%		81.4%	
District Accreditation	Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	46.8%		6.7%		6.5%	
Original Application	Transfer School						

School Name	The Pinnacle Charter School High						
Year Opened/Transferred	2006-2007	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	9-12					**	TBD
School Model	Core Knowledge	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Federal Heights	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Adams 12 Five Star Schools	539		58.4%		81.3%	
District Accreditation	Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	33.6%		3.0%		9.5%	
Original Application	Transfer School						

School Name	Thomas Maclaren State Charter School						
Year Opened/Transferred	2009-2010	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	6-12					**	TBD
School Model	College Prep	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Colorado Springs	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Colorado Springs 11	392		19.6%		29.1%	
District Accreditation	Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Urban-Suburban	80.0%		1.0%		16.1%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	T.R. Paul Academy of Arts & Knowledge							
Year Opened/Transferred	2006-2007	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	
Grades Served	K-8					**	TBD	
School Model	Mosaica / Paragon	Graphic Information 2015-2016						
Town/City	Fort Collins	Enrollment		FRL		Minority		
District of Residence	Poudre R-1	255		25.9%		32.2%		
District Accreditation	Accredited	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented		
District Type	Urban-Suburban	6.3%		4.3%		12.9%		
Original Application	New School							

School Name	Two Rivers Community School						
Year Opened/Transferred	2014-2015	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	K-8					**	TBD
School Model	Place based	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Glenwood Springs	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Roaring Fork RE-1	212		12.7%		31.6%	
District Accreditation	Accredited	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & T alented	
District Type	Rural	13.7%		6.6%		7.1%	
Original Application	New School						

School Name	Victory Preparatory High School						
Year Opened/Transferred	2011-2012	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	9-12					**	TBD
School Model	Core Knowledge	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Commerce City	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Adams County 14	139		80.6%		94.2%	
District Accreditation	Priority Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	47.5%		2.9%		8.6%	
Original Application	Transfer School/Expansion						

School Name	Victory Preparatory Middle School						
Year Opened/Transferred	2011-2012	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	6-8					**	TBD
School Model	Core Knowledge	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Commerce City	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Adams County 14	254		84.6%		91.7%	
District Accreditation	Priority Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Denver Metro	54.3%		3.1%		7.5%	
Original Application	Transfer School/Expansion						

School Name	Youth & Family Academy Charter						
Year Opened/Transferred	2011-2012	Accreditation Rating	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Grades Served	7-12					**	TBD
School Model	Alternative Education Campus	Student Demographic Information 2015-2016					
Town/City	Pueblo	Enrollment		FRL		Minority	
District of Residence	Pueblo City 60	189		56.1%		63.0%	
District Accreditation	Priority Improvement	ELL		Special Education		Gifted & Talented	
District Type	Urban-Suburban	0.0%		14.8%		0.0%	
Original Application	Transfer School						

Giving Back to our Schools

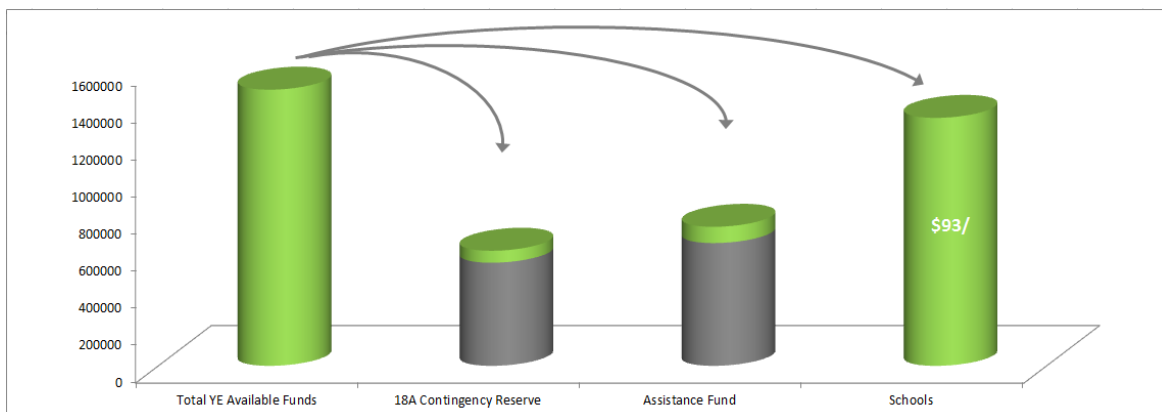
For the 2015-16 school year, CSI operated using less than the 3% of total portfolio school revenue as allowed by statute. Specifically, the CSI operating percentage was 1.67%.

