



COLORADO
Department of Education

Colorado State Board of Education

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
BEFORE THE
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMISSION
DENVER, COLORADO
October 8, 2014, Part 3

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT on October 8, 2014,
the above-entitled meeting was conducted at the Colorado
Department of Education, before the following Board
Members:

Paul Lundeen (R), Chairman
Marcia Neal (R), Vice Chairman
Elaine Gantz Berman (D)
Jane Goff (D)
Pam Mazanec (R)
Debora Scheffel (R)
Angelika Schroeder (D)



1 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: At this time the state
2 board will recognize Isabella Griffon, a sixth-grader at
3 the Alamosa School District, for her antibullying efforts
4 through her program Be a Buddy, Not a Bully. Mr.
5 Commissioner.

6 COMM. HAMMOND: Thank you. First of all,
7 Isabella, thank you for coming today. It's an honor to
8 have you here and presenting. We don't often get that,
9 so we enjoy that and what you've done. I'm going to have
10 Rebecca just say a few words, and then we'll have you
11 talk, okay? Rebecca.

12 MS. HOLMES: Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
13 It is my great honor to introduce you to Isabella
14 Griffin. As was mentioned, she's a student in the
15 Alamosa School District. After experiencing bullying
16 herself in third grade, she then witnessed another
17 student being bullied the following year. This student
18 was repeatedly picked on, because he was different, and
19 Bella decided one day to stand up for him. Soon her
20 classmates realized that she would always be there, and
21 the bullying of the student over time turned into genuine
22 approval of him.

23 What she noticed, was that the change that
24 she had made, had really made a behavior in the change of
25 her peers, and in the culture of her school, and she



1 realized that if she could make that happen, so could
2 anyone. At that point she began speaking with the third
3 through fifth graders at her school, and then the Alamosa
4 School Board took interest in her ideas.

5 She then found herself being interviewed
6 with Keven Torres of 9 News, soon followed by an
7 interview with CNN. Isabella was also nominated for, and
8 won, a two-year fellowship with Peace First. Peace First
9 is a national organization that recognizes collaborative
10 change through children.

11 She's here today because October is National
12 Anti-bullying Awareness Month, and we thought a Colorado
13 student would be an ideal person to hear from to mark the
14 recognition of that month. Her general idea, which she
15 will share more with you today, is that if the students
16 who are typically bystanders in bullying situations would
17 instead stand up and step in, then they themselves can
18 stop bullying.

19 She has watched this happen and has created
20 programming for young people around what she calls the
21 three C's; of compassion, confidence, and 20 seconds of
22 courage. She believes that students as peers have the
23 largest and most powerful voice in this conversation, and
24 she works with schools to encourage every student to take
25 a pledge to be a buddy, not a bully. She makes posters



1 for each school, which every student signs as a visible
2 pledge, of their commitment to change their commitment to
3 change their behavior. Her program has so far been
4 accepted in five local schools across grades from
5 kindergarten through 12th, and she just finished being
6 interviewed for Scholastic Magazine, where she will be
7 featured in their October issue, so she's here for a
8 brief address to you all today.

9 MS GRIFFIN: Thank you. So, I'm here for
10 the bullying -- National Bullying Awareness Month, which
11 is October, and the colors of National Bullying Awareness
12 Month are blue, and I'm not wearing blue, but --

13 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: I am.

14 MS. GRIFFIN: Okay. So, I started my
15 program -- I first -- I had -- my first experience with
16 bullying was when I was in third grade. I was being
17 bullied and made fun of because of how I dressed, and I
18 tried dressing like the bully and that didn't really
19 work, so after a few months of this happening I finally
20 stood up for myself, and the bullying stopped.

21 And then when I was in fourth grade, I
22 noticed that a special needs kid in my class was being
23 bullied, and I watched as kids were making fun of the way
24 he talked, and I even listened to some of my friends mock
25 him. And it really bothered me, because I knew he didn't



1 understand that these kids were not trying to be his
2 friend, and he didn't understand that their laughs were
3 directed at him and not with him.

4 So, after that -- watching that happened, I
5 stood up for him, and it took a little while, but the
6 kids finally stopped bullying him, and started talking to
7 him, and some kids even invited him to sit by them at
8 lunch, and that made me really happy.

9 I real -- I started my program because --
10 what really inspired me to start my program is the
11 special needs kids, and all the people being bullied.
12 Because when I saw that -- after I stood up for the
13 special needs kid in my class, I went home and I did a
14 lot of research about bullying, and I found that about 85
15 percent of people just stand by and watch, and that's
16 what I really wanted to make my program focus on.

17 So, I sat down with my parents and I -- we
18 looked at all the research that I had found, and they
19 thought it was a really good idea, and we took it to my
20 principal and he loved the idea, and we got it going in
21 my school, and then it kind of just took off from there.

22 I've been doing Be a Buddy, Not a Bully, for
23 two years, and officially yesterday I am in six schools.
24 Yesterday I went to Lyman to present my program.

25 And my goals for my program -- my main, big



1 goal is to make my program nationwide, but right now my
2 main goal is to get my program into all of the schools in
3 Colorado, and that's why I'm here and for your guys' help
4 to do that. So, thank you.

5 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Thank you.

6 MS. NEAL: Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Thank you, Isabella.

8 Well, on behalf of the state board I would like to say
9 thank you for being a buddy and not a bully. And beyond
10 that, I would say thank you so much for being a leader.
11 And you are intrinsically a leader. Intrinsically is
12 just a fancy word that means it comes from within you,
13 this leadership. It wasn't a program that you signed up
14 for, it wasn't something that you joined or came along
15 with other people. From within you, the kernel grew from
16 within you as an individual, of leadership that is now
17 extending out to so many people. So, thank you so very
18 much for being who you are and for putting your thoughts
19 and your beliefs into action in this significant way.

20 So now we'd love to have you come up here,
21 and your parents as well if they'd like to join you, for
22 a picture with your board member, Marcia Neal.

