



**Colorado Charter Schools
Annual Conference**
February 25-27, 2026
Denver Marriott Tech Center

**FORWARD
TOGETHER** 
2026

"If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together."
— African proverb



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(78) Tools That Strengthen Authorizer Quality: The Authorizer Self- Reflection Tool & Welcome Kit

Karega Rausch, Founder & CEO
NACSA

Longs Peak
February 26, 2026 | 8:30 – 9:30 AM
Authorizers



“
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Colorado Charter Schools
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We make it our priority to **advocate** for high-quality public **charter schools** across Colorado.



Be a part of the action.

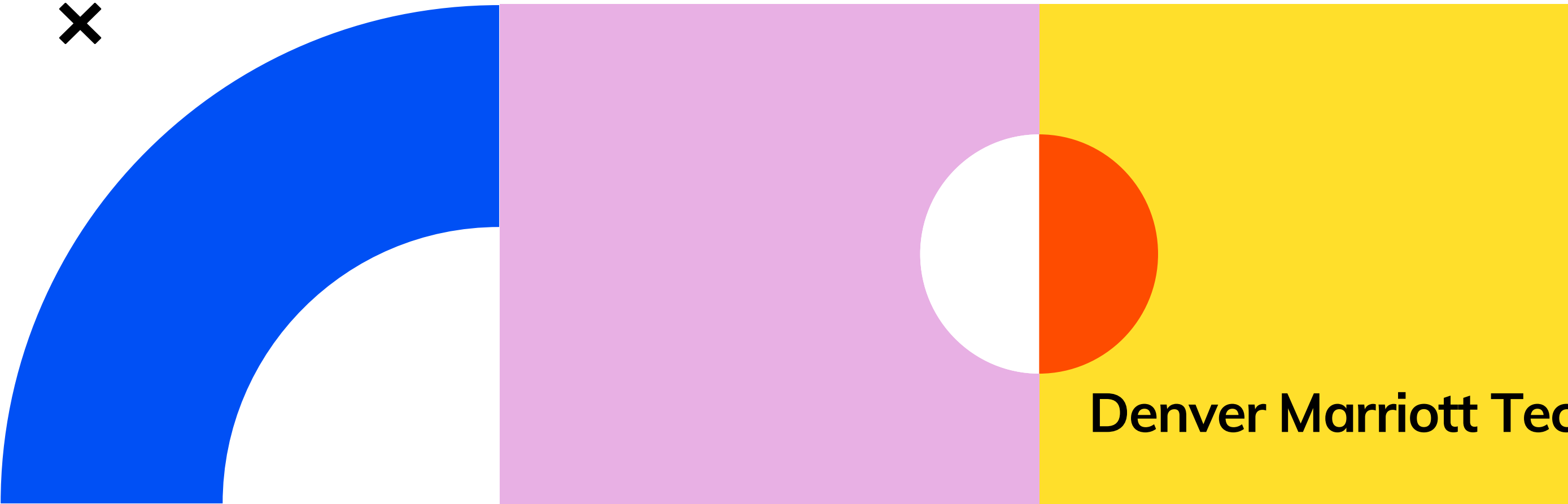




Tools That Strengthen Authorizer Quality

The Authorizer Self-Reflection Tool & Welcome Kit

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February 26, 2026

Denver Marriott Tech Center - Longs Peak

Room

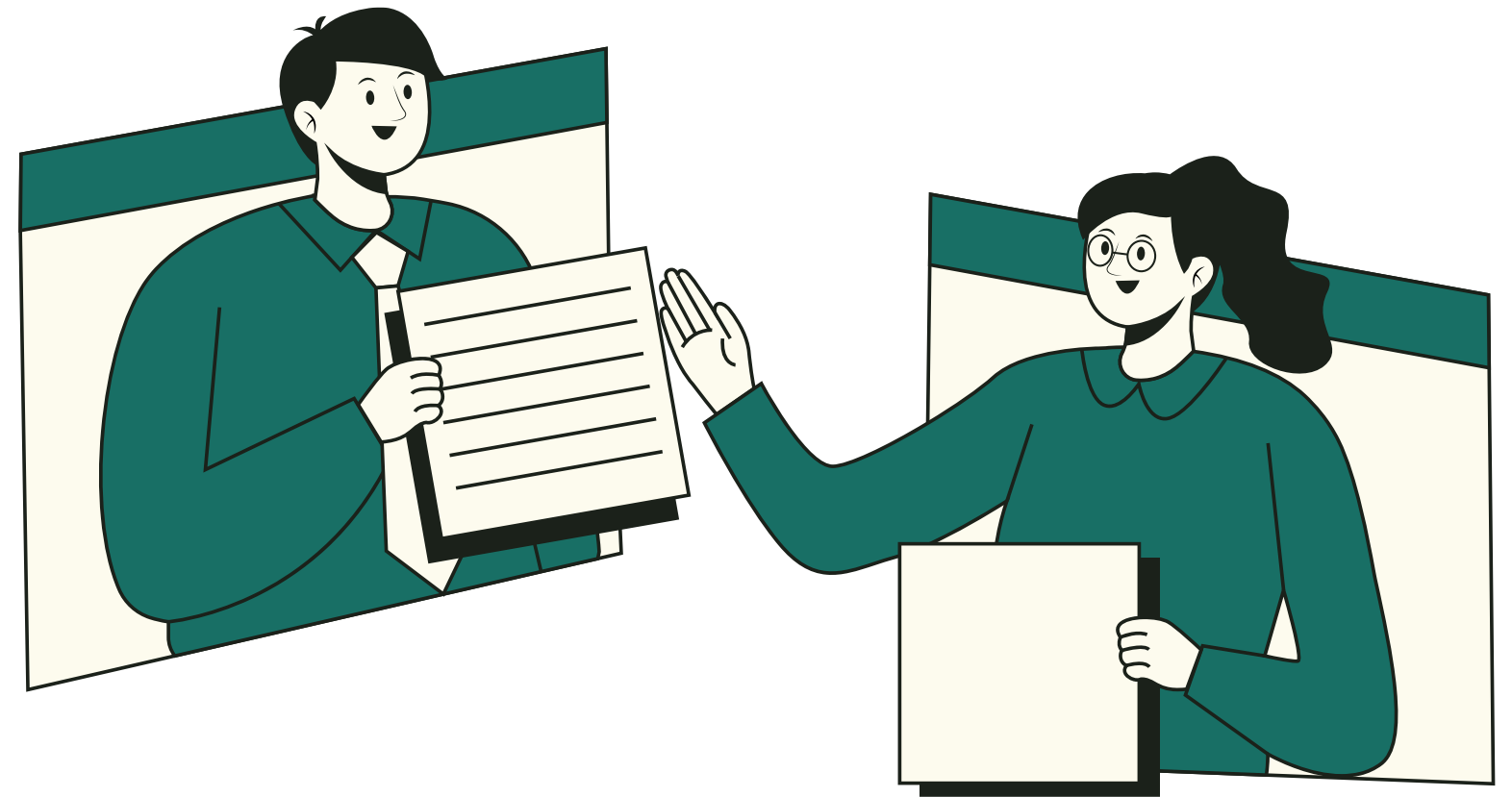
Session Purpose



Introduce two CACSA resources that help districts strengthen consistency, transparency, and shared expectations in charter school authorizing.

Participants will:

