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CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE

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News Release

Mark Hyatt Named Executive Director Of Charter School Institute

The Board of Directors of the Charter School Institute today announced the appointment of Mark Hyatt, current president of The Classical Academy (TCA), as the institute's new executive director.

TCA is the largest kindergarten through twelfth grade charter school in Colorado with 3,100 students on several campuses in Colorado Springs. Hyatt has served as president of TCA since 2002.

"We are delighted to have a leader of Mark Hyatt's caliber leading the institute," said Alex Medler, president of the CSI Board of Directors. "Mark has a demonstrated commitment to quality charter schools. We are very excited because Mark will be able to build partnerships while moving the Charter School Institute into a leading role in education reform during the next phase of its existence."

Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones echoed those sentiments. "Mark Hyatt's experience and knowledge will be an asset not only to CSI, but to charter schools across the state," said the commissioner.

Hyatt said he welcomed the new challenge. "All students in Colorado deserve a great education and all parents deserve the opportunity to choose the school that's right for their children," said Hyatt.

"Wherever they are in their academic career today, we need to help students catch up, keep up or move up at every grade level."

Hyatt is a retired Air Force Colonel and fighter pilot. In addition to being a frontline combat squadron commander, he served as an advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Defense. He also served as the Vice Commandant at the U.S. Air Force Academy and six years as the Director of the Center for Character Development at the academy. In 2000, he received the Citizenship and Character Award from President Gerald Ford for his leadership of the academy's cutting edge character development program.

In 2002, Hyatt's passion for education led him to become the president of The Classical Academy, chartered by Academy School District 20. In addition to its large on-campus enrollment, TCA has the largest "home school" program of any school in Colorado. Additionally, the school offers a "blended/hybrid" online secondary school that has a unique community college partnership that allows high school students to take college courses at no cost and earn an Associate's Degree when they graduate from high school. Hyatt received the 2008 Education Innovator of the Year Award from the University of Colorado for the partnership.

Under Hyatt's leadership, Gov. Bill Ritter and the Colorado Department of Education in 2009 recognized TCA's high school as being in the top 6 percent academically in the state for sustained superior performance over three years. At the same time, TCA's high school was ranked in the top 1.5 percent nationally by Newsweek magazine.

In 2006, TCA was named the Best Public School among hundreds in the Pikes Peak Region by the Colorado Springs Gazette. In 2004, TCA was recognized as the top K-12 school in America for character education by the Character Education Partnership in Washington, D.C.

Hyatt serves on Gov. Ritter's P-20 Education Council and Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones' School Leadership Academy Board.

Deputy Executive Director, Lee Barratt

The CSI board also named Lee Barratt as deputy executive director. Barratt has been the Director of Fiscal Services / Chief Finance Officer at CSI since June 2007. Prior to joining CSI, Barratt was executive director at the Colorado School Resource Center, a nonprofit organization aiding schools of choice in Colorado. He has also worked

as a program administrator for the University of Colorado at Denver following a 25-year career with the U.S. Navy.

Barratt holds a master's degree in economics from the University of Colorado-Denver and has been involved in charter schools since 1997 as a founding parent at Lincoln Academy and Woodrow Wilson, both in Jefferson County Schools.

About The Charter School Institute

The Charter School Institute has grown from two schools in 2006 to 17 schools with a combined 6,244 students in 2009. Two more schools will be added for the 2010-2011 school year.

The Charter School Institute was created by the Colorado State Legislature in 2004 as an independent agency within the department of education. The Institute is governed by a nine-member board: seven members appointed by the governor and two by the commissioner of education. The original board members were appointed in September 2004.

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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