2023-2024

# ANNUAL REPORT













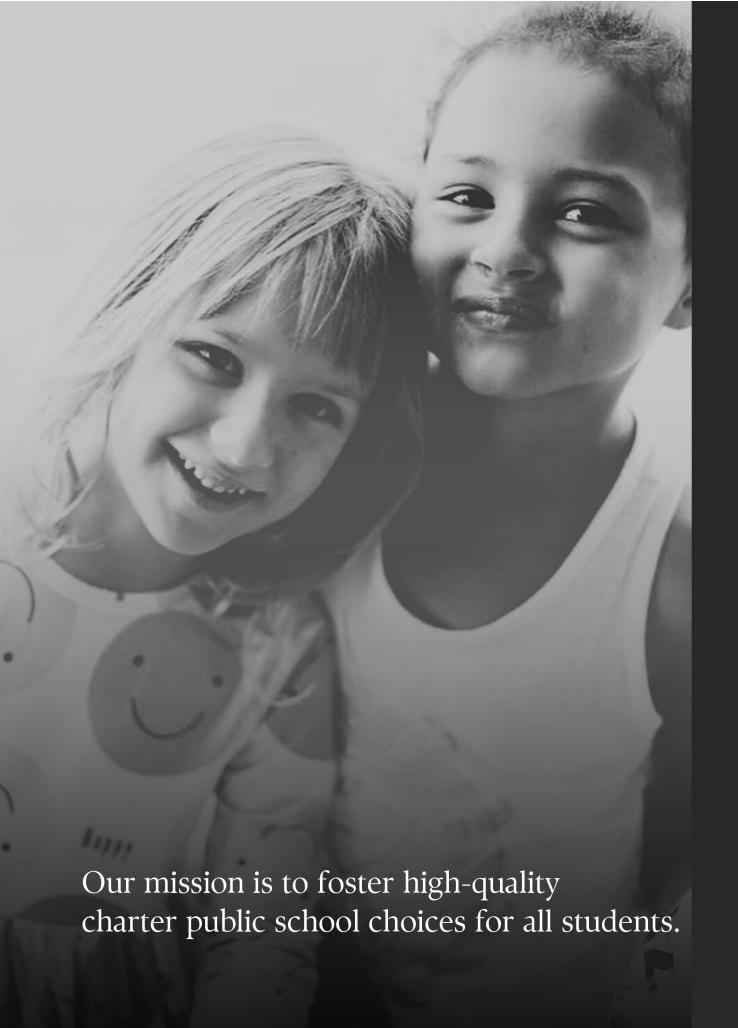






**COLORADO**CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE

20th Anniversary



## Table of Contents

Welcome Letter	4
Who We Are	6
Our Why	7
Who We Serve	9
Authorization Updates	10
Portfolio Outcomes	11
Organizational Highlights	12
20 Years of Impact	14
Legislative Highlights	16
Representation	17
Our Team	19

Mission Page Photo: Mountain Song Community School

Front Cover Photos: AXIS International Academy, Mountain Song Community School, Global Village Academy North, Colorado Early Colleges, New Legacy Charter School, Ascent Classical Academy, Golden View Classical Academy, Ross Montessori School

## Welcome Letter

Dear Friends,

We are thrilled to present our 2023-24 Annual Report, marking a significant milestone – the 20th anniversary of the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI). Founded in 2004, CSI has dedicated the past two decades to fostering high-quality charter public school choices that serve all students. This year's theme, "Celebrating 20 Years of Impact," reflects our journey, achievements, and unwavering commitment to innovation and quality in education.

From our modest beginnings authorizing just two schools in 2005 to now authorizing over 40 charter public schools serving over 20,000 students across 24 towns and cities in Colorado, CSI has been at the forefront of providing diverse and high-quality educational options. Our schools offer 16 unique educational models, from Montessori to Classical to Early College, ensuring that every student can find a learning environment that best meets their needs.