- Understand the purpose and structure of the Authorizer Self-Reflection Tool and Year 1 Authorizer Welcome Kit
- See how the tools align to Colorado and national authorizing best practices
- Learn how each resource supports strong authorizing across the charter lifecycle
- Consider how one or both tools could be adapted within their local context



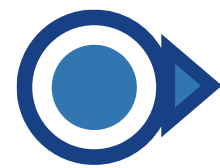
Why these tools exist



- Authorizing is complex and high-stakes
- Many districts lack dedicated authorizing systems or onboarding
- Need for shared standards and continuous improvement
- Support alignment to Colorado and national best practices

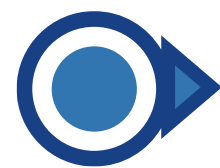


What Strong Authorizing Requires



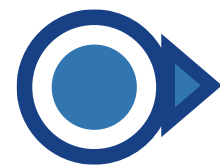
Clear policies

Do our charter policies clearly define expectations and decision criteria?



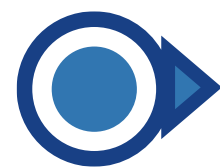
Consistent processes

Are our authorizing processes applied the same way across schools and over time?



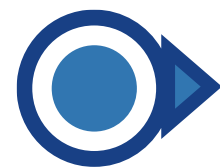
Defined roles

Are board and staff responsibilities in authorizing clearly understood?



Evidence-based decisions

Do charter decisions consistently rely on defined evidence rather than opinion?