23 MS. NEAL: Your board member.

24 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: So why don't you come
25 down around here and look at a picture of you.



1 MS. NEAL: Your buddy, your board member.

2 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Isabella, thank you so
3 much for being with us today. Congratulations and thank
4 you very much.

5 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Yes, thank you. Very
6 nice.

7 MS. NEAL: (indiscernible) Durango one's
8 mine too.

9 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Awesome.

10 MS. NEAL: My day. Except they're on the --
11 they're coming on the screen, or something, aren't they?

12 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: I don't know. Are -- do
13 we have a video link for this next one? And is it live?
14 Are we good to go? So, let's -- she we go ahead and
15 begin teeing this up, or do you need a couple minutes?

16 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I think you should mention
17 --

18 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Oh, they're there.

19 MS. NEAL: There they are.

20 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I think you should mention
21 that Isabella has a Facebook page for Be a Buddy.

22 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: We good?

23 MS. NEAL: Aerospace design is -- way beyond
24 me.

25 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Can Durango hear us?



1 MS. NEAL: We can't hear them.

2 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: They're not responding as
3 if they can.

4 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I think their calling it
5 right now.

6 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Okay. So, as we're
7 teeing this up here, kind of want to get them involved to
8 where we --

9 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: This is not the first --
10 yeah. They've done this a bunch of times already.

11 COMM. HAMMOND: I think we recognized them
12 last year (indiscernible) people.

13 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Yeah, the (indiscernible)
14 awards.

15 COMM. HAMMOND: Or is this a different --?

16 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: This is a --

17 COMM. HAMMOND: Yeah.

18 MS. NEAL: Yeah. Two, three, four, five,
19 six -- this is sixth time.

20 COMM. HAMMOND: Robotics.

21 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: What? We haven't had
22 these guys.

23 COMM. HAMMOND: It's robotics, or --

24 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Was it robotics? No,
25 robotics was --



1 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: We've had a lot of
2 robotics presentations, and I don't know that we've had
3 (indiscernible).

4 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Well then, I was somewhere
5 else when they were recognized. Somewhere I've been
6 (indiscernible) --

7 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Durango, can you hear us
8 yet?

9 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Nobody's got a phone to
10 their ear.

11 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Just got a
12 (indiscernible)?

13 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Just got to -- there we
14 go. Durango, can you hear us?

15 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Go ahead (indiscernible)
16 muted.

17 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Well, welcome. So, the
18 next item on the agenda for the State Board of Education
19 here in Denver is recognition of the Durango High School
20 Aerospace Design Team Award Winners. Mr. Commissioner,
21 now that we've connected with Durango, please.

22 COMM. HAMMOND: Thank you. It's a pleasure
23 having you online and visiting with you and honoring you
24 today. So, Dr. Owen.

25 MR. OWEN: Sure. Mr. Chair.



1 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Please.

2 MR. OWEN: So, good morning everyone there
3 in Durango. Good to see everybody, Mr. Garner, looking
4 dapper as usual.

5 MR. GARNER: Good morning.

6 MR. Owen: Yep. So, Mr. Chair, Durango High
7 School has been doing some great work, and has had many
8 recognitions, and we really wanted to take this
9 opportunity to honor them today. So, they've received
10 six world championships at the International Space
11 Settlement Design World Finals. They've had four
12 national championships and one NASA Ames Grand Prize for
13 Design. They've also made an appearance and
14 presentation, and I think Dr. Schroeder, this is maybe
15 what you were referring to, at the 2011 Colorado
16 Department of Education, Educational Reform Summit that
17 we hosted here in Denver. Plus numerous recognitions
18 from local, state, national legislatures. At the 2014
19 International Space Settlement Design World Finals,
20 Durango once again swept the individual awards, bringing
21 both the leadership award for the best female presenter,
22 and the best male presenter award.

23 The Durango Aerospace Design Team starts as
24 all-grade-level elective class at Durango High School
25 called Aerospace Design. In this class, students run the



1 class like a corporation, the task is to produce a
2 professional-grade statement of work, which usually
3 pertains to creating a hypothetical settlement in space.
4 The Statement of Work is used to enter into two
5 competitions. The NASA Ames Special Space Settlement
6 Design Competition and international Space Settlement
7 Design Competition.

8 The teams had opportunities to take lots of
9 different tours, but one I'll mention was that they got
10 to go to Lockheed Martin, and ever got to suit up and see
11 the Maven spacecraft up close as it went through
12 acoustical testing. They ended up getting to go to the
13 Kennedy Space Center as well. They got -- the team got
14 VIP seats to watch the launch of the Maven. You can
15 imagine what kind of experience that would be.

16 So, without further ado, I'd like to turn it
17 over to Mr. Garner and his team, and let them talk a
18 little bit, but let's give them a big round of applause
19 for their work.

20 (Applause)

21 Mr. Garner.

22 MR. GARNER: Well, Chairman Lundeen and the
23 members of the board, this is -- this is a very special
24 occasion, and we, on behalf of the Aerospace Design Team,
25 who I have here with me today, we just want to thank you



1 for this recognition. And I know for me it really is an
2 honor that you would recognize their hard work, because
3 these kids work incredibly hard doing some incredibly
4 difficult things. And so I first want to -- want to
5 thank you there. So --

6 In addition, I think perhaps we ought to
7 introduce the members who are here with us, and perhaps
8 they can tell you what grade they're in, and what they do
9 in aerospace design. So, I'm going to pass the mic over
10 yonder.

11 MR. GREENBURG: Hello.

12 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Hi.

13 MR. GREENBURG: I'm Charlie Greenburg, and
14 I'm a junior in high school. And in Houston I was Chief
15 Financial Officer, and this year I am the head of
16 operations and infrastructure.

17 Ms. Gerd: Hi. I'm Mallar Gerd (ph), I'm a
18 senior here at Durango High School. This year in Houston
19 I was the Head of Structural Engineering, and going into
20 our class year I will be the Head of Business.