#### **Celebrating Legislative Wins**

Our 20th year has been marked by significant legislative victories. Thanks to the tireless advocacy of CSI school communities, CSI staff, and our education partners, we secured an additional \$10M for the CSI Mill Levy Equalization Fund for the 2023-24 school year. Furthermore, starting in 2024-25, the legislature has committed to full mill levy equalization, a monumental achievement in our long-standing fight for funding equity for students attending CSI schools.

#### Celebrating Representation and Advocacy

CSI has continued to amplify charter voices at the state and national levels. Nearly a quarter of our staff have actively engaged in various committees, working groups, and task forces, ensuring that the interests of charter schools, and specifically CSI schools, are represented and heard by decision-makers. This year, our collective advocacy efforts have led to meaningful changes that will positively impact our schools and students for years to come.

#### **Celebrating School Supports and Innovations**

Supporting our schools to overcome barriers to equitable, high-quality education remains a cornerstone of our mission. This past year, we enhanced our support services in several key areas, including facilities, nutrition, governance, teacher mentoring and professional development, mental health, multilingual learners, and preschool. These initiatives ensure that our schools are well-equipped to provide the best possible education to their students.

#### Reflecting on Two Decades of Growth and Success

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, we reflect on the tremendous growth and success of CSI and our schools. From pioneering new educational models to advocating for policy changes that promote equity and access, CSI has consistently pushed the boundaries of what is possible in public education. Our journey has been shaped by the dedication of our school leaders, teachers, students, families, and community partners, all of whom share our vision of high-quality charter public school choices for all students.

We hope you enjoy this year's Annual Report and join us in celebrating two decades of impact. As we look to the future, we remain committed to our mission and to the continuous improvement and innovation that have defined our work from the very beginning.

Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership.

With gratitude,

giu Arodnutz

**Jill Anschutz** 

**CSI Board Chair** 

Teny Gay Linis

**Dr. Terry Croy Lewis** 

**CSI Executive Director** 



## 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.

#### What is an Authorizer?

An authorizer is an entity approved by the state legislature to:

- 1. consider applications to open new, high-quality charter schools;
- 2. monitor existing charter schools; and
- 3. close failing schools.

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

Fundamental principles of authorizing include:

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

#### CSI's Roles

In addition to serving as a statewide authorizer, CSI takes on several additional roles, which require it to fulfill monitoring requirements above and beyond what might be required of an entity that is solely an authorizer.

- Authorizer
- Local Education Agency
- Administrative Unit
- School Food Authority
- Fiscal Agent



## Our Why

At CSI, we believe every child deserves access to high-quality school options, and families should choose the schools that best fit their children's needs. This is our why. We're committed to sharing the unique stories of CSI students, parents, school leaders, and staff.