Lifecycle alignment

Do our policies and practices connect coherently across the charter lifecycle?

Common Challenges

- Inconsistent processes
- Unclear oversight expectations
- Renewal confusion
- Contract variability
- Board/staff role ambiguity
- Insufficient internal capacity



CACSA Response: Two Complementary Tools



The Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers (CACSA) gratefully acknowledges the partnership and support of the Colorado League of Charter Schools in developing these resources, which were created as part of a grant-funded initiative to strengthen authorizing practices across the state.

Authorizer Welcome Kit → builds systems

Authorizer Self-Evaluation → evaluates systems

Together → continuous improvement

Authorizer Welcome Kit

What is it?

A practical onboarding and reference resource that helps new and developing authorizers understand their role and establish strong systems and practices across the charter school lifecycle.

- Onboarding and reference resource for authorizers
- Best-practice guidance across the charter life cycle
- Narrative explanations + links to model documents
- Designed especially for new or transitioning authorizers



What's Included?

AUTHORIZER WELCOME KIT



- 1 Role of the authorizer
- 2 Colorado legal and policy context
- 3 Setting up an authorizer office
- 4 Applications, oversight, renewal, and closure
- 5 Templates, tools, and resources

What Authorizers Gain from the Welcome Kit

- Clarity of authorizing roles and responsibilities
- Lifecycle-aligned processes and expectations
- Foundational structures for consistent practice
- Alignment to state and national standards



Discussion: New to Authorizing

- When someone new takes on authorizing responsibilities in your district, how do they learn what to do across the charter lifecycle?
- Which stage of authorizing (application, contracting, oversight, renewal, closure) feels least clearly defined or documented in your district?



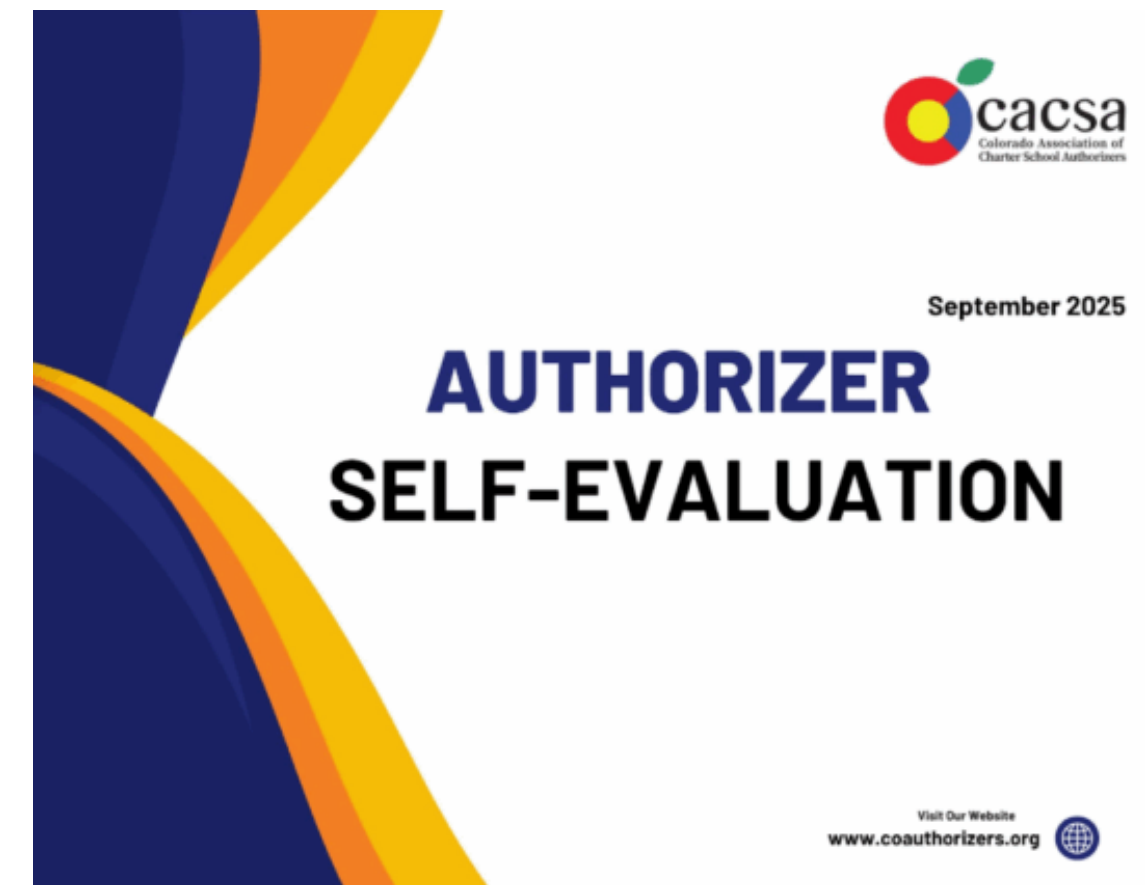
Authorizer Self-Evaluation

What is it?