As an overview of how unused funds are passed back to schools, any amount of revenue above expenditures at the end of the year in CSI's Administrative and Overhead Cost Fund is:

- Retained in CSI's Administrative and Overhead Cost Fund as a reserve in a total amount of up to 20% of the 3% of per pupil revenue (PPR) collected by CSI (CRS 22-30.5-506)
- Transferred to CSI's Assistance Fund
- Any fund balance above \$750,000 in the Assistance Fund is transferred to CSI schools. Note that this maximum balance of \$750,000 may be adjusted annually by the CSI Board of Directors in collaboration with the CSI Council of Schools (CRS 22-30.5-515.5)

After appropriately populating the CSI Assistance Fund and contingency funds, CSI returned excess revenue to the schools in the amount of \$92.82 per student at the end of the fiscal year. Total amount returned to the schools was \$1,337,462.00.

“CSI returned excess revenue to the schools in the amount of \$92.82 per student....”



Evaluating the Authorizer

Those in the charter sector are familiar with the concept of the authorizer serving as the evaluator of a school's performance. Authorizers typically provide an annual report to schools, evaluating schools against known performance standards, and providing an output that helps to highlight a school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Less familiar, but growing, is the notion of an authorizer evaluation, in which the authorizer is being evaluated against principles of quality authorizing. At the end of the 2015-2016 school year, CSI engaged in an evaluation of its authorizing practices. Conducted by the National Association for Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) and funded by the U.S. Department of Education through the National Charter School Resource Center, the evaluation was designed to provide CSI a reflective, formative look at its current authorizing policies and practices in relation to NACSA's Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing.

Consistent with NACSA's Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing, the evaluation focused on addressing the following five guiding questions:

1. Does the authorizer approve applications based on applicants' demonstrated preparation and capacity to open and operate a quality charter school?
2. Does the authorizer have effective systems for establishing and monitoring school performance expectations and holding schools accountable as necessary to protect student and public interests?
3. Does the authorizer have rigorous, appropriate standards by which it holds schools accountable for results? Are decisions made with the intent to maintain high standards and protect the students' and the public's interests?
4. Do schools have the autonomy to which they are entitled?
5. To what extent do the organizational structure and systems support quality authorizing practices and forward

the authorizer's mission?

The evaluation was conducted through a desk audit of CSI historic records, materials, and processes; interviews with authorizer staff, CSI board members, and CSI school leaders; and observation of a CSI Board Meeting

Here's what NACSA found.

KEY COMPETENCIES

High Quality Authorizing Practices

NACSA's report confirmed that CSI has in place a majority of the components of high-quality authorizing practices. These practices include strong contracts that incorporate expectations for school performance and align to law without adding any unnecessary requirements. Other strengths in authorizing that were highlighted include its performance standards, and application materials. Additionally, NACSA called out CSI's monitoring tools, many of which are differentiated based on school performance, as differentiation is an advanced authorizing practice.

Organizational Improvements

NACSA was aware of the significant organizational changes that took place over this past year. Despite these changes, CSI decided to move forward with this formative evaluation so that it could use this feedback in its strategic planning efforts. NACSA's evaluation concluded that CSI has recovered from a challenging leadership transition, and staff culture and buy-in have significantly improved.

