

CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE ACCREDITATION PLAN 2006-2008

MISSION STATEMENT

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 on a par with the highest performing schools, including particularly schools for at-risk students.

1. CHARTER SHOOOL INSTITUTE PROFILE

The Charter School Institute was created by the legislature in 2004 as an independent agency within the Department of Education. The Institute is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors; seven members are appointed by the Governor, two by the Commissioner of Education. The original board members were appointed in September 2004.

Twelve applications were submitted in January, 2005 for schools to open in the fall of 2005. Two of those applications were approved: Colorado Springs Charter Academy, a Core Knowledge K-6 school in Colorado Springs; and Ross Montessori School, a K-6 Montessori school in Carbondale. Those schools opened in August, 2005, with a total enrollment of 377 students K-6.

Five additional charters were approved in 2006. Pinnacle Charter School (K-12) transferred from Adams 12. New schools included the Northern Colorado Academy of Arts and Knowledge (NCAAK) (K-8 (Mosaica) in Fort Collins, Academy at Highpoint (K-8, Core Knowledge) in Brighton school district but located near DIA, Stone Creek (K-8, Core Knowledge) in Avon (Eagle County), and Colorado Distance and Electronic Learning Academy (CDELA), a K-12 online school headquartered in Brighton. The Institute will thus oversee at least seven schools and around 2700 students for the 2006-2007 school year.

Four additional schools are scheduled to open for the 2007-2008 school year: Cesar Chavez Colorado Springs Central (K-2), Colorado Springs Early Colleges (9-12 Early College model), Caprock Academy (K-8 Core Knowledge with a classical emphasis) in Grand Junction, and Ricardo Flores Magon Academy in Adams 50 (K-8 Core Knowledge) targeting low-income minority students. In addition, 21st Century Charter School will transfer from Colorado Springs D-11 to the Institute.

The Institute charter schools exhibit a variety of educational philosophies, structures, and pedagogical approaches, but all are committed to high academic achievement for all of their students.

The Charter School Institute has a staff of 5.5 FTE, with an additional 1.5 FTE planned to be added before the end of December, 2007. Staff positions include the Executive Director, a

Director and Assistant Director of Exceptional Student Services, Director of Fiscal Services, Director of Assessment and Accountability, and Office Administrator. This staff will serve a student population (preschool through twelfth grade) of approximately 4000. The Institute serves a culturally, economically, and geographically diverse student population, with schools from Grand Junction to Fort Collins to Colorado Springs.

2. CONTENT STANDARDS ADOPTION AND ACHIEVEMENT PERFORMANCE LEVELS

Training on the use and assessment of content standards is consistently reinforced. At present, the standards and benchmarks in Language Arts and Mathematics are reviewed and refined annually to ensure they remain rigorous enough to enable the students within Institute charter schools to reach the high achievement goals, the Colorado Commission for Higher Education (CCHE) pre-colligate curriculum, and meet or exceed Colorado model content area standards.

Content Standards 2.01(4)(a), 2.01(4)(e)

Each Institute charter school is required to adopt content standards that meet or exceed the Colorado Model Content Standards, in a manner consistent with that required of school districts (22-30.5-505 (8) C.R.S.). A charter applicant is required to show, in their application, how their proposed curriculum aligns with the Model Content Standards. Once the school is established and test data is available, that alignment review is extended down to the level of classroom instruction, and regularly reinforced through the use of mentoring and staff development training.

Student Progress Assessments 2.01(4)(c), 2.01(4)(d)

The Colorado Student Assessment in reading, writing, math and science is administered annually at all schools. Scores are analyzed individually to assess individual student achievement in reading, writing, math and science in grades three through ten and to identify individual strengths and weaknesses in those subject areas. CSAP performance is also analyzed individually using a longitudinal growth model to monitor individual student growth year to year.

Throughout the year, student progress toward achieving the standards is measured two to four times a year using assessments such as the NWEA MAP or Scantron, and local teacher-developed assessments, all of which are aligned to the Colorado standards. The specific assessments and frequency of use is specified in each Institute Charter school's application and contract.

Institute charter schools use a variety of early reading assessments, including DIBELS and DRA. All schools will transition to using DIBELS for Read-to-Achieve and DRA2, DIBELS, and/or PALS for CBLA assessments in the 2007-2008 school year to comply with the recent action by the State Board of Education.

3. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, 2.01(4)(f)

Goal I: To Increase the Levels of Achievement for All Students (2.01(4)(b))

Objective 1:

To steadily and consistently increase levels of achievement in reading, writing, math and science for all students as measured by state assessments.

A. Reduce to 10% or less the percentage of students, who have attended the same Institute charter school for two years or more, rated “Unsatisfactory” at all grade levels on the Colorado Student Assessments.

1. **Annual Benchmark** – Reduce by 40% the number of students scoring unsatisfactory in reading, writing, or mathematics each year.

