


The background of the entire page is a photograph of a hand holding a piece of white chalk, drawing stick figures on a dark grey chalkboard. There are several stick figures already drawn, each enclosed in a white oval. Pink chalk lines radiate from these figures, connecting them in a network. The hand is in the foreground, holding the chalk and touching one of the figures.

ANNUAL REPORT

Colorado Charter School Institute

2016-2017



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, and the ability to better advocate for public charter schools' needs.

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

- 4 Letter of Welcome
 - 6 Who We Are
 - 7 Who We Serve
 - 8 School Profiles
-

CONNECTIONS WITH OUR SCHOOLS

- 10 Regional Meetings
Governing Board Events
 - 11 Authorization Cycle Outcomes
2016-2017 Portfolio Stats
-

CONNECTIONS WITHIN OUR WORK

- 12 CARS 2.0
 - 13 Student Services Screener
Financial Efficiency
 - 14 Legislative Actions & Changes
-

FUTURE CONNECTIONS

- 15 Mill Levy Equalization
Communications
AEC Task Force
-

BEHIND THE SCENES

- 16 Meet Our Staff
- 18 Board of Directors



WELCOME

From CSI Executive Director, Dr. Terry Croy Lewis
and CSI Board Chair, Luke Ragland

Dear Friends and School Leaders,

It is a privilege to have the opportunity to celebrate CSI's collective successes and highlight the tremendous work of CSI schools and staff during the 16-17 school year! As we reflected upon the past year, it was apparent that our success stems from deep connections - connections with the people in our schools who support our students each and every day, connections with CSI families that choose CSI schools for their children,

connections with CSI staff and Board Members, and connections with the greater education community to advocate for charter schools. These connections foster greater alignment to a common purpose, and the greater the alignment, the higher the propensity for success. It's these connections that have and will continue to strengthen our schools and advance CSI as a model authorizer in the state of Colorado.

This past year included a focus on building new relationships and strengthening existing relationships with our schools. We made new connections with school governing board members through attendance at school board meetings, hosting Board to Board trainings, and participating in networking events across the state. CSI Board members were warmly welcomed when they visited Durango, Salida, Avon, Aurora, Commerce City, and Colorado Springs. Our Board to Board events provided an additional opportunity for school leaders and governing board members to interact directly with CSI board members. Ultimately, our attention to school governance was incredibly successful and we're excited about continuing this work. In addition to building these new relationships, we strengthened existing relationships with school staff and leadership. CSI staff traveled the state to host Fall, Winter, and Spring regional meetings, which provided in person training and networking opportunities. These meetings offered not only an opportunity for school staff and leadership to engage with CSI staff but also an opportunity for our schools to develop deeper connections with other schools and to find ways to share resources with each other.

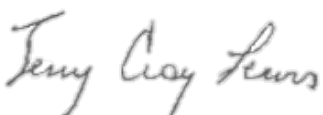
Internally, CSI staff worked hard to streamline and improve its performance across departments and projects. We tackled some challenging initiatives as a team: developing CARS 2.0, taking a deep dive into our work with exceptional students to create a tiered support system, and striving to offer a much higher level of support for our schools from all

our departments. Through all of these efforts, CSI staff worked diligently to ensure alignment across projects. As you'll see in this report, for example, our CARS accountability system informs not just the supports we provide for our schools but also the requirements related to renewal and other charter development processes. It is this focus on making connections within our work that will alleviate burdens on schools, streamline processes, and ultimately advance our practice as a model authorizer.

Of course, we would be remiss if we did not mention the connections built within the greater education community this past year. The way in which the entire CSI family—our school leaders, staff, education reform partners, legislators and CSI board members—connected to advocate for charter school funding equity was nothing short of outstanding. Without question, the CSI community had their voices heard as they worked together to tell their stories and successes, especially during the legislative session. The time has come for CSI students to have funding equity with their peers and we were able to take an important step forward to accomplish this. We're not there yet, but rest assured that we will continue to work towards that goal.

