



REIMAGINING


COLORADO
CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022

***Our mission is to foster
high-quality charter public
school choices for all students.***



Animas High School, Durango

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Welcome Letter

Dear Friends,

We are excited to share our 2021-22 year-in-review for the Colorado Charter School Institute.

Our annual report theme – **“Reimagining”** – illustrates how CSI and our schools leaned into innovation and embraced the challenge of meeting the needs of the students in our communities throughout Colorado. We partnered with our schools to be as imaginative and creative as possible as we adapted to many new and unique challenges.

Our 42 schools reimagined how to expand access and programming to the 20,000+ students in the 2021-22 school year.

So, too, did CSI. Despite the need to think differently to address challenges, at the core of our work has remained our mission – to foster high-quality charter public school choices that serve **all** students.

We, too, have *reimagined* facets of our work over the 2021-22 school year, which this report highlights:

Reimagining How We Expand Access

We continued to reimagine ways to expand access to high-quality education and programming. With universal preschool on the horizon, CSI established the Early Childhood & School Support Specialist position to help schools implement Pre-K programming. We also continued to lean into postsecondary college and career opportunities for students. This past year, two CSI schools were accepted into the Path4Ward Program, a grant initiative providing scholarships to low-income students to access postsecondary education and careers.

Strides were made to expand access to food services in the CSI School Food Authority (SFA), which served 22 charter schools this past school year. The SFA supported the development of unique partnerships to offer local and healthy food options for students across the state.

“Despite the need to think differently... at the core of our work has remained our mission - to foster high-quality charter public school choices that serve all students.”



Reimagining Advocacy

Once again, CSI was relentless in advocating for funding equity through mill levy override equalization. While modest gains in funding had been achieved in the last few years, funding nearly doubled in 2021-22. We still have a long way to go to reach full parity, but we are proud of this tremendous step towards equity for CSI schools.

Reimagining Pathways

CSI worked to reimagine pathways for prospective school applicants seeking authorization with CSI, prioritizing access and equity throughout the charter application process for new, transfer, and expansion applications. Additionally, we continued to partner with CSI schools to consider innovative pathways for serving their communities in online formats, including blended learning flexibilities, single district online programs, and multi-district online schools.

Reimagining School Supports

In response to the significant need for mental health supports nationwide and echoed by CSI schools, CSI established the Mental Health Specialist position in 2021-22. Mental health supports were developed and accessed by schools across the portfolio. CSI also implemented its updated Equity Screener to support schools in understanding and improving outcomes for all students.

Reimagining Our Role

CSI continued to evolve and adapt to the ever-changing public education landscape. As an organization, we were faced with rethinking our role to better align with the needs of our schools, their students, and their communities as schools worked to transition to a new normal.

This past year, CSI partnered with the Colorado League of Charter Schools to pass legislation that would increase pathways for charter schools to better serve students with special needs. Included in this legislation was the opportunity for district charter schools to join CSI's Administrative Unit for the provision of special education. We are excited to embark on this journey as we continue to expand opportunities for Colorado charter school students.

We hope you enjoy this annual report and look forward to your partnership as we continue to *reimagine* how to expand the frontiers of public education.



Dr. Terry Croy Lewis
Executive Director



Jill Anschutz
Board Chair



Colorado Early Colleges, Fort Collins

Who We Are

OUR MISSION is to foster high-quality charter public school choices for all students.

OUR VISION is to be recognized as the nation’s most effective charter school authorizer by building a portfolio of high-performing charter public schools that use innovative educational designs to serve all students.

The CSI approach to authorizing charter schools balances autonomy and accountability.

CSI offers its schools the flexibility to choose the educational models and methods that best meet the unique needs of their students and communities and holds them accountable to clear expectations for performance.

WHAT IS AN AUTHORIZER?

An authorizer is an entity approved by the state legislature to 1) open new charter schools 2) monitor existing charter schools and 3) close failing schools.