21 Mr. Wilbur: Hello. I'm Ben Wilbur (ph).
22 I'm a senior. I worked in Automations Engineering, and
23 for the competition in this year I'll be the Head of
24 Automation for the team.

25 Mr. Donald: Hi. I'm Core Donald (ph). I'm



1 a sophomore here at Durango High School, and I work under
2 structural in the engineering section, and this year I do
3 the same.

4 Ms. Wood: Hi. I'm Jenna Wood, I'm a
5 senior, and this last summer I was in the Human Factor
6 section, and this year I'll be the head of
7 (indiscernible) Factors.

8 Mr. Waldee: Hello. I'm Jojenny Waldee
9 (ph). I'm in 11th grade this year. This last year I
10 worked under structural engineer, and this year I'm the
11 Head of Structural Engineering.

12 Mr. Greenburg: All right, and also with us
13 is Deanne Garcia, our amazing principal as well, we've
14 gotten a lot of support from. I think one of the best
15 things about this program is really the interface that we
16 get with the university systems in Colorado, and
17 especially with the experts in the aerospace community
18 who have really opened their arms to us when they see
19 what we've done, and they seem to -- they seem to see a
20 kinship in what these kids are doing. And that's
21 incredibly powerful. That collaboration alone is worth a
22 tremendous amount.

23 For example, last week we had a meeting with
24 the Colorado State Business Roundtable, and we told our
25 story and our process to them, and a lot of them were



1 saying, "You'll do this exact same thing if you're in the
2 aerospace industry." And they're like, "We can't believe
3 they're doing this." And so that's really, really
4 fulfilling to a lot of us, whether these guys go into
5 aerospace or not, to have that connection with real word
6 -- real word examples, and in the industry. So, we're
7 very pleased with that as well. So, we do want to thank
8 you once again for recognizing us. It's an incredible
9 honor.

10 MS. NEAL: Question.

11 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Excellent. We have a
12 question from the Vice Chairman for you.

13 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Mr. Garner, I'm just
14 curious in looking at this long history of yours with
15 former members. Have many of them gone on into the
16 professions, your former students?

17 Mr. Greenburg: Yeah. A good deal of them
18 have. They -- some of them get recruited by the
19 Aerospace Engineering program at Boulder, and so I would
20 -- I would say from the team members that I've had who've
21 stayed in Colorado, a good half of them end up going into
22 engineering fields in Colorado, and a portion of those
23 end up sticking with Aerospace Engineering as their
24 major.

25 But they, you know, the -- as you go out of



1 state, a lot of them end up going to engineering schools
2 like Cal Poly and Stanford, or other schools out east.
3 So, it's -- it really runs the gambit. These skills seem
4 to transfer really well to other disciplines.

5 MS. NEAL: Well, you're to be congratulated
6 if you've been working at it this long, and obviously
7 this team members are really strong, so it -- we really
8 appreciate you as a classroom teacher.

9 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Excellent.

10 Mr. Greenburg: Cool thing.

11 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Now I had the good
12 fortune to visit Lockheed Martin yesterday, and I was in
13 the room where they're preparing and, in fact, receiving
14 information back and forth from their Mars efforts right
15 now. And I've got to tell you, all that I saw there was
16 screens full of data, numbers and letters on the screen.

17 This is so much more like what I would
18 expect a settlement on a far, you know, place in space to
19 look like, this interaction we're having with you. It's
20 so much more exciting. And I would expect also that one
21 of the seven members on your team here might someday be
22 having some sort of a com link from someplace further
23 away from Denver than Durango, Colorado. So, we wish you
24 all the best, on behalf of the State Board we would like
25 to congratulate you for continuous -- so your trend in



1 excellence in this area, so congratulations very much.

2 (Applause)

3 MR. GREENBURG: Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: And with that are we --

5 oh, picture. Heaven forbid. So, you folks stay put.

6 We're going to get a picture of your picture on the

7 television screen here. We're going to bring the

8 commissioner and Marcia Neal, your board representative,

9 around to snap a picture with you.

10 MR. GREENBURG: Tell us when to say cheese

11 and we'll say cheese.

12 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Did you say the moon is

13 made of cheese? Is that what you said?

14 MR. GREENBURG: Yeah. (indiscernible)

15 actually. Little known secret.

16 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: All right, everybody.

17 Look this way and say cheese. Excellent. Well, again,

18 congratulations. Keep up the great work.

19 MR. GREENBURG: Thank you. Thank you very

20 much.

21 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: It's going to be a hard

23 act to follow, but the next item on the agenda is a

24 presentation by the Charter School Institute. I'd like

25 to welcome CSI Executive Director Ethan Hemming, and



1 Chairman of the CSI Board, Steve Schneider (ph), and
2 Secretary of the Board, Pat Clover (ph).

3 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Former state board member.

4 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: And former state board
5 member. Yes. I should acknowledge. Welcome back to the
6 room.

7 MR. HEMMING: So, thank you, members of the
8 board, Chairman Lundeen, Commissioner Hammond. We
9 appreciate the opportunity to be here today. We're going
10 to get a deck up here to walk through -- we'll keep it
11 brief. We know you guys have a lot on your agenda.
12 Before I jump into that, I would love if I could just
13 introduce Steve Schneider, our board chair, and Pat
14 Clover, our secretary, and allow them to say a few things
15 about CSI in our trajectory.

16 MR. SCHNEIDER: Well, thank you very much
17 for allowing us to speak today. That is incredibly
18 humbling to go after those last two presentations. So,
19 we --

20 MS. NEAL: You're not a space expert?

21 MR. SCHNEIDER: I am not a space expert.

22 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Neither are we.

23 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: But you're a buddy, not a
24 bully, I'm confidant.

25 MR. SCHNEIDER: I certainly try to be.



1 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: There you go.

2 MR. SCHNEIDER: My name is Steve Schneider,
3 I am the board chair as of, I think, three or four weeks
4 ago now. On my second term with the CSI Board. My day
5 job -- when not doing things with CSI I'm a principal in
6 a financial services company in Colorado Springs.
7 Previous board positions; I've been the chair of our
8 Economic Development Council in the Springs as well as a
9 board chair for our foodbank, large foodbank down in
10 Colorado Springs and southern Colorado.