Looking forward, we are laser-focused on expanding the number of high quality seats available to Colorado's kids. We know that building authentic, powerful connections between CSI, CSI schools, and CSI families is the only way we will be able to achieve that goal. Let's make 2017-18 our best year yet.

Sincerely,



CSI Executive Director, Dr. Terry Croy Lewis



CSI Board Chair, Luke Ragland

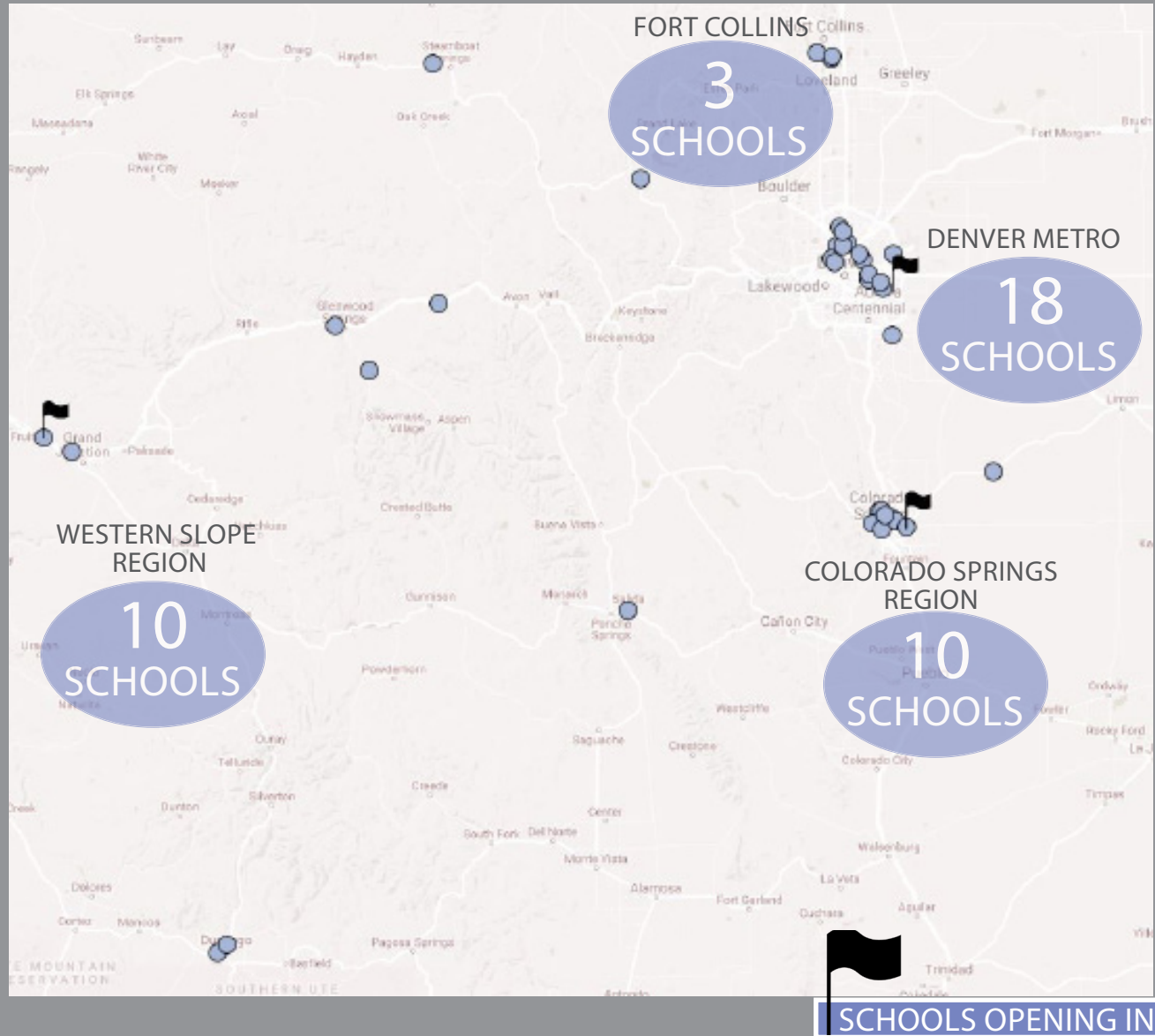
WHO WE ARE

In response to the growing desire for charter schools, the lack of school options for at-risk students, and the interest in an alternate mode of authorizing charter schools that could assist districts in implementing authorizing best practices, the State Legislature created the Colorado Charter School Institute in 2004.