Charter schools are accountable to their charter authorizer for meeting local, state, and federal requirements.

Fundamental principles of authorizing include:

ACCESS	AUTONOMY	ACCOUNTABILITY
Access to high-quality school options for all students	Autonomy for schools to best meet the needs of their students	Accountability for schools in meeting high expectations



Our Why

At CSI, we believe that all children should have access to high-quality school options and that families should be able to choose the schools that best meet the unique needs of their children.

THAT'S OUR WHY.

Recognizing that each person's "why" for choosing their charter school is unique, we continue to highlight the personal stories of CSI students, parents, school leaders, and staff on our website.

"New Legacy gave me the confidence & reassurance of why I needed to believe in myself."

BIANCA

Former Student, New Legacy Charter School



"I love working in an innovative environment...I see these kids thrive and grow every day!"

MARY BAIN

School Staff, Colorado Early Colleges



"What makes [Mountain Middle School] so special is how free... and how extraordinary it is."

LIV

Student, Mountain Middle School



CSI PORTFOLIO

School	City	Model	Grades
Academy of Arts & Knowledge	Fort Collins	Arts Integration	K-5
Animas High School	Durango	Project-based Learning	9-12
Ascent Classical Academy Douglas County	Lone Tree	Classical	K-12
Ascent Classical Academy Northern Colorado	Fort Collins	Classical	K-9
AXIS International Academy	Fort Collins	Language Immersion	PK-5
Caprock Academy	Grand Junction	Classical	K-12
Colorado Early Colleges Aurora	Aurora	Early College	9-12
Colorado Early Colleges Colorado Springs	Colorado Springs	Early College	6-12
Colorado Early Colleges Douglas County	Parker/Castle Rock/Inverness	Early College	9-12
Colorado Early Colleges Fort Collins	Fort Collins	Early College	6-12
Colorado Early Colleges West	Fort Collins	Early College	6-8
Colorado Early Colleges Windsor	Windsor	Early College	6-12
Colorado International Language Academy	Colorado Springs	Language Immersion	K-5
Colorado Military Academy	Colorado Springs	Military Academy	PK-12
Colorado Springs Charter Academy	Colorado Springs	Core Knowledge	K-8
Community Leadership Academy	Commerce City	Core Knowledge	PK-5
Coperni 2	Colorado Springs	Personalized Learning	K-8
Coperni 3	Colorado Springs	Personalized Learning	K-8
Crown Pointe Academy	Westminster	Core Knowledge	K-8
Early College of Arvada	Arvada	Early College	6-12
Global Village Academy North	Northglenn	Language Immersion	K-8
Golden View Classical Academy	Golden	Classical	K-12
High Point Academy	Aurora	Wellness	PK-8
James Irwin Charter Academy	Colorado Springs	Core Knowledge	K-5
Kwiyagat Community Academy	Towaoc	Indigenously Inspired PBL	K-1
Montessori del Mundo	Aurora	Dual-Language Montessori	PK-6
Monument View Montessori	Fruita	Montessori	PK-5
Mountain Middle School	Durango	Project-based Learning	4-8
Mountain Song Community School	Colorado Springs	Waldorf	K-8
New Legacy Charter School	Aurora	Alternative Education Campus	9-12
Ricardo Flores Magon Academy	Westminster	College Prep	K-8
Ross Montessori School	Carbondale	Montessori	K-8
Salida Montessori Charter School	Salida	Montessori	PK-8
Steamboat Montessori	Steamboat Springs	Montessori	PK-6
Stone Creek Charter School	Avon/Gypsum	Core Knowledge	K-8
The Academy of Charter Schools	Westminster	College Prep	PK-12
The New America School Aurora	Aurora	Alternative Education Campus	9-12
The Pinnacle Charter School	Federal Heights	Core Knowledge	K-12
Thomas MacLaren School	Colorado Springs	College Prep	K-12
Two Rivers Community School	Glenwood Springs	Place-based	K-8
Victory Prep Academy Middle	Commerce City	Core Knowledge	6-8
Victory Prep Academy High	Commerce City	Core Knowledge	9-12

Kwiyagat Community Academy, the first charter school in Colorado located on a reservation, opened its doors in August 2021.



