

NACSA Receives National Grant to Strengthen Charter School Quality Nationwide

For more than a decade, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) has led the effort to improve quality within the charter school community by helping authorizers set high standards, facilitate innovation, and protect the interests of students and the public. Today, the U.S. Department of Education recognizes the critical role of authorizers by awarding a \$2.3 million National Leadership Activities Grant to NACSA for its Better Outcomes through Quality Authorizing (BOQA) Project.

This is NACSA's second consecutive National Leadership Activities grant, a highly-competitive award from the U.S. Department of Education's Charter Schools Program, to support efforts to improve the quality of charter schools on issues of national significance and scope. The grant was submitted in partnership with the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the Education Commission of the States (ECS), the National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools (NCSECS), and Civil Rights Solutions (CRS).

"We are thrilled to receive this grant, which represents a vote of confidence in NACSA and its work," said Greg Richmond, president and CEO of NACSA. "Improvements in authorizing are the linchpin in the work to impact the overall quality of the sector and the lives of schoolchildren who attend our nation's charter schools."

Through the BOQA project, NACSA will improve authorizers' practices by helping them identify and overcome key challenges in authorizer practice, as well as create a strengthened set of standards, resources, and adoption strategies that reflect emerging trends in the charter sector. The project will also facilitate our understanding of the links between high standards, strong and faithful implementation of good authorizing practice, and the quality of charter school portfolios.

The project also addresses issues of uneven quality and questions of equity that are challenging the charter sector. Through the grant, NACSA will work to develop strategies and disseminate practices that increase access to charter schools for students with disabilities and English learners, as well as increase charter schools' capacity to recruit, enroll and serve these students by increasing student achievement.

The work will be amplified and shared widely by a network of partners with extensive expertise in the field, aiming to increase the number of high-quality charter schools across the country, decrease the number of low-performing schools through closure, and thereby creating an improvement in student achievement and outcomes.

"Many, but not all, charter schools are having success serving our nation's most disadvantaged children," Richmond concluded. "This grant helps us address emerging challenges in the sector and ensures we're doing all that we can to help give more children the chance to attend a great school – one that will prepare them for success throughout their lives."

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. In late 2012, NACSA launched its One Million Lives campaign to give one million more children the opportunity to attend a great school. Visit www.qualitycharters.org