B. Increase the number of students in Institute charter schools achieving at a “Proficient” level or higher.

At least 85% of students attending the same Institute charter school for three years or more will score proficient or advanced on the reading, writing, and mathematics CSAP.

1. **Annual Benchmark** – At least 10% of the students in Institute charter schools rated Unsatisfactory or Partially Proficient on Colorado Student Assessments in reading, writing, or math the previous year will score “Proficient” or “Advanced” the next year

C. Increase the number of students in Institute charter schools achieving at an “Advanced” level.

1. **Annual Benchmark** – Increase by 5% annually the aggregate number of students within Institute charter schools rated “Advanced” on Colorado Student Assessments in reading, writing, and math.

Objective 2:

To increase the number of students completing high school on time and graduating fully prepared for post-secondary success.

A. Achieve and then maintain an overall four-year graduation rate of 90%.

CSI has one high school, which is completing its first year as an Institute charter school. An Early College model high school will be added in the 2007-2008 school year. Baseline graduation rate data from the 06-07 school year will be used to set specific goals and annual benchmarks for future years.

Objective 3:

To increase annually the level of student achievement on local assessments in content standard areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign languages, geography, music, physical education, and art.

A. Increase the number of students achieving at or above grade level as measured by locally administered assessments such as NWEA MAPS and Scantron.

1. **Annual Benchmark** – Increase the number of students at each school beginning at grade level who demonstrate at least a year’s growth on locally administered assessments.

2. **Annual Benchmark** – Increase the number of students at each school beginning below grade level who demonstrate more than one year's growth on locally administered assessments.

B. Increase the number of students successfully obtaining a passing grade as reported on student progress reports and student report cards.

1. **Annual Benchmark** – Increase annually the number of students at each school receiving a passing grade on course and teacher assessments in civics, economics, foreign languages, geography, and history.
2. **Annual Benchmark** – Increase annually the number of students at each school successfully participating in school and course performances in physical education, and the arts.

Objective 4:

To annually increase the number of children entering Kindergarten and third grade who are academically prepared for those milestones.

A. Increase the number of low-income pre-school/kindergarten students served by Institute charter schools.

1. **Annual Benchmark** – Implement Colorado Preschool/Kindergarten program at the Institute level and get CPKP slots allocated to Institute charter schools for the 2008-2009 school year.
2. **Annual Benchmark** – Increase annually the number of CPKP slots allocated to Institute charter schools.

B. Increase the student achievement levels for third grade reading.

At least 85% of students attending the same Institute charter school for three years or more will score proficient or advanced on the third grade reading CSAP

1. **Annual Benchmark** – Increase by at least 10% the number of students at grade level on reading skills at each grade, as measured by the CBLA assessments.

Goal II: To Eliminate Achievement Gaps Between Subgroups of Students

Objective 1:

To raise the percent of students in each subgroup performing at Proficient or Advanced on the Reading CSAP to within 10% of the highest achieving subgroup.

Annual Benchmark – Reduce the gap in percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced between the highest and lowest achieving subgroups by 30%.

Objective 2:

To raise the percent of students in each subgroup performing at Proficient or Advanced on the Math CSAP to within 10% of the highest achieving subgroup.

Annual Benchmark – Reduce the gap in percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced between the highest and lowest achieving subgroups by 30%.

Objective 3:

To raise the percent of students in each subgroup performing at Proficient or Advanced on the Science CSAP to within 10% of the highest achieving subgroup.

Annual Benchmark – Reduce the gap in percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced between the highest and lowest achieving subgroups by 30%.

4. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

CSAP scores are analyzed individually to assess individual student achievement in reading, writing, math and science in grades three through ten and to identify individual strengths and weaknesses in those subject areas. CSAP performance is also analyzed individually using a longitudinal growth model to monitor individual student growth year to year.

CSAP performance is also analyzed annually and using a longitudinal growth model at the classroom and school level. This allows the identification of instructional strengths and weaknesses at each of those levels. Coordinated staff training, professional development, and school-wide reviews of the curriculum follow in order to facilitate the instructional or curricular changes needed to respond to the identified weak areas.

Analyses similar to those performed on CSAP data, though much more frequent, are performed at the individual, classroom, and school level on the results of the local assessments. Working in teams to review and analyze the data allows staff members to identify and implement instructional strategies targeted at improving individual student performance, as well as identifying areas of strength and weakness in instruction in individual classrooms, which may be unique to a particular teacher, and throughout the school, which may indicate a strength or weakness of the curriculum. Professional development is then planned to address those areas needing improvement and to share areas of strength with the rest of the staff.

5. ANNUAL SCHOOL REVIEWS AND ACCREDITATION 2.01(4)(g)

Institute charter schools are governed by a local school governing board and operated under a contract between the Institute and the school governing board. The charter application is incorporated into the contract by reference. Together the application and contract serve as the school accreditation contract.