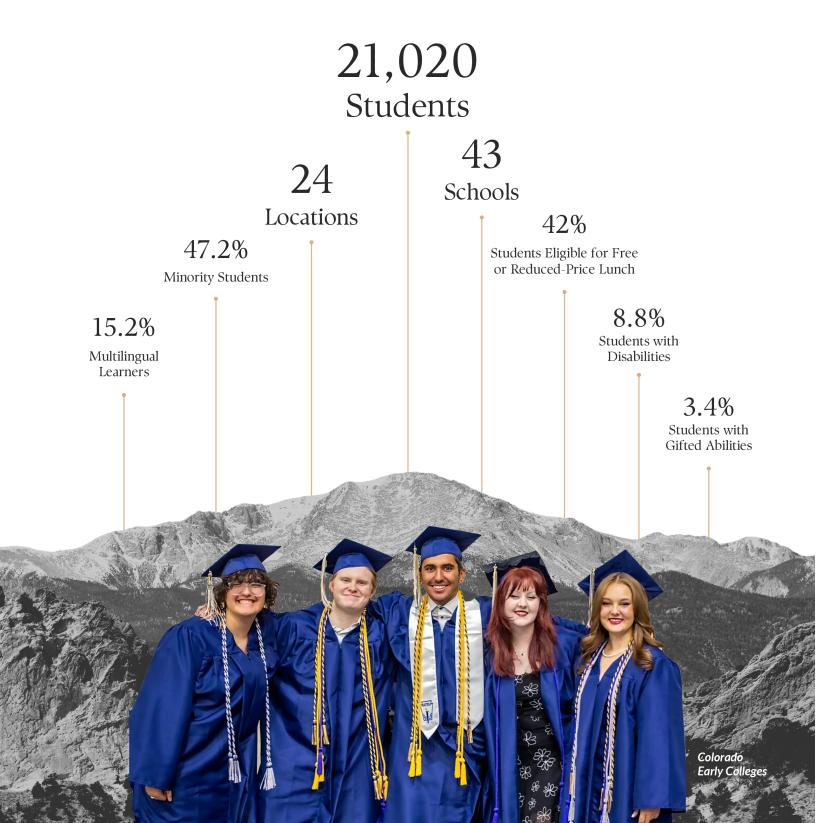


## CSI Portfolio

School	City	Model	Grades Served
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 Grand Junction*	Grand Junction	Classical	K-8
Ascent Classical Academy Northern Colorado	Fort Collins	Classical	K-10
Ascent Classical Academy Northern Denver*	Brighton	Classical	K-8
AXIS International Academy	Fort Collins	Language Immersion	PK-6
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	Early College	9-12
Colorado Early Colleges Fort Collins	Fort Collins	Early College	9-12
Colorado Early Colleges Online Learning Campus	Online	Early College	6-12
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 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	Thornton	Language Immersion	K-8
Golden View Classical Academy	Golden	Classical	K-12
High Point Academy	Aurora	Wellness	PK-8
Kwiyagat Community Academy	Towaoc	Project-Based Learning	K-3
Montessori del Mundo	Aurora	Dual-Language Montessori	PK-6
Monument View Montessori Charter School	Fruita	Montessori	PK-3
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
Prospect Academy	Arvada	Personalized Learning	5-8
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 Charter School	Steamboat Springs	Montessori	PK-6
Stone Creek Charter School	Edwards/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	Classical	K-12
Victory Preparatory High School	Commerce City	Core Knowledge	9-12
Victory Preparatory Middle School	Commerce City	Core Knowledge	6-8
Wildflower Montessori - Aurora*	Aurora	Montessori	PK-2

## Who We Serve

CSI schools seek to offer high-quality programs that are available to all students. Within our traditional K-12 school programs, CSI's service to students of color, students eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch, students with giftedness, and students with IEPs and 504s continues to trend upwards. CSI serves over 20,000 students in schools that range from 35 students (Monument View Montessori School) to over 1900 students (The Pinnacle School).



## Authorization Updates

The CSI Board is statutorily responsible for considering applications for new, expansion, transfer, and renewal schools. During the 2023-24 school year, the CSI Board made the following authorization decisions:



## Portfolio Outcomes



#### Student Performance

Three out of four students were enrolled in schools with a Performance academic rating in 2023-24.

On the PSAT/SAT assessments, CSI schools performed higher than the state average across Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing as well as Mathematics across all tested grades and free and reduced-price lunch, multilingual learner, and special education subgroups.



### Postsecondary Readiness

CSI's graduation rate continues to improve year over year.

CSI's dropout rate has remained below the state's average dropout rate of 2%. CSI had a 1.5% dropout rate at the end of the 2022-2023 school year.



#### Attendance

Student attendance across the CSI portfolio was slightly higher than the state average (91.9% vs. 91.5%). Student truancy (i.e., unexcused absences) across the CSI portfolio is under the state average (2.9% vs. 3.4%).



## Organizational Highlights

#### Financial Highlights

#### **Rebate to Schools**

While statute allows CSI to collect 3% of per pupil revenue from authorized schools, CSI strives to operate well below 3% and return unused funds to its schools at the end of the year.

This past year, CSI operated on 1.8% and was therefore able to provide a rebate of \$137 per pupil to CSI schools, for a total of nearly \$2.95M.





#### **Grants**

CSI schools collectively earned 138 grants totalling \$38.6M, which is a significant increase from the prior year. Some of the highest awards focused on school security, health, mentor programming, and facilities.