The mission of the Charter School Institute is to foster high-quality public school choices offered through Institute charter schools, including particularly schools that are focused on closing the achievement gap for at-risk students.

The vision of the Charter School Institute 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.

WHO WE SERVE



39 SCHOOLS

There were 39 schools in operation in the 2016-2017 school year, and the Youth and Family Academy was closed at the end of the 2016-2017 school year. Three schools were approved to open in the 2017-2018 school year: Colorado Early Colleges Aurora, Monument View Montessori Charter School, and the Colorado Military Academy, increasing CSI's school portfolio for the 2017-2018 school year to 41.

CSI
COLORADO



SCHOOL PROFILES

DENVER REGION

SCHOOL	CITY	CARS RATING	MODEL	GRADE
The Academy of Charter Schools	Westminster		College Prep	PK-12
Colorado Early Colleges Aurora	 Aurora		Early College	9-12
Colorado Early Colleges Parker	Parker		Early College	9-12
Colorado Early Colleges Fort Collins	Fort Collins		Early College	6-12
Community Leadership Academy	Commerce City		Core Knowledge	PK-5
Crown Pointe Academy	Westminster		Core Knowledge	K-8
Early College of Arvada	Arvada		Early College	6-12
Global Village Academy Fort Collins	Fort Collins		Language Immersion	K-8
Global Village Academy Northglenn	Northglenn		Language Immersion	K-5
High Point Academy	Aurora		Core Knowledge	PK-8
Montessori del Mundo Charter School	Aurora		Dual-Language Montessori	PK-4
New Legacy Charter School	Aurora		Alternative Education Campus	9-12
Ricardo Flores Magon Academy	Westminster		College Prep	K-8
The New America School - Lowry	Aurora		Alternative Education Campus	9-12
The New America School - Thornton	Thornton		Alternative Education Campus	9-12
The Pinnacle Charter School Elementary	Federal Heights		Core Knowledge	K-5
The Pinnacle Charter School High	Federal Heights		Core Knowledge	9-12
The Pinnacle Charter School Middle	Federal Heights		Core Knowledge	6-8
T.R. Paul Academy of Arts & Knowledge	Fort Collins		Mosaica Education/ Paragon	K-5
Victory Preparatory High School	Commerce City		Core Knowledge	9-12
Victory Preparatory Middle School	Commerce City		Core Knowledge	6-8

CARS 2.0 RATING

DISTINCTION	PERFORMANCE	IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT	TURNAROUND
-------------	-------------	-------------	----------------------	------------

*These preliminary ratings are based on performance during the 2016-2017 school year and are pending final approval.

WESTERN SLOPE REGION

SCHOOL	CITY	CARS RATING	MODEL	GRADE
Animas High School	Durango		Project-Based Learning	9-12
Caprock Academy	Grand Junction		Core Knowledge	K-12
Indian Peaks Charter School	Granby		Core Knowledge/ Expeditionary	1-8
Monument View Montessori Charter School	Fruita		Montessori	PK-3
Mountain Middle School	Durango		Project-Based Learning	4-8
Mountain Village Montessori Charter School	Steamboat Springs		Montessori	PK-5
Ross Montessori Charter School	Carbondale		Montessori	K-8
Salida Montessori Charter School	Salida		Montessori	K-8
Stone Creek Charter School	Avon/Gypsum		Core Knowledge	K-8
Two Rivers Community School	Glenwood Springs		Place Based	K-8