Commitment to School Autonomy and Incentives for High Performers

Through its desk audit and interviews with various stakeholders, NACSA found that CSI demonstrates a clear commitment to protecting school autonomy. Additionally, the report noted that CSI shows commitment to maximizing incentives for high-performing schools.

Strong Mission, Vision, and Plan

The report confirmed that CSI has in place a strong mission, vision, and strategic plan upon which to build. The report noted that CSI has a detailed and comprehensive strategic plan with objectives that are annually tracked.

FOCUS AREAS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to identifying key competencies at CSI, the formative evaluation also identified three key areas of growth.

Rigor of high-stakes decision-making

NACSA recommended that CSI revise its practices to raise the rigor of all high-stakes decisions, including new application, transfer, expansion, replication, renewal, and revocation to require that schools/applicants meet the standard in all areas in order to ensure that only high-quality schools are allowed to serve children.

Additionally, the report suggested that the CSI Board adopt board policies to make high-stakes decisions that align with CSI's mission to "foster high-quality public school choices offered through Institute charter schools that deliver rigorous academic content and high academic performance in a safe environment and on par with the highest performing schools, including particularly schools for at-risk students."

Organizational sustainability

NACSA's report recommended that CSI focus on organizational sustainability by revisiting the strategic plan and building on recent efforts to strengthen organizational culture and improve staff retention.

Relationships with schools

The report recommended that CSI use strategies to strengthen relationships with schools, which may include informal visits to schools, clearer communication regarding compliance expectations, and offering technical assistance that does not encroach on school autonomy.

At the time of this report, CSI had already begun engaging in work to address NACSA's recommendations and is excited to consider the recommendations as part of its annual goals and strategic plan.

CSI Staff

2015-2016 was a year filled with changes for the staffing and organizational structure at CSI.

Several staff, including the Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Authorizing Officer, transitioned from the organization over the 2015-2016 school year. The CSI Board began its nationwide search for an Executive Director in January 2016. After a thorough search and interview process, Terry Croy Lewis was selected to serve as the next Executive Director and officially started in March 2016.

Under Terry's leadership, significant changes were made to the organizational structure and staffing, and while the number of CSI staff did not change significantly during this transition, both roles and departments were created or adjusted to better meet the identified needs of schools. For example, the Student Services and Data & Accountability Systems departments were expanded to provide more thorough technical assistance and oversight for schools.

Departments were created, each overseen by a director—a significant shift from the previous structure in which all staff were overseen by either the CFO or CAO. Accordingly, the leadership team expanded to include all departmental directors. Technical assistance and compliance monitoring became the joint oversight responsibility of each of the directors, which was a contrast from the previous organizational structure in which there was one staff responsible for school support and one staff responsible for compliance monitoring.

FINANCE



Terry Croy Lewis
Executive Director



Trish Krajniak
Director of Legal & Policy Initiatives



Millie Ramos
Board Liaison



Liz Schmit
Office Administrator



Ginger Lusty
Director of Finance



Marcie Jackson
Grants Fiscal Coordinator



Allegra Matus
Human Resources & Accounts Payable Manager



Cassie Walgren
Controller

STUDENT SERVICES



Clare Vickland
Director of Student Services



Kim Caplan
School Support Specialist



Matt Hudson
Special Education Director



Nick Stachokus
School Support Specialist

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION



Ryan Marks
Director of Evaluation & Assessment



Aislinn Walsh
School Performance Analyst

TBD
Assessment Coordinator

DATA SYSTEMS



Janet Dinnen
Director of Data & Accountability Systems



Julie Eddy
Data Manager

TBD
Data Submissions Coordinator

NOT PICTURED

Tami Boley
PowerSchool Support

Mina Parthasarathy
Infinite Campus Support

CSI Board of Directors

CSI has a nine-member board, seven members of which are appointed by the Governor and two by the Commissioner of Education. Statute requires that the board have no more than five members from either political party.