The accreditation process for Institute charter schools is encompassed in the Institute's accountability and review process designed to lead to a rational and defensible position on renewal at the end of the school's contract (every three or five years). It is intended to be an interactive process that focuses on achieving proficient or advanced performance for all students,

improving financial accountability, and improving the governance and administration of the school.

Because each Institute charter school is independent and unique, accreditation activities around each school will be tailored to that school's unique circumstances and needs. The general process, however, includes regular visits by Institute staff during the school year, monthly and quarterly reports to the Institute on academic and financial performance, a more formal and rigorous annual visit and accountability report, and, if required, an intensive inspection and review by an independent team.

Annual school reviews will also include a review of the school emergency and safety plans. All schools will have Emergency Response Plans readily available in each classroom and office in the school. School staff will be trained in emergency responses and the entire school will participate in emergency drills throughout the year.

6. RECOGNITION OF HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOLS 2.01(4)(h)

The Institute identifies high performing schools through its annual cycle of review. Schools may be recognized as high performing because of consistent high student achievement or because of consistent and exemplary improvements in student achievement. However, those improvement must be substantial enough to lead to high student achievement overall within a three year period to qualify the school as high performing. High performing schools are identified based on a body of evidence, including CSAP scores, content standards, results of other assessments, and student growth measures.

7. PROCEDURES FOR PLACING SCHOOLS ON CORRECTIVE ACTION CYCLES 2.01(4)(i)

The Institute identifies schools in need of corrective action through its accreditation and renewal review process described above. Corrective actions may be prescribed to correct deficiencies in academic performance, financial performance or management, or governance. The Institute will provide interventions whenever circumstances call for them, not just on an annual review cycle, but the effectiveness of those interventions and corrective actions will be assessed primarily as part of the annual review.

Institute charter schools under corrective action will remain accredited, but may, by board action, be placed on Accreditation Watch or Accreditation Probation while under corrective action. A school will be placed on Accreditation Watch if the corrective action has not resulted in at least some improvement by the beginning of the following school year, or if the improvement is deemed insufficient by the Institute board. If the school is demonstrating insufficient improvement the second year, or if additional areas of improvement have been identified, the school may be placed on Accreditation Probation. It is likely that a school's charter will be revoked for cause before a school loses its accreditation. Procedures for revoking a charter are included in the board's operating procedures and rules.

8. GOALS AND PROCESS FOR INFORMING AND INVOLVING PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Institute charter schools are required to demonstrate a high level of parent and community support during the application cycle in order for the application to be approved and the charter issued. The charter school governing boards typically include parents and community members as board members. As schools of choice, they must maintain that level of support and involvement in order to retain their charter. By their very nature as schools of choice, parent involvement tends to be high. Other opportunities for parent involvement include the school accountability committee, Parent-Teacher Organization, fundraising committees, and other committees and working groups that may be formed throughout the year.

9. EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION LITERACY, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS, AND CONTEXTUAL LEARNING 2.02(1), 2.02(2), 2.02(4)

The Institute's Educational Technology and Information Literacy plan is under development and will be submitted to CDE by the end of FY07. The plan will address all of the required elements. Information literacy and educational technology are interwoven throughout the plan; goals, responsibilities, and collaboration are significant components. The plan includes community partnerships as well as both information and literacy standards. The Institute will make ongoing professional development available to Institute charter school staff throughout each year. Individual Institute charter schools will also develop and implement professional development plans appropriate for their school instructional model and grade configuration.

The Institute will support Institute charter schools in recruiting and retaining teachers by participating in teacher job fairs around the state, making access to the Pikes Peak BOCES Teacher in Residence Program available to Institute charter schools, liaisons with Colorado teacher education programs, and the Colorado League of Charter Schools.

10. Accreditation Indicator Reporting (Annual Accountability Report) 3.00

School Accountability Reports (SAR's) are distributed by individual schools by a variety of methods. Additionally, School Accountability Reports are reported to the Institute Board at the first meeting after they are released. Later, after schools have had a chance to analyze the data, each school is given an opportunity to present the results of that analysis, including identified strengths and weaknesses of the instructional program and their plans to improve those areas of weakness, to the Institute board. Those plans then become part of the school improvement plans for the following year.

11. Assurance Statements

The Charter School Institute makes the following assurances:

1. All Institute charter schools will participate in state assessments.
2. All Institute charter schools, and the Institute itself, are in compliance with budgeting, accounting, and reporting requirements set forth in articles 44 and 45 of title 22.

3. Adequate policies are in place and being implemented at the Institute and at each Institute charter school (or, for new schools, are being developed) to carry out state statutes, rules and regulations.
4. Statutory requirements for displaying the flag are implemented at each Institute charter school.
5. Principal professional development needs are identified and addressed as part of the annual school review process.

Approved by the Charter School Institute Board of Directors on July 17, 2007.

Alex Medler, President

Randy DeHoff, Executive Director