COLORADO SPRINGS REGION

SCHOOL	CITY	CARS RATING	MODEL	GRADE
Colorado Military Academy	Colorado Springs		Military Academy	K-8
Colorado Springs Charter Academy	Colorado Springs		Core Knowledge	K-8
Colorado Springs Early Colleges	Colorado Springs		Early College	9-12
Frontier Charter Academy	Calhan		Core Knowledge	K-8
Global Village Academy Colorado Springs	Colorado Springs		Language Immersion	K-8
James Irwin Charter Academy	Colorado Springs		Core Knowledge	K-5
Launch High School	Colorado Springs		Blended Learning/ Entrepreneurship	9-10
Mountain Song Community School	Colorado Springs		Waldorf	PK-8
Pikes Peak Prep	Colorado Springs		College Prep	K-12
Thomas MacLaren School	Colorado Springs		College Prep	6-12
Youth & Family Academy	Colorado Springs		Alternative Education Campus	7-12



SCHOOLS OPENING IN 17-18



SCHOOLS CLOSED IN 17-18

CONNECTIONS WITH OUR SCHOOLS

REGIONAL MEETINGS

The 2016-2017 school year kicked off our first full year of hosting Regional Meetings. CSI staff traveled to each of its three regions: Denver, Colorado Springs and the Western Slope in September, December, and May. Each of these meetings featured a school leader strand and a strand of sessions with a specific CSI department focus. The goals of these meetings were to increase in-person communication and support with schools, promote CSI school collaboration and networking, and provide focused trainings for school staff.

"This was one of the best meetings I have attended. I appreciated networking with district leaders, principals, and fellow teachers and sharing ideas. I walked out feeling informed, part of an important conversation, and feeling as if I was treated professionally."
~School Staff

97% of schools participated in one or more regional meetings this past year.

86%
School
Participation

Fall Focus:
Student
Services
Support

76%
School
Participation

Winter Focus:
Evaluation &
Assessment

81%
School
Participation

Spring Focus:
Data
Submissions

GOVERNING BOARD EVENTS

The 2016-2017 school year kicked off our first year of hosting CSI Board to Board Networking and Training events. These events were designed to facilitate training, support, and conversation opportunities between the CSI Board and CSI School boards.



TOPICS DISCUSSED:

Human Resources Support
Legislative Updates & Future Advocacy
Peer to Peer Small Group Consultancies
School Leader Complaints & Board Responsibilities
Summer Board Retreat Planning
Smart Governing Practice

AUTHORIZATION CYCLE OUTCOMES

CSI utilizes the CSI Annual Review of Schools (CARS) accreditation system as the primary method for evaluating a school wishing to transfer, expand, replicate, or be renewed. 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.

APPROVED APPLICATIONS 2016-2017

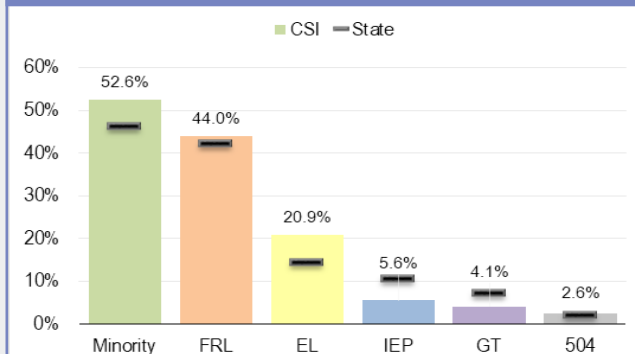
2	New	0	Replication
2	Expansion	2	Transfer

