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News Release

CDE Publishes “The State of Charter Schools in Colorado”

The Colorado Department of Education Schools of Choice Office today published “The State of Charter Schools in Colorado.”

The document presents data and descriptive information about charter schools from the 2007-2008 school year when 141 charter schools operated in the state of Colorado. These schools served 56,188 or 6.9 percent of the total public school enrollment.

The full document is available on the CDE Web site at the following link: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/publications.htm>

“Charter schools clearly meet a wide variety of needs for parents and students and I am pleased to see the charter movement thriving,” said Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. “I encourage school districts and all charter school authorizers to listen closely to the desires of charter school parents and students. Many charter schools are shining examples of both student achievement and parent satisfaction and certainly we are obligated to understand what they have learned and apply the lessons as broadly as possible.”

The report includes a history of charter schools in Colorado, data about charter school characteristics (school size, grade level configuration, waiting lists, student-teacher ratios), characteristics of charter school students (racial/ethnic data, free lunch eligibility, disciplinary data) and charter school performance (Colorado Student Assessment

Program, Colorado Growth Model) and data about the administrators and teachers working in charter schools.

Some facts about charter schools in Colorado:

- Forty-seven percent of charter schools enroll less than 300 students, down from 58 percent in 2006. The mean enrollment was 398 students.
- The number of charter students enrolled in 2007-2008 ranged from six students (Prairie Creeks Charter School) to 3,341 students (Colorado Virtual Academy).
- The largest brick-and-mortar school is The Classical Academy, with 1,860 students.
- Sixty percent of charter schools (84 of 141 schools) fell outside of the traditional grade-level configuration of elementary, middle or high schools.
- Of the 133 charter schools that responded to a survey, 66 percent of charter schools (88 schools in all) stated there was a waiting list/lottery pool for enrollment. The statewide total waiting list was 38,374.
- Colorado charter schools served 20,930 racial/ethnic minority students, representing 37 percent of the total charter school enrollment (56,188). The state average was 39 percent. The percent of racial/ethnic minority students enrolled in charter schools has increased over time from 27 percent in 2001 to 32 percent in 2004.
- Charter schools served 14,089 students who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, representing 25 percent of the total enrollment (56,188) of the schools. This rate reflects steady growth compared to prior years. In 2005, 20 percent of charter school students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch, and in 2001 it was 17.8 percent. The average for public schools was 35 percent for fall 2007.
- During the 2007-2008 school year, students with disabilities represented 7 percent (or 3,905 students) of the charter school population. By comparison, the statewide percentage was 10 percent.
- The average teacher salary in charter schools was \$34,657, ranging from \$18,318 to \$53,115. The average teacher salary in districts in which those charters reside was \$45,950, which means charter teachers made an average of \$11,293 less than non-charter teachers.

For more information, contact Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Megan McDermott, 303-866-2334, in the CDE Office of Communications. To sign up for the CDE e-mail news service, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html>.

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