

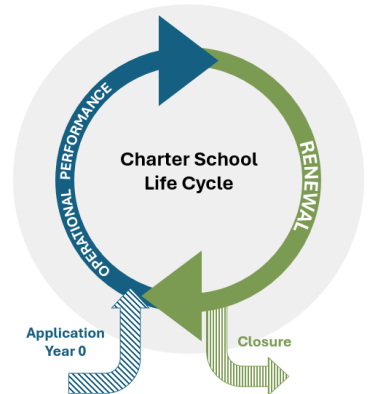
Maintaining High Standards for Charter Schools

A Commitment to Excellence



Charter school authorizers play a vital role in ensuring that schools operate with the autonomy they need while upholding public accountability. The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) defines a quality authorizer as one that practices responsible oversight, maintaining high standards throughout a school's life cycle.

The Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI), as a statewide charter authorizer, embodies this commitment by upholding rigorous standards at every stage of a charter school's journey.



Application Stage: *Rigorous Review and Selection*

CSI's application review process is **rooted in best practices**, ensuring statutory alignment and an objective assessment. Each application is evaluated by a team of experts, including an external reviewer, providing a high-quality and unbiased analysis of the school's potential. This process includes a capacity interview with the founding team, a community meeting, and a presentation to the CSI Board.

Comprehensive Recommendation

Our comprehensive recommendation report—compiled from the reviewers' evaluations of the application, capacity interview of the founding team, and community meeting—highlights the strengths of each application, identifies areas of risk, and offers a **thorough analysis** of the applicant's capacity to operate a successful school.

Proactive Risk Mitigation

For applications recommended for approval, CSI proposes contract **milestones specifically designed to mitigate identified risks**, ensuring that potential challenges are addressed early and comprehensively. This proactive approach gives schools the best chance for long-term success.

Board Action

Ultimately, the CSI Board carefully reviews the staff's recommendation and acts on the charter school application, ensuring a **rigorous yet supportive** authorization process. This process underscores CSI's commitment to selecting schools with the highest potential for success.

Year 0: *Laying the Foundation for Success*

CSI establishes **tailored milestones** through Year 0—the period between contract execution and the first day of school. These milestones are tailored to each school's needs, focusing on areas of risk identified during the application process. This ensures that schools are well-prepared to meet the challenges of opening.

Regular **consultations with content experts** and frequent check-ins provide schools with the technical assistance they need to progress toward a successful opening.

Operational Stage: *Ensuring Accountability and Excellence*

Performance Monitoring

CSI's oversight model is grounded in continuous **data collection and analysis** to assess school quality across academic, financial, and organizational dimensions. Schools are evaluated based on the CSI Performance Framework, which includes indicators such as academic growth, financial health, and governance effectiveness. CSI's focus on rigorous standards ensures that schools meet the needs of all students.

Targeted Support and Continuous Improvement

CSI implements a **tiered system of support and oversight**, providing differentiated assistance based on each school's unique needs. High-performing schools receive greater autonomy while those facing challenges receive more intensive oversight and targeted support. Schools requiring additional assistance access coaching, intervention guidance, and specialized resources, creating a responsive system that promotes accountability and fosters a **culture of continuous improvement**.

Evidence-Based Decision-Making

CSI uses school **performance data to inform critical decisions** regarding charter renewals, expansions, and interventions. Through Unified Improvement Planning (UIP), schools engage in reflective analysis, identify root causes of performance gaps and set action steps to drive continuous improvement. This process keeps schools focused on meeting their goals and improving their educational offerings.

Approximately 75% of CSI schools rank within the state's top academic performance band, reflecting the effectiveness of CSI's oversight model.

75%

of CSI schools are rated Performance

For schools that may be underperforming, CSI provides transparent communication and engages in early interventions to address challenges before CSI and state accountability measures are required.

Closure: *Responsible and Structured Winddown*



When a charter school can no longer fulfill its **commitments to the community** or meet the expectations outlined in its charter contract, CSI takes decisive action to close the school. In collaboration with NACSA, CSI has refined its closure procedures to ensure transparent communication and provide appropriate support to students, staff, and community members.

Over the past five years, CSI has closed 5 schools and had 2 schools merge with existing schools, with most closures resulting from financial and operational challenges. This reflects CSI's **unwavering commitment** to maintaining high standards and ensuring that only schools demonstrating educational, financial, and operational outcomes continue to operate.