2016-2017 Portfolio Stats

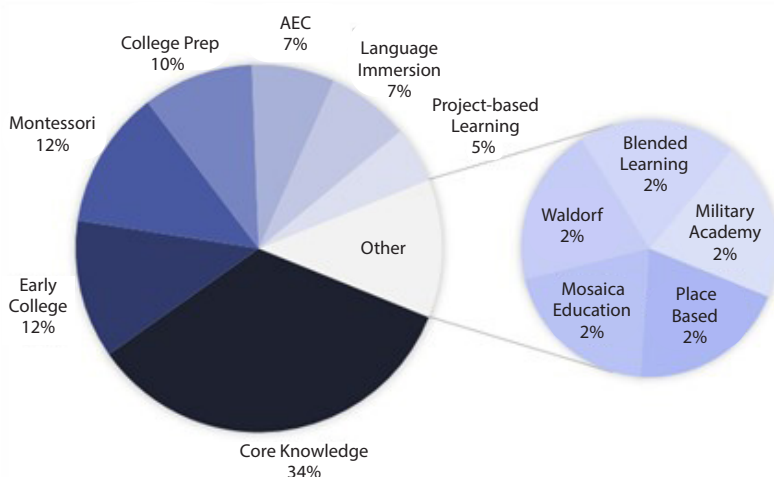
CSI's portfolio of schools is diverse in its service to students, models offered, and locations. In line with its mission, CSI focuses on the service of at-risk students and currently serves a higher percentage of English Learners, students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, and minorities than the state. CSI's focus on outcomes allows for a broad range of educational models from Montessori to Early College.

16,427 STUDENTS

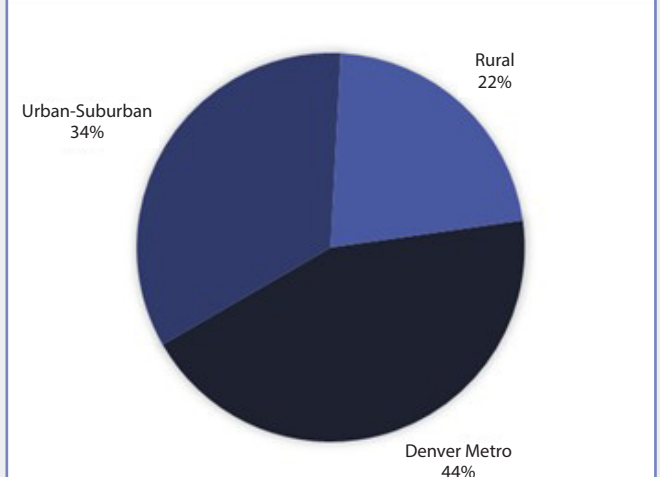
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



SCHOOL MODELS



SCHOOL DISTRICT TYPES

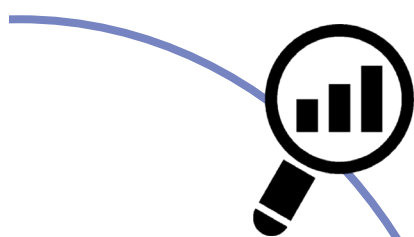


CONNECTIONS WITHIN OUR WORK

CARS 2.0

CSI staff were busy updating the CSI Annual Review of Schools (CARS) accountability system during the 2016-2017 school year. Updates were made to address state and federal changes to measures as well as to provide a more accurate reflection of a school's overall academic, financial, and organizational performance. Additionally, CSI sought to align CARS with new and existing CSI processes and resources. These changes will be realized in the CARS ratings, and the CARS Reports issued to schools this winter will be based upon 2016-2017 school year performance.

There are three main purposes of CARS:



ADD TO THE BODY OF EVIDENCE

CARS will provide the main body of evidence that is used for authorization decisions like renewal, expansion, and replication. This will ensure that CSI's application process remains streamlined and that CSI only asks schools for information not already provided through the CARS report.



IDENTIFY SUPPORTS & INTERVENTIONS

CARS will determine the level of support and intervention to provide to the school. CSI has developed tiered supports within each unit to tailor the level of support and involvement based on a school's need and performance.