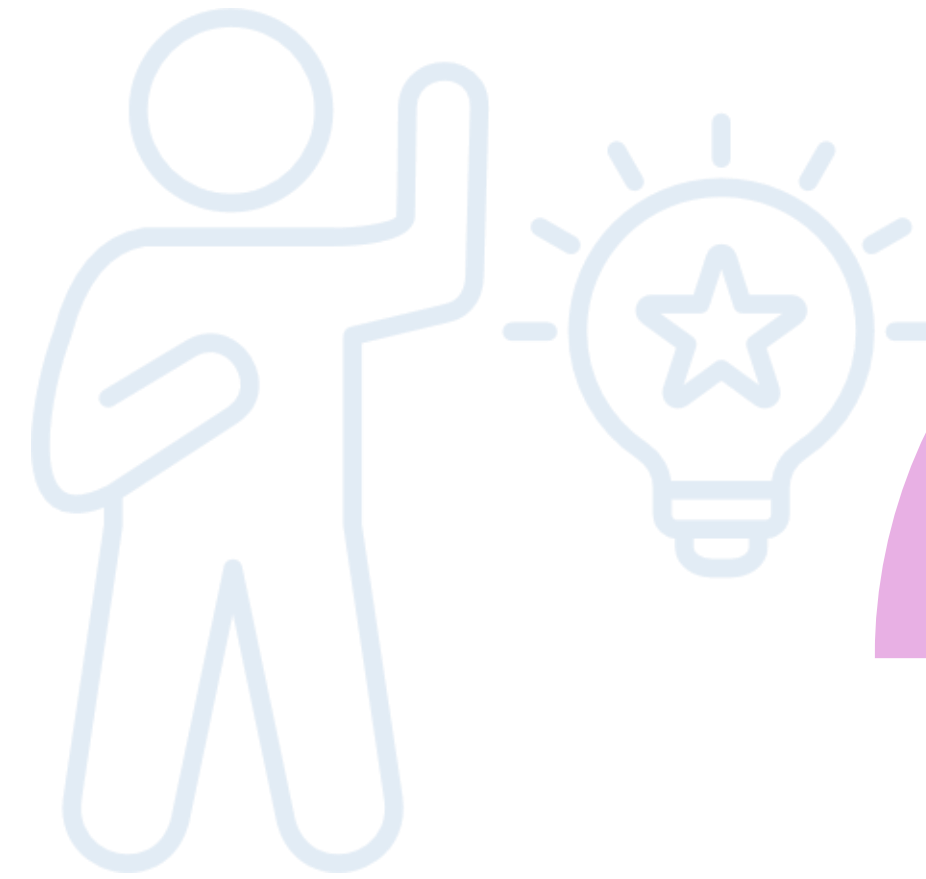
Supports authorizers to reflect on current practices, identify strengths and gaps, and guide improvement planning.

- Structured self-assessment of authorizing practices
- Aligned to NACSA Principles & Standards and Colorado Authorizer Standards
- Five domains across the charter life cycle
- Scoring + evidence + reflection + improvement planning



How to Use

AUTHORIZER SELF-EVALUATION TOOL



1

Rate current practices

2

Collect evidence

3

Discuss strengths and gaps as a team

4

Prioritize improvements

5

Track growth over time

What Authorizers Gain from Self-Reflection

- Clarity of practice
- Shared understanding
- Prioritized improvements
- Alignment to standards

Coming Soon!