Kwiyagat Community Academy, Towaoc

AUTHORIZATION UPDATES

CSI's portfolio of schools is dynamic. Schools can be added to the CSI portfolio through the approval of new schools, the expansion of existing CSI schools, or from the approval of an existing charter school to transfer from a district authorizer to CSI. Schools can also transfer out of CSI or be closed due to poor academic, financial, or operational performance.

The CSI portfolio saw several changes in the 2021-22 school year:

2

Two new schools will open in the fall of 2022: Prospect Academy and Colorado Early Colleges Online Campus.

2

Two schools left the CSI portfolio at the end of the 2021-22 school year: Colorado Early Colleges West closed and Two Rivers Community School transferred to its geographic district.

8

Eight charter schools were renewed for varying contract term lengths.

6

Six charter schools expanded to offer single district online programs.



Who We Serve

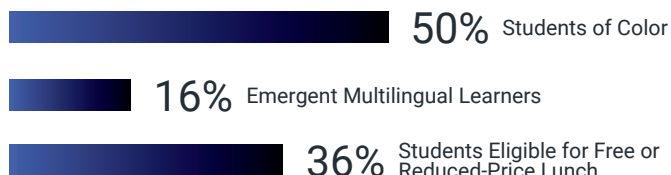
CSI is committed to fostering a portfolio of high-quality public school options that best meet the needs of all students. CSI schools offer unique educational models to students across the state of Colorado.