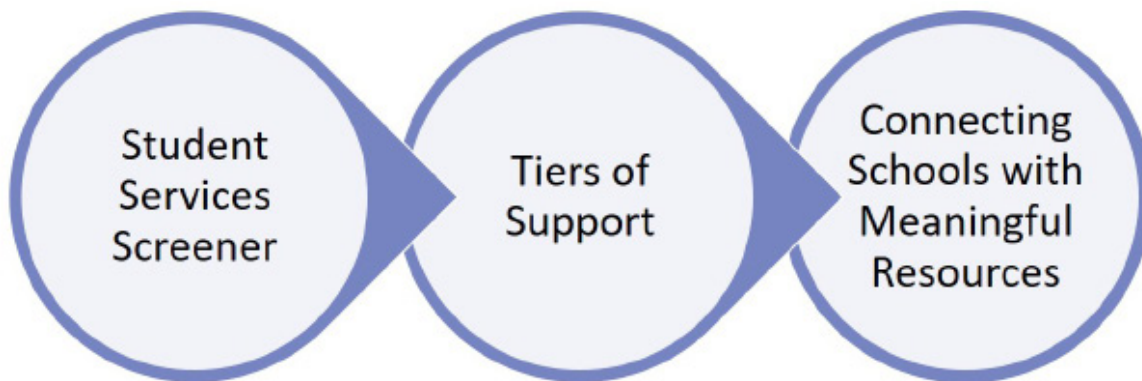


DETERMINE ACCREDITATION RATING

CARS will determine the schools' accreditation rating which is primarily used to inform a school's pathway for reauthorization. In alignment with the focus on greater autonomy in exchange for greater accountability, schools with higher accreditation ratings will have the most streamlined application.

STUDENT SERVICES SCREENER

CSI partnered with the National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools (NCSECS) to develop a Student Services Screener tool that determines tiers of support for CSI schools based on enrollment, stability, academic growth, high school completion, discipline, and compliance indicators across subgroups of students. Tiered supports allow each school to work with a CSI Case Manager in the Student Services Department to develop a customized Support Plan based on its areas of need. The Support Plan will connect schools to additional opportunities for professional development, coaching, and other resources.



FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY

While 3% of CSI's revenue was allocated for operations, CSI operated at 2%. After fulfilling statutory requirements, CSI returned excess revenue to its schools.



\$1,214,325

RETURNED TO CSI SCHOOLS

\$77

PER STUDENT



LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

2016-2017 was a pivotal legislative year for the charter school community. HB 17-1375 passed after much debate and many variations. The bill will help to equalize the disparity in mill levy funding that many district-authorized schools face, and created a structure for funding a CSI mill levy equalization fund. This fund would be subject to annual appropriation by the legislature, and any money placed in the fund would be distributed to CSI schools on an equal per-pupil basis except that no CSI school could receive more on a per-pupil basis than the schools of its geographic school district are currently receiving from locally-raised

mill levy overrides.

Additionally, the bill required that each school post its automatic and non-automatic waivers and replacement plans on its website by July 1, 2017, and removed two waivers from the automatic waiver list [C.R.S. 22-32-109(1)(b) concerning procedures for competitive bidding in the purchase of goods and services, except professional services; and, C.R.S. 22-32-110(1)(y) concerning the power to accept and expend gifts, donations, or grants]. These waivers now must be requested as a non-automatic waiver, and rationale and replacement plans submitted.

KEY LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

For more information regarding the Academic, Financial and Operational Legislative changes that will take effect in 2017-2018, please visit the [Legal and Policy](#) section on our website.

~Special Thanks~

CSI would like to extend its deepest gratitude to school leaders, board members, teachers, students, and community members who demonstrated their support HB 17-1375 by contacting their legislators, and engaging their communities, and testifying in front of the legislature.

CSI extends a special thank you to Kaye Taavialma (Ricardo Flores Magon Academy), Jennifer Douglas (New Legacy Charter School), David Floodeen (The Academy of Charter Schools), Kristin Trezise and Dan Sherrill (Caprock Academy), Keith Ouweneel (Crown Pointe Academy), Raj Solanki (Mountain Song Community School), Ryan Conrad (Early College of Arvada) and Keith King (Colorado Early Colleges).

The CSI voice was definitely heard!