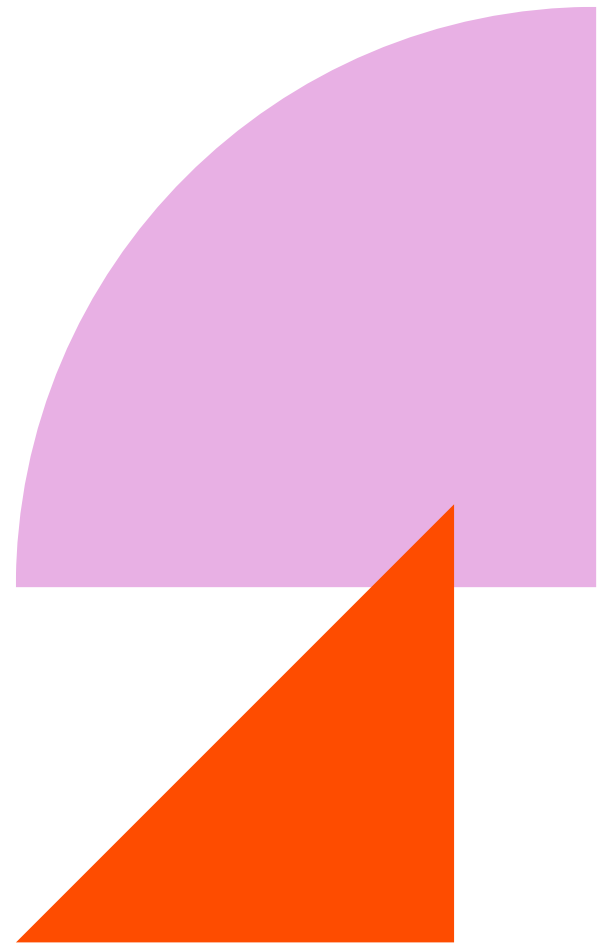
Using These Tools Together

Example flow:

1. Map systems with Welcome Kit
2. Reflect using Self-Evaluation
3. Identify gaps or focus areas
4. Update policies/processes
5. Repeat over time



x



Which tool would be most useful in your context?

Where could it strengthen your system?

CACSA About Us



Who We Are

CACSA is Colorado's statewide nonprofit supporting high-quality charter school authorizing. We help authorizers strengthen their systems, adopt best practices, and align oversight with Colorado's policies and culture of local control. Our members include authorizing professionals, Superintendents, and school board members from school districts in Colorado as well as the Colorado Charter School Institute.

What We Do



Authorizer
Training & PD



Model Tools &
Resources



Statewide
Authorizer
Network



Technical
Assistance



“Our school district is now in an excellent position thanks to the guidance, service, and support of CACSA.”

-Boulder Valley School District

What CACSA Offers School Districts

Tools - Training - Networks - Support

“I highly recommend CACSA to any district or organization seeking a knowledgeable, principled, and professional partner in charter school authorizing. They are an exceptional resource in a complex and high-stakes space.”

-Mesa County Valley School District 51

Authorizer Support Services



Application & Approval

Expert external reviewers for charter applications, capacity interviews, and quality evaluations that support clear, evidence-based board decisions.



Monitoring & Oversight

Site visit tools, annual performance reviews, and actionable data analysis to support schools throughout the charter term.



Contracting & Performance Frameworks

Clear, compliant contracts and performance metrics that define academic, financial, and operational expectations from the start.



Renewal, Intervention & Closure

Structured processes for renewal decisions, intervention planning, and orderly, student-centered closure when necessary.

How to Engage with CACSA



Become a CACSA Member



Request district-specific support



Join monthly meetings



Invite CACSA to train your board



Access statewide tools + templates



Scan to connect with CACSA or request district support.

Contact

Mackenzie Khan, Ed.D.

Executive Director

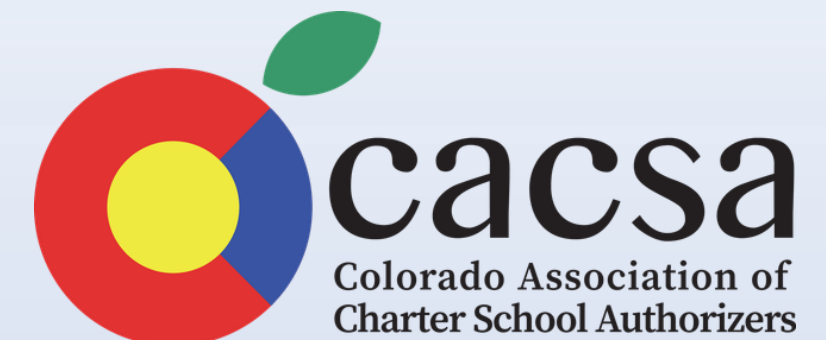
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**“
Your
feedback
helps us all
move forward
together**



**Colorado League of
Charter Schools**

Each time you take the survey you can enter to win prizes