11 Really, what we've done -- a lot of what
12 we've done the last two years -- I'm very proud of the
13 staff, Ethan and his team, what they've accomplished.
14 We've worked very hard on getting the organization on a
15 sound financial footing. We've taken a lot of time and
16 energy around that, and certainly the operational side of
17 CSI with Ethan. And Ethan's brought on an incredible
18 staff.

19 We're very much looking forward to
20 continuing and do more in the way of performance of our
21 schools to the effect -- to the -- to the extent -- that
22 we can affect that as well as expansion of school choice
23 in Colorado. And so, I'm going to -- I'll turn it over
24 to Pat and see if she has anything to add.

25 MS. CLOVER: Thank you. I do feel at home



1 in this room. I have figured it out. I was on a local
2 board in Leadville and came before the board. Then I was
3 elected to the board, and then I had an opportunity to
4 serve the U.S. Department of Education, and I came to
5 monitor the board.

6 So, I know you want to know why I can't give
7 this up. Well, the reason is it has been an honor for me
8 to serve on the Charter School Institute Board. We have
9 seen so much progress being made, not only for innovative
10 programs, but also programs where we hold them
11 accountable for student progress. And they are all
12 different kinds of programs. They reflect -- these
13 schools reflect the student population of over 53 percent
14 minority, 47 percent free and reduced lunch, and 25
15 percent English Language Learners.

16 We really appreciate this opportunity for us
17 to have Ethan present to you, and kind of update you, on
18 what your newest actions are. But we appreciate your
19 time and, on a personal note, because I do know this is a
20 campaign season, I want to thank each of you. Because
21 each of you ran for office. I know all of you
22 personally, and I will tell you the best ones did win, so
23 thank you so much.

24 MS. NEAL: We're glad to hear that.

25 MR. HEMMING: Okay. Well thank you very



1 much, and I appreciate my board being here, and they are
2 reflective of the board that I'm really blessed with.
3 Nine members, seven appointed by the governor, two by the
4 commissioner, and I just feel very lucky to be able to
5 work with this caliber of folks.

6 So, I'll walk through the deck, and then
7 we'll hopefully have a little bit of time at the end for
8 some questions. So, the first thing is, as we've said,
9 we have a statewide presence. We are a charter
10 authorizer. Right? So, we have fewer charter schools,
11 we have 30 schools and 13,000 kids throughout the state.
12 The green dots give you an idea of how far spread out we
13 are. Obviously concentrated in the population centers,
14 but we do have schools in Durango, Grand Junction,
15 Cowhand, Fort Collins, so we're quite spread out. And in
16 the Mountain Corridor.

17 Just a quick graph to show you what has
18 happened over time since CSI I was formed 10 years ago.
19 And so, in terms of aggregate membership, you can see,
20 you know, a pretty clear trendline increasing. But you
21 also notice that there was a dip in 2013, and maybe
22 there's dips in the future. I think it's important to
23 point out that we're fairly elastic, or we're designed to
24 be a little bit elastic in terms of how we operate. A
25 bit of a creature of the market in terms of opening



1 schools that come to us and approving them in concert
2 with districts where it's possible.

3 But also, on the other side, if we have
4 quality concerns at a school, we certainly will execute
5 the right to close schools. Not something we want to do
6 a lot of, and not what we lead with, but it's important
7 to note that that is really the design of a charter
8 school.

9 This gives you a little bit of an idea of
10 our performance over time. Important to point out that,
11 as Steve said, we have had some challenges historically
12 with the organization. We were on priority improvement
13 for finance up till a year ago, but I'm happy to report
14 that we are off priority improvement for finance. I
15 never intend to have that go back. That is my
16 commitment. At the bare minimum we will be financially
17 solvent and work with our schools to be that way as well.

18 What we would really like to talk to -- talk
19 about is obviously performance, so what this does is give
20 you a bit of an overview from 2012, '13, up to '14 in
21 terms of the percentage of our schools and where their
22 performance is. So, the pie chart in 2014 shows you
23 about 67 percent of our schools are in the performance
24 band, which is great, and an increase over previous
25 years. Obviously, though, you still see that little



1 sliver of red, which represents that we have a turnaround
2 school, and that obviously is very concerning to us, and
3 we have a couple of priority improvement schools.

4 We spend a lot of time on staff as a -- as a
5 pure charter authorizer, focusing on performance data and
6 outcome data. We obviously monitor finance and
7 organizational indicators, but a lot goes towards the
8 outcomes.

9 So, what sets CSI apart? First, financially
10 prudent. And we talked a lot about that. By statute we
11 can spend three percent of the total revenue on our
12 staff. We have been operating for the last 2 years, at
13 least, at 2.5 or 2.4. We continue to want to operate
14 with efficiency, with scalability of our operations, and
15 what we want to do with that extra money is give it back
16 to the schools. So last year we sent back \$68 per kid at
17 the end of the year. We hope to continue to do that
18 every year and be efficient for the purpose of getting
19 money where it belongs, which is in the classroom.

20 The next thing I want to point out, is that
21 we have a charter specific evaluation. We are one of two
22 districts across the state that use an annual evaluation
23 system built on the state's SPF, but then add some
24 factors that are unique to CSI. I believe DPS has
25 something like that as well.



1 We think it's really important, because
2 we're a charter authorizer. We have academics, of
3 course, but we have finance and ops that we want to pay
4 attention to as well. And we're really proud of that
5 system. Obviously, it's accountability, but it's a value
6 add back to the schools. They use that information and
7 that analysis hopefully to drive their strategic
8 direction.

9 So, as we said before, we go beyond opening
10 and closing schools. Right? In that middle ground we
11 want to facilitate expansion, replication on the positive
12 side, when schools are doing really well. But on the
13 down side, if they're doing poorly, we will do a
14 restructure and a turnaround.

