What is a Charter Authorizer?

Charter schools are accountable to their charter authorizer for meeting the local, state, and federal requirements. An authorizer is an entity approved by the state legislature to 1) open new charter schools 2) monitor the performance of existing charter schools, and 3) close failing schools.

Fundamental principles of charter authorizing include:

✓ **Access** to high-quality school options for all students

✓ **Autonomy** for schools to innovate an education to best meet the needs of their students
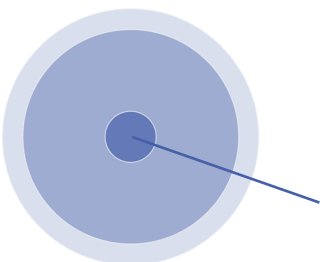
✓ **Accountability** for schools in meeting high expectations and fulfilling obligations to students, parents, and taxpayers

Colorado Charter Authorizers

In Colorado, charter schools can be authorized by school districts or the Charter School Institute (CSI), which is the only statewide authorizer in Colorado.

Exclusive Chartering Authority

Districts can be granted Exclusive Chartering Authority (ECA) by the State Board of Education. Currently, 170 districts have ECA, and 45 of those districts authorize one or more charter schools. CSI authorizes charter schools 1) in districts that do not retain ECA and 2) in districts that retain ECA and either release the charter to CSI or waive ECA.

178 school districts exist in Colorado

170 school districts retain exclusive chartering authority

45 school districts authorize one or more charter schools

The CSI Portfolio of Schools

CSI annually releases applications for new schools, existing charters seeking to transfer authorization to CSI, as well as expansions, replications, and renewals of existing CSI schools.

Applicants with the option to apply to CSI undergo a rigorous application review.

47%
of new school applications are approved by the CSI Board

High Quality Authorizing

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 academic, financial, and organizational performance.