#### **Newcomer Funding**

Through HB24-1389, one-time funding was allocated to support schools experiencing a rise in newly arrived multilingual learners. CSI successfully applied for this funding on behalf of its schools, securing additional resources for over 10 CSI schools that met the eligibility criteria.

#### **School Safety**

CSI secured a two-year grant to enhance school safety across its portfolio of schools. The funding has enabled CSI to establish a School Safety Specialist role, dedicated to conducting comprehensive needs assessments, fostering partnerships between CSI schools and local public safety agencies, and implementing a robust, structured training program for school personnel.

Golden View Classical Academy

#### Programmatic Highlights

#### **School Food Authority**

CSI's Nutrition Team partners with participating schools to understand their goals (local sourcing, culturally relevant menus, scratch cooking) and supports schools in implementing sustainable food programs based on their unique context (staffing, facilities, and the availability of local vendors).

In the 2023-24 school year, CSI's School Food Authority continued to expand, providing meals to students across 31 schools, four of which were district-authorized charter schools.

Five schools also participated in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, which promotes introducing students to fresh fruits and vegetables that they may not consume on a regular basis.

Through this partnership, over 285,000 breakfasts, 800,000 lunches and 4,500 after school snacks were served.





**AXIS International Academy** 

#### **Universal Preschool**

Twelve CSI-authorized preschools participated in the inaugural year of universal preschool. During the 2023-24 school year, three additional preschools were completing the steps to become licensed.

CSI now has 15 authorized preschools opening in the fall of 2024. All are participating in the universal preschool program and have completed additional training in order to enroll all students, including those with individual education plans.

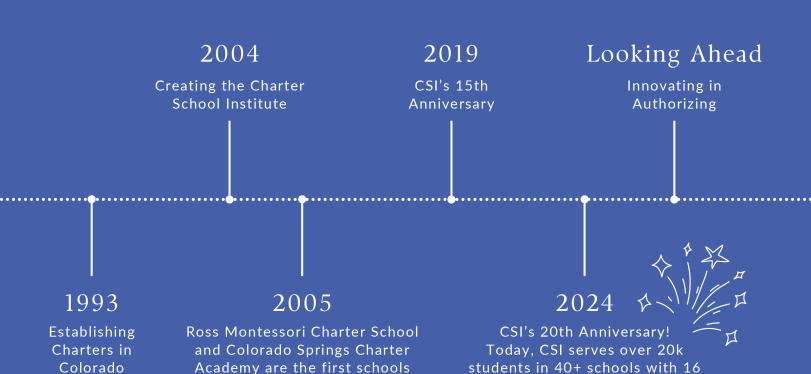
#### **Expanding Student Supports**

CSI hosted its first English Language Development (ELD) Learning Lab, which took place in February 2024 at The Academy of Charter Schools. A total of 26 participants from 14 schools joined for a day of learning and reflecting on ELD programming.









educational models in 24 towns and cities across Colorado.

to be authorized by CSI.



## Legislative Highlights

#### Mill Levy Override Equalization

Since the enactment of HB17-1375, which mandated equitable inclusion of district-authorized charters in local mill levy override revenue, CSI and its dedicated partners have tirelessly pursued fair representation for CSI schools.

Over the span of seven years, through persistent advocacy and negotiations, CSI has realized its longstanding vision: achieving mill levy override equalization. HB24-1394 solidified this achievement by guaranteeing funding parity between CSI schools and their district counterparts, ensuring equitable resources for all students.





Dan Schaller, Daniel Furman, Brenda Dickhoner, Terry Croy Lewis, Angelina Sierra-Sandoval, and other partners attending the bill signing.



The achievement of mill levy override equalization stands as a testament to the unwavering dedication of CSI and our partners in advancing educational equity.

This milestone represents the culmination of years of tireless advocacy, and it signifies a significant step forward in ensuring that all students, regardless of their school's oversight entity, have access to the resources they need to succeed.

