

For Immediate Release

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Charter School Approved to Open on Ute Mountain Ute Reservation

DENVER, CO (October 27, 2020) – During its October 27th board meeting, the [Colorado Charter School Institute](http://www.csi.state.co.us) (CSI) Board of Directors unanimously approved the charter school application for Kwiyaqat Community Academy (KCA).

As a tuition-free public school, KCA seeks to offer an educational program that focuses on academics, character, well-being, and community involvement while incorporating the Ute Mountain Ute culture and language. The charter school intends to open in Towaoc in the fall of 2021 serving children in Kindergarten and first grade and building out to serve grades K-5.

Kwiyaqat Community Academy will be the first charter school to be located on a Native American reservation in the state of Colorado. The charter applicant team has been working closely with the local community as well as the [Native American Community Academy](http://www.naca.org) (NACA) Inspired Schools Network in the design of the school, pulling on best practices and knowledge from existing schools that serve indigenous communities.

Sherrell Lang, NACA Inspired Schools Fellow and member of the KCA Applicant Team, shares: “The Kwiyaqat Community Academy will honor our children, families and strengthen our community by creating an opportunity where Nuchiu culture will empower all aspects of life.”

The CSI Review Team put forth a recommendation to the CSI Board to approve the charter application following a review of the application, an interview with members of the applicant team, a community meeting held virtually due to COVID-19, and a presentation to the CSI Board. Among other things, the recommendation report cited a clear plan for the education, finances, and operations, as well as strong evidence of need, support, and involvement in the design of the proposed school.

As Betty Howe, Ute Mountain Ute Elder, shares: “Past generations had to block their way of life, their Native way of life, and learn a new way of life and now [young people] are coming back and asking more about the old ways.”

Executive Director of the Colorado Charter School Institute, Dr. Terry Croy Lewis, shares: “We are incredibly excited to begin this unique partnership with Kwiyaqat Community Academy.”

Once the school fulfills contract conditions and a contract is executed between the school and the CSI Board of Directors, the school team will participate in the Year 0 process with CSI staff—a process developed to monitor and support new schools as they prepare for opening.

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About the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI)

CSI is a statewide charter public school authorizer in Colorado, currently authorizing 42 schools from Durango to Steamboat Springs, Grand Junction to Colorado Springs and serving over 18,000 PK-12 students. As a charter authorizer, CSI focuses on the outputs—that is, the quantitative evaluation of academic, organizational, and financial school performance—providing schools the flexibility to focus on and make decisions about inputs like instructional strategies, educational programming, internal assessment system, facility selection, and staffing. The focus on outcomes rather than processes allows CSI to be neutral on educational model and maintain a diverse portfolio of school models, which include Classical, Early College, Alternative, and Montessori models. Learn more at www.csi.state.co.us and follow CSI on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).