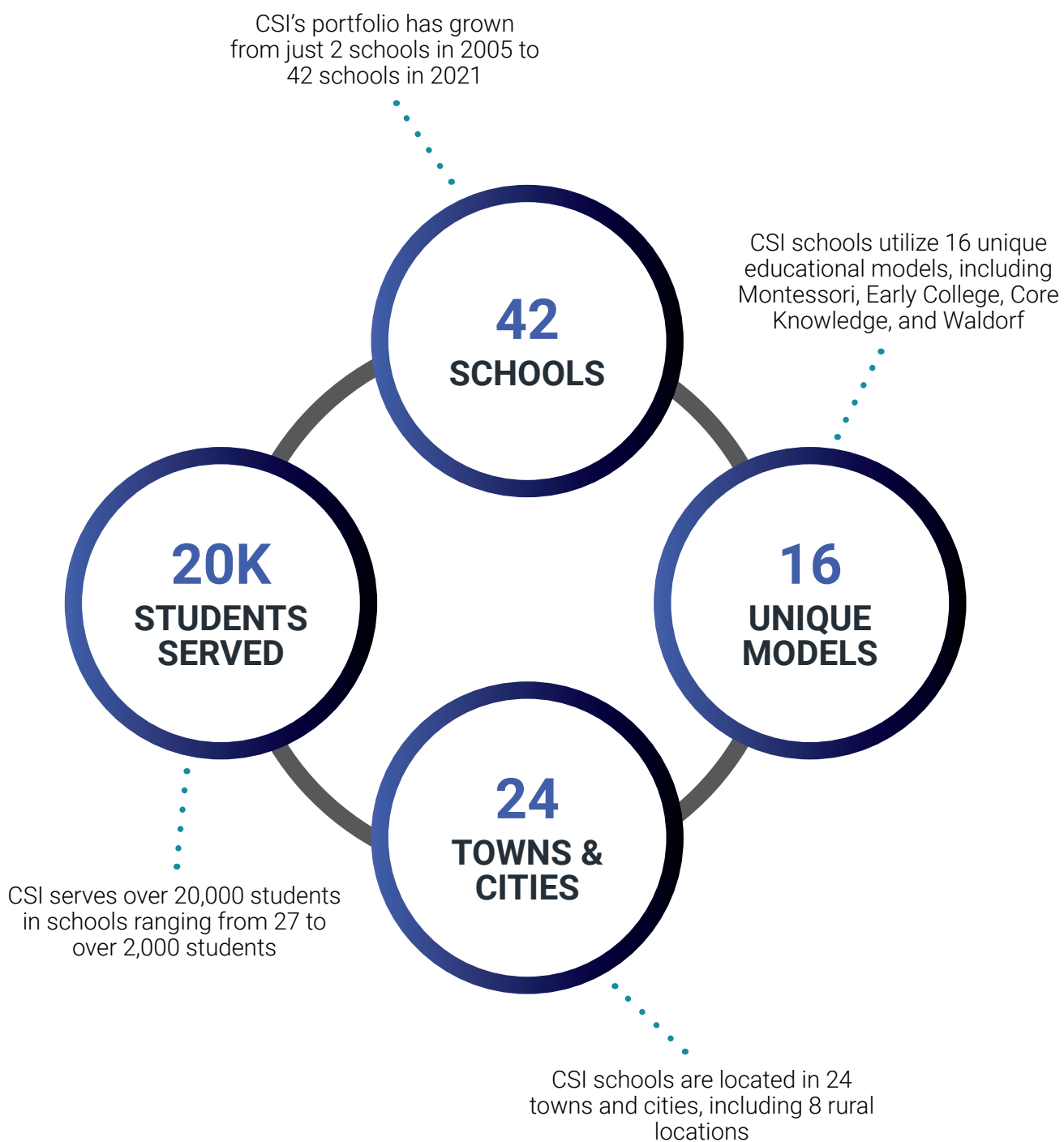
50% PK-5 students

22% 6-8 students

28% 9-12 students



CSI's portfolio remains comparable to the state in service to students of color, Emergent Multilingual Learners, and students with 504 plans. Additionally, CSI's service to students with IEPs continues to trend upwards.



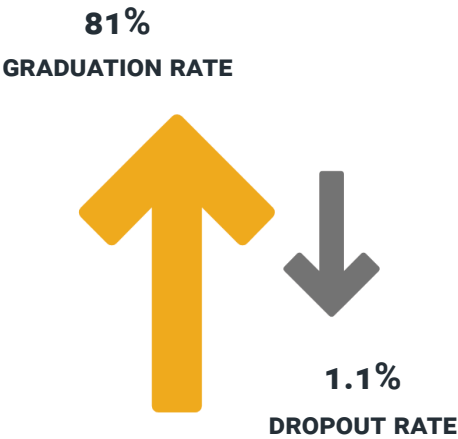
Portfolio Performance

CSI schools' performance in the 2021-22 school year earned CSI a Performance rating from the Colorado Department of Education.

GRADUATION & DROPOUT RATES

CSI's graduation rate continues to increase. CSI's portfolio-wide graduation rate has increased to 81% and all reported subgroups have seen steady increases as well.

CSI's dropout rate continues to decrease. CSI had a 1.1% dropout rate at the end of the 2020-21 school year with all reported subgroups also seeing decreases in dropout rates from the prior year.



ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Of 119+ districts with reportable data for the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state expectations in 2021-22, CSI high schools ranked:



Thomas MacLaren School, Colorado Springs

Operational & Financial Performance

1.9%

OPERATIONS

While statutorily required to withhold 3% of per pupil revenue for operations, CSI **operated at a lean 1.9%** in 2021-22.

\$82

REBATE TO SCHOOLS

CSI was able to provide its schools a rebate of **\$82 per pupil** at the end of the 2021-22 school year, for a **total of \$1.6M**.

86

GRANTS

CSI schools earned **86 competitive grants totaling over \$10.2M**. Awards included funding for computer science, early literacy, school bullying prevention, and more.

LEGISLATIVE WINS

CSI had notable wins in the 2022 legislative session:

- ✓ Mill Levy Override Equalization funding was brought a step closer to equity with an additional \$8 million added to the Fund.
- ✓ \$375,000 was allocated to support Prospect Academy, a new school offering an innovative model for students who learn differently.