15 We also actively transfer schools when we
16 have a relationship with a district if it's appropriate
17 for the school and the district in CSI from the district
18 to CSI. We'll talk more about that.

19 We also are proud that our -- the tools and
20 the processes that we've developed have gotten local
21 attention and recognition and national attention. In
22 statute -- obviously our intention is to support charter
23 schools, but we're also called to be the model authorizer
24 for district authorizers throughout the state. And we
25 put a lot of work and energy into that and try to promote



1 that and provide that through our partnership
2 authorization throughout the state primarily.

3 But again, nationally, we will host other
4 statewide authorizers will come into C-- and visit with
5 us for the benefit of learning together about what we
6 have experienced in our growth.

7 And then, lastly, we advocate actively now
8 for our schools -- for our charter schools, as well as
9 charter schools throughout the state. We have a
10 legislative liaison. For the first time this last
11 session we work in concert with the CDE, with the League
12 of Charter Schools and others, but the goal is to support
13 charters and their unique needs on the legislative front.

14 So, what's next for CSI? So, there's three
15 things I would want to call out for you on these slides.
16 First, that we want to continue to expand partnerships.
17 Clearly, we want to grow, and we want to do better, as
18 Steve and Pat said, in terms of the quality. We'd like to
19 see that 67 percent grow, and we'd like to see no red.
20 Right. That's where most of our energy goes. But we
21 also take, seriously, the need to support district
22 authorizers and their support of charter schools.

23 We have partnerships right now, formal
24 partnerships, with Aurora Public Schools, with Roaring
25 Fork, with Adams 12, and then we have informal



1 partnerships with other districts. We find that to be a
2 really fertile area that we could explore with districts
3 for the -- for the purpose of support the district, but
4 also supporting charter schools in terms of good
5 authorization. So that's one area where we want to
6 continue to explore how can we do that with them.

7 Second, we want to work on quality standards
8 for charter authorizing. Right? So, this body adopted
9 by reference Standards for Quality Authorizing I think
10 three years ago. We would like to explore at -- with
11 others, with the state department, obviously, with the
12 league, with others, like, what's the next step in that?
13 Where could we go further in a way that doesn't create
14 more bureaucracy, but also make sure that authorizers in
15 districts and CSI is doing what we should be doing.

16 So, the last point I'd want to call out is
17 really what is the future for CSI in supporting
18 struggling districts? So as the accreditation clock
19 moves forward, as there are districts and schools who are
20 approaching the fourth or the fifth year of priority
21 improvement or turnaround, how can we help? And we've
22 had lots of conversation with the commissioner and his
23 staff and with others around the states for one part of
24 that solution, one part of the strategy we think is
25 charter schools. Right? Obviously, that's what we do.



1 We're a little biased, but we do believe that's an
2 essential part of reform, and we think we're set up
3 really uniquely to help districts.

4 I think the issue is, when do those
5 districts want help, quote, unquote, right, from a state
6 agency? They're not always so interested in that. But I
7 think what we're trying to demonstrate with Aurora, with
8 Roaring Fork, with Salida, wherever we've been, is that
9 we can be helpful. Right? We can help solicit
10 interested charter applicants. We can help do a really
11 rigorous review to make sure only the best get through
12 the gate, and we can help support those charters through
13 their -- through their evolution.

14 So, I think, obviously, undercurrent to
15 (indiscernible) exclusive authority, we recognize that, I
16 think, 174 of the 178 districts have exclusive authority,
17 so that's something we clearly respect. But we've found
18 that in partnership with Aurora, for example, we now have
19 three charter schools who live in Aurora but are
20 authorized by CSI. Every fall now for two years we've
21 run the new school evaluation with Aurora, and it's --
22 we've found it to be really beneficial for, ultimately,
23 quality charter schools.

24 So within those constraints, within the
25 future of accreditation, we would really like to continue



1 to have the conversation with the state board, with the
2 general assembly. Whoever will want to talk to us about
3 partnership and how we can be of use. So, I will stop
4 talking there, and thank you for giving us time to be
5 here and present. And I would love if you have any
6 questions that we could -- we could answer.

7 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Elaine.

8 MS. BERMAN: First of all, Ethan, it's
9 always very good to see you, and it sounds like you're
10 doing a fantastic job. I want to hear a little bit more
11 about the concept of the partnerships with the districts,
12 and then also remind the state board the process. That
13 if you're a school that wants to become a charter school
14 within a district, does -- they have to first go to their
15 local school board, and if -- and either request that
16 they go directly to CSI, or be turned down by the local
17 school board. So, explain the whole process so we're
18 clear on that, and then go deeper in terms of the
19 partnership piece.

20 MR. HEMMING: Sure, thank you. And it's
21 great to see you, too. So, I'll start with your later
22 question. How does that process work? So, truly, for
23 those 174 or 73 districts, a charter -- interested
24 charter applicant would need to approach the districts
25 first. Right? They have first right of refusal, so what



1 we are trying to do, is to turn that into a constructive
2 process that doesn't necessarily have to be; go to the
3 district, get turned down, appeal to this body, and then
4 potentially be remanded to the district or to CSI. I
5 mean, that's how it could technically happen.

6 We'd like to do something up front with
7 establishing the relationship like we have with Aurora,
8 where basically the school, or the interested school,
9 potential school, talks with Aurora, talks with CSI, and
10 then as this fall, two of the three applicants submitted
11 jointly to Aurora and to CSI, which really then gives us
12 a chance to concurrently evaluate the schools. The
13 interesting thing is we're doing it for potential
14 authorization.

15 We're also doing it for Aurora for their
16 authorization decision. So, it's a little interesting
17 there. But I think the best way is to have an open
18 conversation with a district, what does the school need?
19 Because at the end of the day that's the most important
20 thing. CSI is not all things to all charters. We have a
21 very particular focus for high autonomy, for high
22 accountability, and we are not an embedded district
23 authorizer. So, if the school really wants a lot of
24 engagement and supports that is more of a low autonomy
25 charter school, that's not us. We're more on the high



1 autonomy charter.