Steve Schneider
Board Chair

Principal, Central Bancorp

Appointed by: Governor
Term: April 2014– July 2017
(second term)



Tony Lewis

Executive Director, Donnell-Kay Foundation

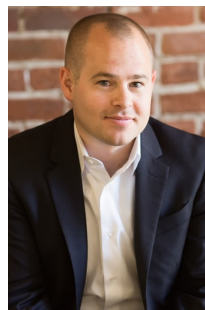
Appointed by: Governor
Term: August 2015—July 2017
(second term)



Liz Aybar Conti
Vice Chair

Executive Director, Margulf Foundation

Appointed by: Governor
Term: July 2014—2017



Luke Ragland

Vice President of Policy, Colorado Succeeds

Appointed by: Commissioner
Term: August 2016—July 2019



Frank McNulty
Secretary

Founder, Square State Strategy Group

Appointed by: Commissioner
Term: January 2015 - 2018



Yee-Ann Cho

Senior Vice President - Initiatives, The Colorado Education Initiative

Appointed by: Governor
Term: July 2016—2019



Tom Brinegar
Treasurer

Chief Financial Officer, PEAK Resources, Inc.

Appointed by: Governor
Term: July 2016– 2019



Antonio Pares

Education Director, Mayor's Office of Children's Affairs at the City and County of Denver

Appointed by: Governor
Term: September 2016– July 2018



Bob LaPalme

Board President, James Irwin Charter Academy

Appointed by: Governor
Term: August 2015 –July 2018
(second term)

Looking Ahead

Be on the lookout for these exciting changes!

Leadership Consulting

CSI has contracted with a School Support Liaison to work with CSI school leaders and governing board members on leadership development and governance in the 2016-2017 school year.

CARS 2.0

CSI has started the process of updating its CSI Annual Review of Schools (CARS) accreditation system. Like the current CARS system, CARS 2.0 will be aligned with the state's updated academic frameworks and will also include updated academic, financial and organizational measures to more closely reflect a school's performance.

CACSA

Throughout the last year, CSI has been working with approximately fifteen different authorizers throughout Colorado to create the Colorado Association for Charter School Authorizers (CACSA). This effort has been led by Dr. Alex Medler who worked for the National Association of Charter School Authorizers and formerly served as a CSI Board member. The authorizer group meets at least quarterly and coordinates these meetings with CDE's Authorizer meetings. CACSA's mission is to increase capacity for quality authorizing and the group has developed best practices that are reflected in the Colorado Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing as adopted by the State Board of Education. Given that CSI must serve as a model authorizer per Colorado statute (22-30.5-501), CSI will continue to help lead the initiative to develop and grow this

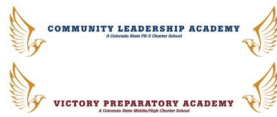
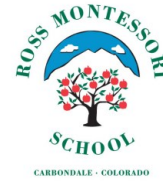
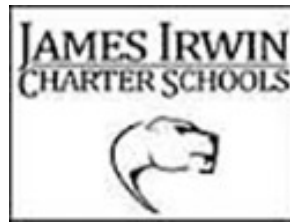
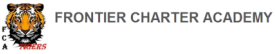
Special Education

With increased CSI Staff capacity in the area of special education, CSI will be focusing its resources on reviewing CSI practices around special education compliance and services to schools. CSI will be collaborating with the National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools to develop programming and accountability measures that best support the unique needs of CSI schools. CSI staff will also be working on providing more access to financial supports for schools with high-needs students. Stay tuned for more information and pilots coming early spring!

School Visits

CSI staff and board members will be engaging in informal site visits as part of the renewal cycle.







Colorado
Charter School Institute
1580 Logan Street Suite 210
Denver, CO 80203
O: (303) 866-3299
F: (303) 866-2530
www.csi.state.co.us