AXIS International Academy, Fort Collins

REIMAGINING

In the 2021-22 school year, CSI and CSI schools reimagined ways to best serve all students.

We reimagined how to: expand access, advocate effectively, create pathways, support our schools, and rethink our role.

REIMAGINING

How We Expand Access



UNIVERSAL PRE-K

When legislation for universal, voluntary preschool (UPK) for all 4 year olds passed, CSI responded. CSI staff actively participated in stakeholder groups during the development of the Colorado Department of Early Childhood. During the summer and fall of 2021, CSI staff contributed to setting recommendations for Universal Preschool to ensure the inclusion of CSI schools.

Additionally, CSI secured a position on the Advisory Board for the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools' Early Childhood Education Community of Practice to bring national level best practices into support efforts.

CSI staff are working closely with existing CSI preschools to ensure they are included in their community plans and are leading a cohort of CSI schools planning to open preschools in the future.



FOOD SERVICES

Charter schools face many challenges when working to provide nutritional, affordable meals to students. Despite these challenges, the CSI School Food Authority (SFA) and its schools continue to find innovative ways to make healthy meals available for students.

In its second year of operation, the CSI SFA worked with 22 charter school buildings. CSI's School Nutrition Program Manager supports schools in determining the options available based on the resources they have (staffing, facilities, local vendors) and their specific goals (local sourcing, culturally relevant menus, scratch cooking).

For example, Kwiyyagat Community Academy in Towaoc worked with community partners to develop culturally relevant menu items, and Community Leadership Academy in Commerce City participated in a "Harvest of the Month" program.



POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

The 2021 passage of the Successful High School Transitions bill expanded flexibility for high school students to access postsecondary education and careers by introducing the Path4Ward grant. Path4Ward allows learners from low-income backgrounds who complete high school graduation requirements early to continue their education by providing those students a scholarship. This can be used for postsecondary education or workforce training in what would have been their fourth year of high school.

The Colorado Early Colleges Network and The Academy of Charter Schools have joined the Path4ward program. Students on track to graduate early will receive enhanced college and career exploration services, scholarship money to help pay for postsecondary training and education, and access to funding for transportation to these postsecondary opportunities.