Dr. Terry Croy Lewis Executive Director of CSI

#### **Charter School Capital Construction**

HB24-1448 allocates \$65.5 million to the Charter School Capital Construction fund over the next five years. This significant investment not only bolsters infrastructure development in charter schools but also positions the state to potentially secure an additional \$30 million in federal matching funds during the same period.

#### **CSI Bond Indebtedness**

HB24-1154 addressed lingering uncertainties by affirming that school district boards of education have the discretion to include CSI schools in district ballot initiatives, such as bonds supporting vital capital construction projects.

## Representation

One way in which CSI seeks to support and advocate on behalf its portfolio of schools is through active engagement in committees, task forces, and working groups. In fact, CSI and CSI schools are represented by a variety of CSI staff in over 20 entities. Here are just a few:

- Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers
- Colorado Association of School Executives School Safety Working Group
- Colorado Department of Education
  - Accountability Task Force
  - Accountability Working Group
  - Colorado Educator Preparation Advisory Committee
  - Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee
  - District Capstone Stakeholder Committee
  - School Finance Task Force
  - Special Education Fiscal Advisory Committee
  - State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education
  - Technical Advisory Panel
- Colorado Department of Early Childhood School District Implementer Working Group
- Education Data Advisory Committee
- National Association of Charter School Authorizers Leadership in Action
- National Charter Schools Institute
  - A-GAME
  - Arc Changers



## 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.



Andrew Karow
Board Treasurer



**Brenda Dickhoner**Board Vice Chair



**Deborah Hendrix**Board Member



Damion LeeNatali Board Member



Jill Anschutz Board Chair



**Kenny Smith**Board Member



Maribel Obreque\*
Board Member



Nicholas Hernandez
Board Member



**Ross Izard**Board Secretary

20 Years of Impact Photos: New Legacy Charter School, Early College of Arvada, Colorado Springs Charter School, Animas High School, Colorado Early Colleges Aurora, Golden View Classical Academy, AXIS International Academy

<sup>\*</sup>Maribel Obreque resigned from the CSI Board in 2024. Nicholas Thompson has been appointed by the Governor to fill the vacant seat.

## Our Team

## **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
Sheila Sellers, Data Quality & Audit Specialist
Cherish Trammell, Data Specialist
Allegra Wenger, Human Resources Manager
Niria Quinones, Office Administrator\*

#### **Authorization & Accountability Team**

Ryan Marks, Chief of Authorizing & Accountability
Michael McManus, Authorization and Accountability Manager
Collin Phillips, Performance & Accountability Analyst\*
Tom McMillen, Director of Governance
Stephanie Aragon, Director of Policy

#### **Finance & Operations Team**

Andi Denton, Chief of Finance & Operations
David Sever, Controller
Art Ford, School Finance Manager
Cassie Walgren, Data Pipeline Tech
Ilene Agustin, School Nutrition Program Manager
Maggie Necaise, School Nutrition and Data Coordinator
Marcie Robidart, Grants Fiscal & Accounting Manager
Emma Post, Senior Grants & Procurement Analyst
Magaly Mar-Sotero, Grant & Accounting Technician
Shawn Wilkens, Grant & Accounting Technician
Melissa Allen, Staff Accountant

#### **School Programs Team**

Jessica Welch, Senior Director of School Programs
Kimberly Caplan, Director of Professional Learning & School Programs
Betsy Basch, Mental Health Program Coordinator
Kali Winn, Assessment Coordinator
Paul Cairney, Senior School Safety Specialist
Rachel Franks, English Language Development Coordinator
Willyn Webb, Early Learning & School Support Coordinator
Matt Hudson, Director of Special Education
Nick Stachokus, Assistant Director of Special Education
Brian Printz, Special Education Coordinator
Cait Eggleston, Special Education Coordinator
Donna Day, Special Education Coordinator
Josh Nichols, Special Education Coordinator
Karen Davidson, Special Education Coordinator
Lynnette Steinhoff, Special Education Coordinator



**Expanding Frontiers in Public Education** 

www.csi.state.co.us