

For Immediate Release

November 13, 2020

Press Contact

Amanda Oberg
Communications Coordinator
720-985-1481
amandaoberg@csi.state.co.us

Durango Bonds Approved with Funding for CSI Charter Schools

Durango, CO (November 13, 2020) – [Ballot Issue 4A](#), which proposed \$90 million in new bonds to “help create safer and more innovative schools” [was approved](#) by 72% of Durango voters last week.

Making History

Two charter schools authorized by the [Colorado Charter School Institute](#) (CSI), Mountain Middle School and Animas High School, will each receive \$2.5 million from the bond.

Durango 9-R school district is the first school district in Colorado to include funding for CSI charter schools in a bond and was the first school district in Colorado to include CSI charter schools in its mill levy override in 2016.

Long-time school leader of Mountain Middle School, Shane Voss, shared the significance of the bond results at a CSI Board committee meeting on November 10th: “That was the largest margin of victory of an election measure that the district has ever had in its history... Our partnership with [the district] is setting history in Colorado for CSI schools. We did that in 2016 on the first mill levy and now we did it on the first bond.”

Executive Director of the Charter School Institute, Dr. Terry Croy Lewis shares: “We are proud of the strong relationship our Durango schools have established with their local community and school district. These results show what can happen when schools and districts work together in the interest of all students, regardless of the public school type they are attending.”

Mountain Middle School Campus Expansion

[Mountain Middle School](#) serves 4th – 8th grade students, with a focus on integrating technology into project-based learning. Established in 2011, the school has received many accolades for its strong academic performance and has earned the Charter School Institute’s *Distinction* rating— a status reserved for schools performing in the top 25 percent of the state. The school was also identified as the #1 best public middle school and #1 for the best teachers in La Plata County, according to the [Niche](#) rankings.

With the \$2.5 million received from the bond, Mountain Middle seeks to finance its expansion project which will add 7,000 square feet of classrooms and serve an additional 50 students. The expansion is a welcomed addition as the school continues to receive more interest than there are seats available, a trend that has continued for the past 10 years. “We’re engaging our architect and our builder right now so we can expand and offer more seats for the families that have been on our waitlist,” shared Voss.

The school will continue to use its weighted lottery for students eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch, a strategy to ensure the award-winning programming is accessible to the whole community and that the school is reflective of the surrounding community.

Animas High School Permanent Facility

Founded in 2009 by community members, [Animas High School](#) serves students in grades 9-12 offerings a student-centered and project-based curriculum.

The school's home base has been in a strip mall on the north side of town and modular buildings on the west side of Durango as it sought to identify permanent facilities.

With the award of the BEST (Building Excellent Schools Today) Grant in June, Animas has moved forward with plans to build a permanent facility on the Fort Lewis Campus. Animas will seek input from students, staff, and community members in the design process. The school hopes to move to the new location by fall of 2022 or 2023, depending on construction.

The funds generated from the passage of the Durango 9-R bond measure (by over 72%) will be used by Animas as a match for \$13.7 million.

Animas has had a long educational partnership with local Fort Lewis College. [Earlier this year](#), Sean Woytek, school leader, said, "Moving AHS to Fort Lewis will allow us to strengthen the already excellent educational experience we provide for students by increasing access to 21st century facilities and resources in a new building and central location that will better support our mission, vision and values. What better way to help prepare young adults for college than to have their high school experience actually take place on a college campus?"

###

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](#).