REIMAGINING Advocacy

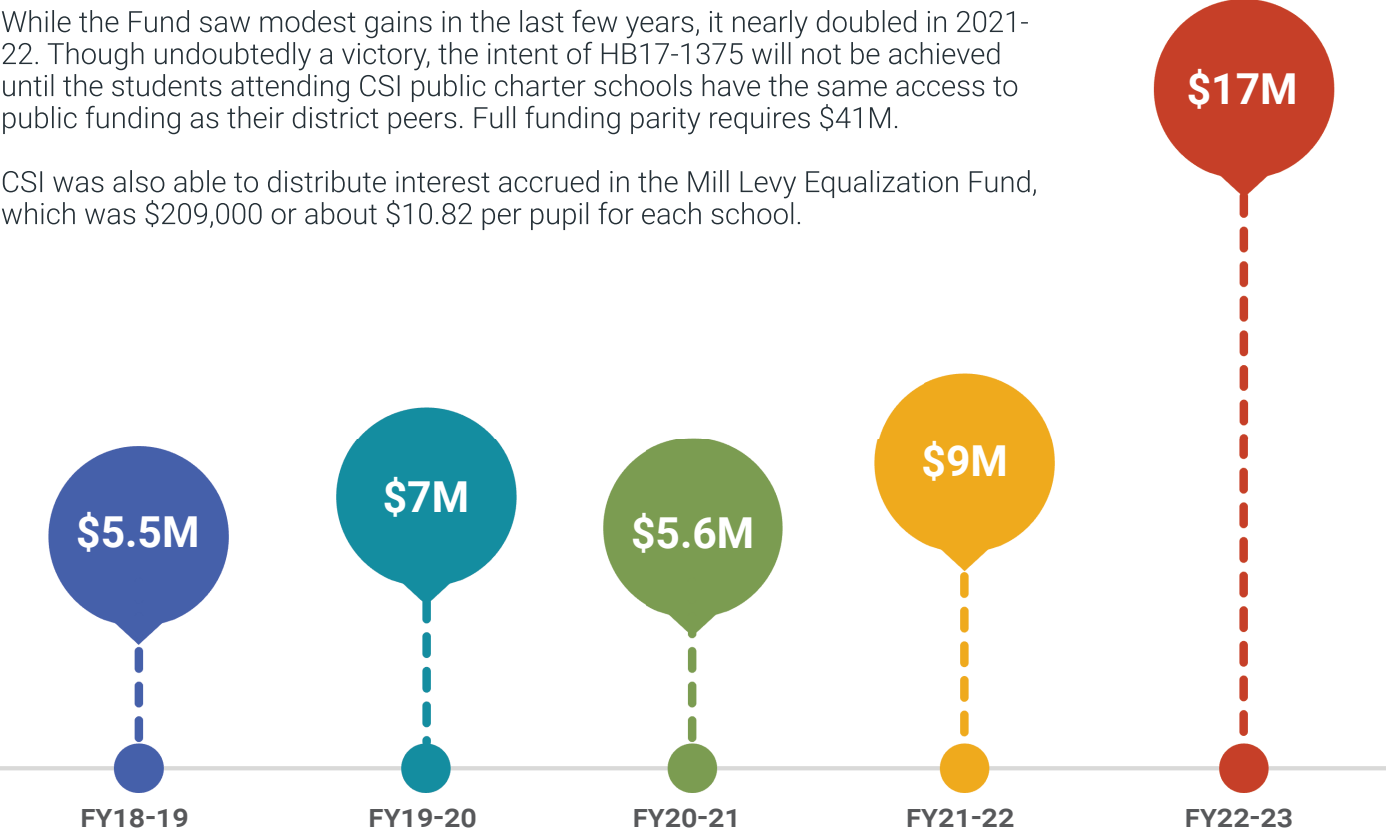
CSI MILL LEVY EQUALIZATION FUND

In recognition that districts should allocate resources equitably to all students, regardless of the type of public school the student is enrolled in, the General Assembly passed HB17-1375. The law requires school districts to distribute at least 95% of funding received from local property taxes generated by Mill Levy Overrides (MLO) on an equal per pupil basis to all of its public schools, including district charter schools.

Recognizing that CSI schools have no access to local tax revenue, HB17-1375 created the Mill Levy Equalization Fund. It is at the legislature's discretion to allocate money to the Fund each year.

While the Fund saw modest gains in the last few years, it nearly doubled in 2021-22. Though undoubtedly a victory, the intent of HB17-1375 will not be achieved until the students attending CSI public charter schools have the same access to public funding as their district peers. Full funding parity requires \$41M.

CSI was also able to distribute interest accrued in the Mill Levy Equalization Fund, which was \$209,000 or about \$10.82 per pupil for each school.



STATE MATCH FOR MILL LEVY OVERRIDE

SB22-202 provided a state matching fund to address inequities created by Colorado's uneven mill levy override. This bill requires distribution of state funds to match local money raised through mill levy overrides raised by eligible school districts. Importantly, this bill includes the distribution of funds to CSI schools located in eligible districts.



"All kids [and] all families are different. We want to make sure that kids have access to something they're passionate about, excited about – that their school fits their needs."

- Dr. Katy Anthes,
Commissioner
of Education

"A SCHOOL FOR EVERY KID"

CSI partnered with Ready Colorado to tell the story of four CSI schools and the importance of funding equity through film. In the fall of 2021, the film "A School for Every Kid" was shared with a community of CSI school representatives, education reform partners, and state decision makers. The Commissioner of Education gave a keynote highlighting the importance of school choice.