2 So partly is what do you think you need, and
3 then together with the district, if we have a
4 relationship and a conversation, let's talk. I think
5 that's much better than, say, for an example, in Pueblo
6 where the charter applicant came to us, applied, went to
7 the district, the district showed very little interest in
8 them, and ultimately, you know, nothing went forward,
9 because we didn't have a partnership. Not for lack of
10 trying.

11 So, in terms of where a partnership
12 authorization can go, there's a -- in your -- you'll get
13 brochures from us after this that describe -- yeah.
14 Right, you have them now. Great. Probably describe it
15 in more detail than you could possibly want. But at the
16 very lowest end of participation, it simply ad hoc
17 technical assistance. I get calls from superintendents
18 throughout the state with just questions about charters.
19 With reviews, with applications, so we will provide that
20 no matter what.

21 What we would love to do, though, is have an
22 MOU, like we have with Aurora, that says we will
23 potentially authorize a school that is no longer a good
24 fit for you. We will provide an evaluation for you for a
25 new school. We will provide a renewal evaluation, or



1 we'll do annual evaluations for all of your schools. So,
2 it's kind of up and down that ladder of specificity
3 engagement. I hope that helps.

4 MS. BERMAN: Yes, thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Any questions? Angelika
6 had her hand up, please.

7 MS. SCHROEDER: So, congratulations on the
8 growth of the process, and what looks like some real
9 success. I am aware of districts sometimes wishing and
10 encouraging participation with CSI instead of being in
11 their own district for what I think are the right --
12 usually the right reasons for the students, so I think
13 that's a great thing.

14 And I don't want to emphasize the negative,
15 but I do have some questions on the chart that you have.
16 You're showing great improvement in your charters. I'm
17 wondering, have you closed many charter schools? How are
18 you addressing what's left in order to convince us, or a
19 district, that you would be able to help them turn around
20 in a really meaningful way, having done so with some of
21 your own schools. I'm looking at this pie -- at the pie
22 charts.

23 MR. HEMMING: Sure, right.

24 MS. SCHROEDER: Seeing great progress.

25 MR. HEMMING: Right, but to be clear,



1 absolutely. There is red and there is orange, right?

2 MS. SCHROEDER: Right.

3 MR. HEMMING: In terms of performance, so
4 have we closed schools? Yes. CSI has closed two
5 schools. One before my time an online school closed --

6 MS. SCHROEDER: Did they come here and argue
7 with us, too? I think they did, didn't they? One did,
8 okay. Right, so --

9 MR. HEMMING: So, the most -- the most
10 recent closure was last fall, a school that came to us
11 for renewal. Four out of five years on priority
12 improvement, operational challenges, financial
13 challenges, and we recommended closure to our board, our
14 board affirmed that in December. We make those decisions
15 very early. We do not want families impacted in March or
16 April. They have the right to appeal to you. We factor
17 that in. December is kind of the sweet spot for getting
18 the right data and the right action, and we put a lot of
19 emphasis and money into ensuring that those parents had
20 contact and support with finding another school.

21 So direct outreach from CSI, staff on the
22 ground working with the host district, District 11, in a
23 very collaborative fashion to do everything, because
24 there's no way to get around the fact that closure is
25 very difficult.



1 MS. SCHROEDER: Very difficult, and it's
2 very difficult for a school district, so I'm really
3 wondering if a school district wouldn't be tempted to try
4 to move an at risk school to you all in an -- because you
5 have the kind of support system -- you seem to have the
6 kind of support system that helps them either up or down.

7 MR. HEMMING: I think we do, but I think
8 support -- I think Steve weigh in, for sure, and Pat, but
9 support is a tough word sometimes, because we do put a
10 lot of emphasis and money into that charter school and
11 expect them to be the ones that find the solutions. What
12 we do, where our value add is, is on the data. We put a
13 lot of time and energy into systems and support to say,
14 "Here's what your data looked like. Here's how we think
15 you can consider things. But ultimately you have to make
16 that call."

17 Do districts look at transferring schools to
18 us who they may not want? Yeah, absolutely. We look at
19 alt ed campuses, high-risk kids. We know that. We want
20 to support those at-risk schools, but we also want to be
21 clear, ultimately, within that framework, this
22 differential, and we really appreciate that opportunity,
23 ultimately that we need to see some progress. Right?
24 That it's working somehow.

25 MS. SCHROEDER: So, let me make sure I



1 understand the correctly the -- even the school is a CSI
2 school and you have your own board, each of those
3 charters also have their own boards. Am I right?

4 MS. HEMMING: Yes. Yes, you are.

5 MS. SCHROEDER: Do you provide training for
6 those board members, because I think that's where some
7 charters have really struggled, because the board members
8 are citizenry, and takes a while to get up there. You
9 understanding the issues.

10 MS. SCHNEIDER: I -- we've discussed this
11 the last couple years. I think you're spot on. I --
12 when we -- if you can look at a correlation between a
13 poor performer, there is often a untrained board, new
14 board members, they are not fiscally educated, and so
15 we've had some discussions around that. It does -- it's
16 a balance between resources. A lot of what we talked
17 about here with the partnership authorization, we are not
18 charging for those services. So, we have to look at
19 that, and we have to certainly, as Ethan said, look at
20 performance overall long term, if they become -- if they
21 come into our portfolio can we get them performing
22 quickly, and if not, then we have to make some difficult
23 decisions.

