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NACSA Launches New Communications Effort

Jobi Cates named VP of Communications

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers is pleased to announce that Jobi Cates has joined the organization as Vice President of Communications.

Cates comes to NACSA from Human Rights Watch, where she served as the Senior Director of the Chicago Office since 2008. In her role there, she led an integrated communications and advocacy initiative to end the practice of sentencing children who commit serious crimes to “life without parole.” As the organization’s top representative in the Midwest, she was responsible for raising significant private funds to support Human Rights Watch’s global agenda and for building a broad and influential constituency to support the organization’s advocacy efforts.

Cates is a veteran of the charter school community. In the mid-1990s, she helped develop the charter application for one of Illinois’ first charter schools—now a thriving network. As a grant maker, she supported dozens of charter schools in formation and in their early years. Later, as a lobbyist, she advocated for improved charter school finance laws in Illinois, and to increase the “cap” on the available number of charters in Chicago. Before joining Human Rights Watch, she was the Illinois Advocacy Representative for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

“It’s our deep pleasure to welcome Jobi to NACSA and back to the charter school community,” said Greg Richmond, NACSA president and CEO. “Jobi has a track record as an innovative leader and an effective communicator, particularly on complex social issues. We will look to Jobi to help us amplify our core messages about the importance of quality in charter school authorizing.”

In the newly revamped role of Vice President of Communications, Cates will build a team to implement an ambitious communications plan developed in partnership with Larson Communications. The plan is designed to add NACSA’s voice to national and state-level debates on the role of charter schools in efforts to improve public school systems.

“Jobi has been a tenacious advocate for children for more than 20 years,” Richmond said. “Her work on behalf of youth being sentenced as adults in the criminal justice system has given her a keen awareness of the importance of getting public schools right.”

Cates joined the NACSA team on November 10.

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) is committed to advancing excellence and accountability in the charter school sector and to increasing the number of high-quality charter schools across the nation. To accomplish this mission, NACSA works to improve the policies and practices of authorizers—the organizations designated to approve, monitor, renew, and, if necessary, close charter schools. NACSA provides training, consulting, and policy guidance to authorizers. It also advocates for laws and policies that raise the bar for excellence among authorizers and the schools they charter. Visit <http://www.qualitycharters.org>