Following the film screening was a panel facilitated by Colorado League of Charter Schools President Dan Schaller, joined by CSI Executive Director Dr. Terry Croy Lewis and leadership from each of the four schools represented in the video: New Legacy Charter School (Aurora), New America School – Aurora, Thomas MacLaren School (Colorado Springs), and Kwiayagat Community Academy (Towaoc). They each shared why families choose their school, what makes their school unique, and the importance of having access to equitable resources.



Colorado Early Colleges, Castle Rock

REIMAGINING Pathways

ALIGNMENT OF CHARTER APPLICATIONS

CSI staff embarked on a project to rethink, revise, and align the application process for new, transfer, and expansion schools. CSI also updated its homeschool application. Through this project, CSI has worked to prioritize access and equity and reduce the administrative burden by streamlining content and processes.

EXPANDING ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES

This school year, CSI and CSI schools accessed additional pathways for serving their communities in online formats.

Blended Learning and Online Course Flexibilities

CDE updated its guidance on blended learning and online courses in 2021-22. CDE offered additional flexibility for schools with learning models that didn't fit within the state's new parameters. Several CSI schools took advantage of this opportunity to continue providing and piloting innovative offerings for over 1,000 students in their school communities while also supporting the state in better understanding the variety of learning models that are being implemented.

Single District Online Programs

Several CSI schools operated single-district online programs to serve students in a fully-online format. In 2021-22, 110 students accessed full online programming through CSI single-district online programs.

Multi-District Online School

CSI reviewed an expansion application for a multi-district online school. This was unanimously approved by the State Board of Education to begin operation in the 2022-23 school year.

REIMAGINING School Supports

MENTAL HEALTH

In response to the significant and growing needs identified by schools, CSI created the Mental Health Specialist position in 2021-22. Over this year, the following mental health supports have been developed for CSI schools:



On Demand Mental Health Consultation, including Crisis Consultation & Restorative Practices



Mental Health resource website



CSI Mental Health Listserv



Weekly Mental Health Cohort Meetings for Mental Health Staff at CSI Schools



A Mental Health Toolkit, a Mental Health Program Plan, & a Wellness Curriculum



On Demand Trainings: Suicide & Threat Assessment, Safe2Tell, & more

Additionally, through partnerships with graduate programs across the state and SparkHealthCorps, CSI placed 7 mental health interns at schools in 2021-22, and is looking to place at least 20 in 2022-23.

EQUITY SCREENER

CSI developed its Equity Screener and Tiers of Support to both assess and support schools in providing equal access and quality programs to students qualifying for specialized supports. Schools can use this tool to identify and prioritize initiatives that are aligned with their mission, values, and improvement planning efforts.

The rollout of the updated CSI Equity Screener during the 2021-22 school year included numerous meetings with school leadership teams as well as personalized action planning, on-site professional development offerings, crosswalk documents to aid in the identification and support of dual-identified students, and 1:1 coaching.

"We have had the opportunity to work with many authorizers but admire CSI's commitment to leveraging data to inform their practices."

Lauren Morando Rhim, Executive Director and Co-Founder, Center for Learning Equity

REIMAGINING Our Role

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN CHARTER SCHOOLS

CSI has prioritized programming and supports for special education for a good part of the last decade.

This past year, CSI partnered with the Colorado League of Charter Schools and other education reform partners to support legislation that would increase pathways for charter schools to better serve students with special needs.

Included in this legislation was the opportunity for district charter schools to join CSI's Administrative Unit for the provision of special education.

This legislation also included \$375,000 of Year 1 funding for Prospect Academy, the first charter school in the state that has a particular focus on supporting all learners, including those with diagnosed learning differences such as autism, ADHD, and dyslexia.

This historic legislation was passed unanimously out of the Senate.