24 MS. SCHROEDER: Do you turn them down? Do
25 you turn some schools down?



1 MR. SCHNEIDER: Yes.

2 MR. HEMMING: So, our rate of approval over
3 time has been about 40 percent for new schools. Most
4 recently it's a little bit higher than that, but we do
5 have a high bar. And we do, you know, if it's a transfer
6 school and we do not feel like it's a good fit, we will
7 turn them down. So --

8 MS. CLOVER: And we have been very
9 thoughtful about the school, their boards, and they will
10 frequently come present to us, and it's great what --
11 when they come to us, just as we're coming to you, and
12 we've got a prepared program. But if there's a big
13 change, if there's too many changes on that board, or in
14 their leadership, then we have to look at it a little bit
15 more carefully as we move down that timeline, because we
16 don't want them to change from what they presented to us.
17 And sometimes that happens. I mean, you know, they've
18 got this wonderful project, this wonderful program, and
19 then they change leadership, or those board members
20 change, so we do monitor that, and it's a concern to
21 those of us that have served on the boards to see
22 different face.

23 MS. SCHROEDER: Thank you very much.

24 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: We'll go over here and
25 then come back to you. Jane, go ahead.



1 MS. GOFF: Thank you. Are you -- I don't
2 know how to say this. What's your level of involvement
3 and interaction and partnering with NACSA? Is that a --
4 is that a regular exchange of time together as such?

5 MR. HEMMING: Yeah, is it from a staff, from
6 board perspective we have the annual conference and we
7 have board who will participate in that. From a staff
8 perspective I'm heavily involved with NACSA.

9 MS. GOFF: Just to be -- my job -- NACSA
10 stands for the National Association of Charter Schools
11 Authorizers, so it's -- in fact, that was one of the
12 first learning opportunities I had when I came on the
13 board, was NACSA's work to start this develop --
14 beginning of the development of the standards was going
15 on about that time. And I've always been -- had an
16 interest in how that's going. And let me -- have you
17 finished your answer? But tied in with that, what I
18 would ask at some point, what do you all see the future
19 of the standards being?

20 So, as we -- as it moves around and time
21 comes up for review, or update, or check-in and what does
22 -- what is the general goal, the objectives for meeting
23 the standards of other? I think, and what all goes into
24 that. Not in detail, just your outlook on it.

25 MS. CLOVER: If I could just mention before.



1 I know he has been very active, and our staff has been,
2 with NACSA. I was really impressed the first time I went
3 to one of those meetings, because when they'd have
4 presentations, you'll see different states get up and
5 have a part of a program. Frequently they would say
6 things like, "Now what did they do in Colorado?" I mean,
7 they looked at Colorado as being a leader, even though
8 our numbers, numbers of schools, are not as significant
9 as maybe some of the other states; Arizona or, you know,
10 has, like 164 or something charter schools.

11 And -- but they really looked at the
12 modeling that CSI has done, and Colorado has done, in the
13 way they're very cautious about how they planned things,
14 and not to overextend, just charter anything to get those
15 numbers. And that's what kind of was bothersome to me.
16 I would hear them, "Oh, we've got, you know, 50 here, and
17 60 there." And I thought, "How can you monitor those
18 schools at all? It just looked like they were stamping
19 them to get those numbers in. So, I believe that
20 Colorado is a model. But Ethan can answer the hard part
21 of that question.

22 MR. HEMMING: Right. So, I think that the
23 first part of that is we -- as Pat has said -- we're
24 really involved with NACSA in terms of they provide a lot
25 of products for us to consider, a lot of communities that



1 we participate in for PD, we provide a lot of PD for
2 them, vice versa, so it's a good relationship.

3 I think the key to remember when NACSA is,
4 that it is at the national level providing good guidance
5 in the right goalposts, but what we do with that is we
6 have to tailor it to Colorado clearly with our
7 frameworks. Right? And so, we go back and forth with
8 NACSA sometimes in a very healthy way to say, "Well,
9 that's great. But we need to tailor it a little bit."
10 So, I think it's a good starting point.

11 In terms of where authorizing standards need
12 to go, I think the foundation, though, is solid in the
13 rules that you adopted three years ago. I think the
14 question is, though, where are we at right now with the
15 quality of authorizing throughout the state of Colorado?

16 So, I think 50 districts and CSI have
17 schools. How are they doing? And are -- is there -- I
18 think there's a time now to think about especially with
19 some of the expectations from the Department of Education
20 nationally, like, where is the trend going to move? I'd
21 be very nervous about adopting something cookie cutter.
22 I'd really want to look at making something that fits
23 Colorado, but it does ramp up the standards a little bit,
24 and maybe take a shot at evaluating all the districts
25 right now, and all those essential practices. How many



1 are hitting it and how many aren't?

2 MS. CLOVER: I -- just one last wrap-up.

3 NACSA and actually Alex Medler reached out recently to
4 NASB (ph) and so there has been some conversation about
5 where's the potential for some partnering, maybe more of
6 an umbrella type of arrangement that -- yes, you know,
7 and I, of course, interjected my points about Colorado is
8 a model, and a lot of places that we go we have -- we
9 have many, many opportunities to mention the law and how
10 it has really sustained and helped with modifying changes
11 to the -- not only the law, but how schools go about it
12 here. So, I was very excited to hear that conversation
13 has begun, and we will be looking at that, as well. So -
14 -

15 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Pam.

16 MS. MAZANEC: Thank you, nice to meet you.
17 I'm curious about the district partnerships. Do -- does
18 the districts enter into a contract with you, and your
19 paid for the services you provide to the charters that
20 are applying, or whatever situation you're in?

21 MR. HEMMING: Sure. So, the nature of them
22 with the three districts that I rattled off, we have an
23 MOU. So, it is -- it purely meant to ensure clear
24 communication and understanding between the two parties,
25 but not illegally, you know, we don't -- we're not going



1 that far at this point. We have other districts who
2 we're working more informally with that will ultimately
3 probably get to an MOU, but it's really for the sake of
4 making sure the terms are clear. What is the benefit to
5 that district to work with us, and when money is involved
6 there is -- there is not cost being charged at this
7 point.

8 Ultimately, though, if we go to scale with
9 this and we're doing Aurora and Adam Swelve (ph) and a
10 bunch of others, we will have to find some way of
11 covering our cost, because it wouldn't be fair to put
12 that burden on the schools in our portfolio, or
13 indirectly paying for it. But at this point the scale is
14 such that we can absorb it, so this year we worked with
15 two districts as follows, so it's reasonable, we'll just
16 see where it goes.