FUTURE CONNECTIONS

Looking ahead to 2017-2018, CSI's focus is to ensure that each CSI school has access to the tools and resources necessary to create and maintain positive student outcomes. Here are three of CSI's focuses in the 2017-2018 school year:

1 MILL LEVY EQUALIZATION

CSI's focus moving forward will be to ensure that the CSI mill levy equalization fund receives an equitable appropriation. Given that district charters will not be eligible to receive mill levy funds until the 2019-2020 school year (unless, of course, the district is already sharing mill levy money), CSI has two years to make certain that all charters in the state are receiving equitable funding. Therefore, the CSI team, as well as our Ed Reform partners, are deeply committed to ensuring that the CSI fund has the appropriate allocation by 2019.



2 COMMUNICATIONS

Following the efforts to increase awareness for public charter schools, CSI launched a new Communications department in 2016-2017. The goal of this department moving forward is two-fold: to increase the awareness for and understanding of CSI, and to further the ways in which CSI is recognized as a model authorizer. These goals are to be carried out through the development and implementation of consistent branding, refined key messages, and targeted outreach, as well as through authorization partnerships, increased publications and consistent networking.



3 AEC TASK FORCE

The 2017-2018 school year will have a continued focus on AECs. CSI has formed a task force, comprised of a variety of stakeholders including the Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers, the Colorado Department of Education, and AEC school leaders, to strengthen our authorizing procedures and metrics for Alternative Education Campuses (AECs). Specifically, the task force will develop policy recommendations around the selection, submission, and verification of optional measures for AECs. CSI's goal is to ensure appropriate, transparent, and rigorous accountability and oversight for alternative schools. CSI will incorporate these recommendations into its work. It is CSI's hope that these recommendations will also be relevant and useful to all task force members, as well as the state's AECs.

MEET OUR STAFF



Terry Croy Lewis
Executive Director



Amanda Oberg
Executive Assistant

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT



Ryan Marks
Director of Evaluation
& Assessment



Aislinn Walsh
School Performance
Analyst



Jessica Welch
Assessment
Coordinator

DEPARTMENT OF DATA & COMMUNICATIONS



Janet Dinnen
Director of Data and
Communications



Julie Eddy
Data Manager



Ryan Hartung
Data Submissions
Coordinator



Rachel Hitt
Communications
Coordinator/Board
Liaison

NOT PICTURED: Mina Parthasarathy (Infinite Campus Support) & Tami Boley (PowerSchool Support)

DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL & POLICY INITIATIVES



Trish Krajniak
Director of Legal and
Policy Initiatives

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE



Amanda Karger
Director of Finance



Marcie Jackson
Grants Fiscal
Coordinator



Allegra Matus
Human Resources
& Accounts Payable
Manager



Cassie Walgren
Controller

DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT SERVICES



Clare Vickland
Director of Student
Services



Matt Hudson
Special Education
Director



Kim Caplan
School Support
Specialist



Nick Stachokus
School Support
Specialist

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.



Luke Ragland
Board Chair

President, Ready CO



Liz Aybar Conti
Vice Chair

Executive Director,
Margulf Foundation



Frank McNulty
Secretary

Founder, Square State
Strategy Group



Tom Brinegar
Treasurer

Chief Financial Officer,
PEAK Resources, Inc.



Antonio Parés
Board Member

Partner, Donnell-Kay
Foundation



Bob LaPalme
Board Member

Parent



Yee-Ann Cho
Board Member

Independent Consultant



Eric Lerum
Board Member
VP of Growth &
Strategy,
America Succeeds



Kristi Pollard
Board Member
CEO, Jefferson County
Economic Development
Corporation

The background of the entire page is a light blue-grey color. It features a faint, repeating pattern of stick figures. Each stick figure is drawn in white and is enclosed within a white circle. These circles are interconnected by thin, pinkish-purple lines that radiate outwards from the circles, creating a network-like or web-like structure across the background.

COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE

1580 LOGAN ST. STE. 210, DENVER, CO 80203

TEL: 303.866.3299 FAX: 303.866.2530

csi_info@csi.state.co.us