CSI SPECIAL EDUCATION INITIATIVES OVER TIME



CSI Board Prioritization of Service to At-Risk



Commissioning of Special Education Report



Development of Screener and Tiered Supports



Greater Capacity Building of Special Education Staff



Expansion of Special Education Financial Resources



CSI as Alternative Administrative Unit for SPED



Golden View Classical Academy, Golden

Looking Ahead

PARTNERSHIPS

CSI will continue to cultivate partnerships with fellow authorizers, school districts, and other education organizations to expand access to innovative opportunities for students attending CSI schools.

CAPACITY BUILDING

CSI will focus efforts on how to best support our schools in building capacity while also honoring school autonomy. CSI will also invest in capacity-building efforts within its own staff.

"I am so excited to see where the next few years take CSI and our schools. I have no doubt we will continue to rise to challenges and reimagine public education."

Dr. Terry Croy Lewis, CSI Executive Director

Our Board

CSI is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Governor of Colorado and the Commissioner of Education. The CSI Board is statutorily required to be mission-driven and politically balanced, which ensures steady leadership of our organization and stable oversight of our schools.



JILL ANSCHUTZ
BOARD CHAIR



LUKE RAGLAND*
VICE CHAIR



ERIC LERUM
SECRETARY



TOM BRINEGAR*
TREASURER



TAMARA OLSON
BOARD MEMBER



BRENDA DICKHONER
BOARD MEMBER



MARIBEL OBRIQUE
BOARD MEMBER



NICHOLAS MARTINEZ
BOARD MEMBER



KENNY SMITH
BOARD MEMBER

*Ross Izard and Andrew Karow have been appointed to fill the seats formerly held by Luke Ragland and Tom Brinegar (whose terms ended July 1, 2022).

Our Team

CSI's team of experienced educational professionals are partners in the ongoing success of our charter schools. We understand the challenges that charter public schools face and hold schools accountable for the academic achievement of their students and financial and organizational success.

Executive Director

Dr. Terry Croy Lewis

Communications, Data Submissions, & HR/Office Team

Janet Dinnen, Chief of Staff
Amanda Oberg, Communications Manager & Board Liaison
Raena Vigil, Digital Communications Coordinator
Julie Eddy, Data Manager
Ryan Hartung, Data Specialist
Jessica Tribbett, Data Specialist
Allegra Wenger, Human Resources Manager
Cherish Trammell, Office Administrator

Evaluation, Accountability, & School Improvement Team

Ryan Marks, Director of Evaluation, Accountability, & School Improvement
Jessica Welch, Improvement & Implementation Specialist
Collin Phillips, Performance & Accountability Analyst
Kali Winn, Assessment Coordinator

Finance & Operations Team

Andi Denton, Director of Finance & Operations
David Sever, Controller*
Ilene Agustin, School Nutrition Program Manager
Marcie Robidart, Grants Fiscal & Accounting Manager
Emma Post, Grants & Accounting Technician
Shawn Wilkens, Grants & Accounting Technician
Melissa Allen, Staff Accountant

Legal & Policy Team

Anastasia Hawkins, Director of Governance
Stephanie Aragon, Director of Policy

Student Services & Professional Learning Team

Clare Vickland, Director of Student Services & Professional Learning*
Kimberly Caplan, Gifted Education & Professional Learning Manager
Michael McManus, Career Pathways & School Programs Coordinator
Betsy Basch, Mental Health Program Specialist
Brooke Frarck, School Improvement & Equity Specialist
Willyn Webb, Early Childhood & School Support Specialist
Matt Hudson, Director of Special Education
Donna Day, Special Education Coordinator
Josh Nichols, Special Education Coordinator
Brian Printz, Special Education Coordinator
Nick Stachokus, Special Education Coordinator

*CSI bid farewell to David Sever and Clare Vickland as they continued on in their professional journeys.

Front cover photo: Pinnacle Charter School, Federal Heights
Back cover photo: Colorado Early Colleges, Aurora



COLORADO
CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE

Expanding Frontiers in Public Education

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