17 MS. MAZANEC: Okay.

18 MR. HEMMING: I think as long as we have at
19 the front end of that -- the point is quality authorizing
20 for the benefit of kids.

21 MS. MAZANEC: What do you do with the
22 charter applications that you don't accept? Do you --
23 what happens to them? Do you help them prepare a better
24 application, or are you saying it was the -- that 60
25 percent of applications were hopeless?



1 MR. HEMMING: I wouldn't say hopeless,
2 definitely, but we do a very rigorous review that's
3 aligned with the state principals and guidance that the
4 CDE puts out. We tailor those, of course, for us a
5 little bit. But the point is, those who are denied, or
6 who withdraw, they get a very robust set of information;
7 rubric-based reviews, and you hope that they would either
8 use that to apply again with us, or with somebody else,
9 and improve their product. Sometimes they do, sometimes
10 they don't.

11 We don't quote, unquote help them. We
12 provide guidance to all applicants in terms of making
13 sure they understand the application, critiquing them,
14 but typically for quote, unquote help, they would go to
15 the League of Charter Schools, and the league offers a
16 really critical review of applications. And I think
17 that's helpful as well. So we try to work in concert
18 with the league.

19 MS. MAZANEC: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Dr. Scheffel, questions?

21 MS. SCHEFFEL: I just want to thank you for
22 a great presentation and appreciate especially your focus
23 on accountability for student progress, that's excellent.
24 Is there anything that the state board can do to better
25 support your work, or any comments you have for our role



1 in the support of it?

2 MR. HEMMING: Thank you, and I think there
3 is. I think the question is as you move forward, and the
4 commissioner moves forward, trying to figure out what
5 will happen with districts who are kind of under the gun
6 with that clock. Is there a way that CSI can be helpful?
7 There's no way that we want to be an unwanted resource,
8 but we also feel like if there was a way to encourage
9 some openness and dialogue with districts that are really
10 struggling, we have some evidence that shows that charter
11 schools can be one small part of the strategy. Right?

12 So, I guess that would be the question, is
13 how can we do that in concert in a way that is absolutely
14 respectful of local control. We get that. We have no
15 desire to go where we're not wanted, but I feel like
16 sometimes the conversation could be broadened a little
17 bit.

18 MS. SCHEFFEL: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: And I'm going to -- all
20 right, but I'm going to -- I've kind of fallen down this
21 path, so make it quick.

22 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Talk to me about the issue
23 of facilities.

24 MR. HEMMING: Number one challenge for every
25 charter school anywhere in Colorado, CSI charter schools



1 particularly difficult. Because, as a CSI charter
2 school, there is no bonding authority. We do not have
3 any tax base for bonding. A lot of our schools will do
4 an independent bond, they will do private financing, I
5 think we might have one or two that have gotten
6 facilities through a district, but it is absolutely a
7 critical concern for us. So, when you look at our
8 legislative agenda, you know, we work in content with the
9 league and with others to say, "All right, we have to
10 find facility money to support our schools."

11 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Okay, so following --
12 kind of coming back to where Dr. Scheffel was at earlier.
13 This -- the concept of high autonomy as we begin to get
14 into this turnaround and what can we do to work with some
15 of these schools that are challenging they say -- it
16 seems counterintuitive almost. Explain to me how you
17 feel there's a good solution in that.

18 Mr. Hemming: I think we're probably a good
19 solution in that we, first of all, have an apparatus and
20 an ability to attract and to get attention for a certain
21 community through our call for applications. So, getting
22 noticed from either national CMOs, Charter Management
23 Organizations, or those based in Colorado that want to
24 expand.

25 So, A, we can get attention and provide a



1 way to have them focus on a certain community to say,
2 "This is -- this community may be now open to looking at
3 a charter." Then I think the question is how can we help
4 the district evaluate those options, or authorize them?
5 But to be -- to be clear, these would be options who are
6 best suited for CSI who were coming in ready to tackle a
7 problem, who are maybe not coming in needing a lot of
8 support and guidance in a way that a district embedded
9 authorizer would. So, to be clear, I would not say that
10 we are going to be providing that role.

11 Now there is, I think, an option to consider
12 is there an arm of CSI, or a silo within CSI, that could
13 have some more robust supports in maybe years one through
14 three, in an area that they really need some support?
15 We'd absolutely be open to that. But that would require
16 some changes into how we currently operate.

17 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Excellent. Okay. Well,
18 with that, I will thank you very much for coming in.

19 MR. SCHNEIDER: (indiscernible).

20 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Certainly.

21 MR. SCHNEIDER: Just from my standpoint and
22 the department's standpoint working with CSI, I want to
23 complement Ethan. You've done an incredible job. What
24 you've done in the few short years that you've been here,
25 and we really appreciate that, so keep up the good work.



1 You've been great to work with. Thank you.

2 MS. BERMAN: Thank you.

3 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Thank you.

4 MS. NEAL: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Thank you for being
6 (indiscernible).

7 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Here.

8 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Lunch time.

9 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Well --

10 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: No lunch time?
11 (indiscernible) had 15 minutes (indiscernible).

12 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Well, you know what, if
13 we didn't use so many words, we'd actually have lunch
14 time, but we've used too many words, so no lunch today.
15 We'll take a brief break for lunch, and then we'll come
16 back in and pick back up with -- what?

17 MS. NEAL: Two minute?

18 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: What's that? Two-minute
19 lunch, the commissioner says. We'll come back to the
20 legislative update.

21 (Meeting adjourned)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberly C. McCright, Certified Vendor and Notary, do hereby certify that the above-mentioned matter occurred as hereinbefore set out.

I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT the proceedings of such were reported by me or under my supervision, later reduced to typewritten form under my supervision and control and that the foregoing pages are a full, true and correct transcription of the original notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 25th day of May, 2019.

/s/ Kimberly C. McCright
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Certified Vendor and Notary Public

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