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NACSA Recognizes the SUNY Charter Schools Institute, the State of Michigan and NAPCS with Awards for Excellence

Awards Presented for Excellence in Advancing Knowledge, Improving Policy and Improving Practice

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Chicago, Ill. (October 25, 2010) – The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) presented its annual Awards for Excellence recognizing the exemplary practices of the State University of New York (SUNY) Charter Schools Institute, the State of Michigan and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS). The awards were presented Wednesday, October 20 at the 2010 NACSA Leadership Conference in Scottsdale, Ariz.

NACSA president and CEO Greg Richmond remarks, “Authorizers are the cornerstone of the charter school movement, and best practices in the sector are critical towards the success of charter schools across this nation. NACSA is pleased to recognize the SUNY Charter Schools Institute, the State of Michigan and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools for their outstanding work in bringing high quality educational opportunities to children across the country.”

The SUNY Charter Schools Institute, the nation's largest university-affiliated charter school authorizer, was presented the Award for Excellence in Improving Practice - Best Application Process. SUNY's high quality application process is aligned with NACSA's *Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing*. Their protocol includes an in-depth academic, legal and fiscal review of new applications by Institute staff as well as review by a panel of nationally recognized education experts; two interviews with the lead applicant and proposed board; and a detailed due diligence review of any proposed management partner.

In accepting the award, Charter Schools Institute Executive Director Jonas S. Chartock noted that SUNY is proud of its rigorous application review process. “It is tough to get a charter from SUNY and everyone who applies to us knows that. But we set the bar high because at the end of the day, we believe that those who are approved come away with a better blue print to build a better school.”

NACSA awarded the State of Michigan with its Award for Excellence in Improving Policy for becoming the first state to enact a “smart cap.” This smart cap makes charter public schools that meet the legal definition of “high performing” or “beating the odds” eligible for reauthorization under a new section of law and outside of the cumulative 150-school cap placed on university authorizers. By making growth of the charter sector possible, but contingent upon quality, Michigan has acknowledged the important role of charter public schools in its education system, while providing the movement with an additional performance incentive.

“The Michigan Council of Charter School Authorizers is truly grateful for the work so many dedicated legislators such as Senators Wayne Kuipers (R-Holland) and Buzz Thomas (D-Detroit), in developing legislation that will serve the children and communities of Michigan well for many years to come,” said Billie Wimmer, executive director of the Council, who accepted the award on behalf of those involved in passing the legislation.

NACSA was pleased to present its Award for Excellence in Advancing Knowledge for *How State Charter Laws Rank Against The New Model Public Charter School Law*, by Todd Ziebarth and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. In January 2010, NAPCS released the first-ever ranking of all state charter school laws that is based on the full range of values in the public charter school movement: quality and accountability, funding equity, facilities support, autonomy, and growth and choice. The report assesses the strengths of each state's charter school law against the 20 essential components of a strong law contained in *A New Model Law For Supporting The Growth Of High-Quality Public Charter Schools*, released by the Alliance in June 2009.

"We are honored to be recognized for our work to improve state charter school laws," said Peter C. Groff, president and CEO, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. "Strong authorizing practices are a critical component of any good charter school law, and NACSA does a terrific job working to help authorizers model excellence. We hope policymakers will pay close attention to how their state's laws support these high-quality authorizing practices and the growth of a high-quality charter school sector in general."

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) is the trusted resource and innovative leader working with public officials and education leaders to increase the number of high-quality charter schools in cities and states across the nation. NACSA provides training, consulting, and policy guidance to authorizers and education leaders interested in increasing the number of high-quality schools and improving student outcomes.

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