

The Washington State Board of Education

Governance | Accountability | Achievement | Oversight | Career & College Readiness

Title:	I-1240 and Quality Charter School Authorizing	
As Related To:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal One: Effective and accountable P-13 governance. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Two: Comprehensive statewide K-12 accountability. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Three: Closing achievement gap.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Four: Strategic oversight of the K-12 system. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Five: Career and college readiness for all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Relevant To Board Roles:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy Leadership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> System Oversight <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Convening and Facilitating
Policy Considerations / Key Questions:	A representative of a nationally recognized organization with expertise in requirements for quality authorizing of charter schools will present to the Board. Members will hear perspectives on Washington's charter school law, in relation to other states' laws, that will help inform decisions SBE will make on approval of authorizers, oversight of authorizers, and other responsibilities assigned by I-1240.	
Possible Board Action:	<input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt <input type="checkbox"/> Approve <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	
Materials Included in Packet:	<input type="checkbox"/> Memo <input type="checkbox"/> Graphs / Graphics <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Third-Party Materials <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint	
Synopsis:	<p>Mr. Alex Medler, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy at the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), will address remarks to the Board on best practices for charter school authorizing, provide NACSA perspective on Washington's charter school law, and discuss how the SBE can carry out duties under I-1240 in a way as to promote best outcomes for students.</p> <p>The National Association of Charter School Authorizers is a non-profit, membership-based organization, founded in 2000, whose stated mission is "to achieve the establishment and operation of quality charter schools through responsible oversight in the public interest." Its members, consisting mainly of school districts, state education agencies, and higher education institutions, oversee more than half of the nation's nearly 5,000 charter schools. It has a ten-member Board of Directors including such recognized education leaders as James Peyser, Partner at New Schools Venture Fund and former chair of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, and Hannah Skandera, New Mexico Secretary of Education.</p> <p>NACSA has published a series of policy guides on such topics as charter school performance accountability, charter school contracts, the charter school application process, and authorizer funding. Its flagship publication <i>Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing</i>, a set of guidelines to best practices in charter authorizing, has been written into state laws and rules and influenced federal legislation.</p> <p>In your packet is a letter to Mr. Medler from Executive Director Ben Rarick asking him to address certain questions of interest to SBE in his remarks. There will be opportunity for questions and discussion at the end of Mr. Medler's presentation.</p>	

December 20, 2012

Mr. Alex Medler
Vice President of Policy and Advocacy
National Association of Charter School Authorizers
105 West Adams Street, Suite 3500
Chicago, IL 60603-6253

Dear Mr. Medler:

Please accept our appreciation for agreeing to present to the State Board of Education on January 9 on I-1240 and quality charter school authorizing. We believe NACSA has much of value to offer the SBE on how it may perform its duties under the state's new charter schools law in a way to achieve best outcomes for children, and look forward to your presentation.

We request that you address the following questions in your remarks:

1. In what ways has Washington benefited from being one of the last states to authorize the establishment of charter schools? What are some of the lessons that have been learned from the 20 years of experience with charter schools in other states?
2. How does our law compare to other states' laws in important ways? Specifically, how do I-1240 and our draft rules differ from how other states handle the authorizer role?
3. What are the most frequent reasons that charter schools fail? What are the most important things that authorizers can do to avert those failures?
4. Your organization recently launched a "One Million Lives" campaign in which it called on charter authorizers to "be more proactive in closing failing schools and opening great ones." Please discuss why this campaign was launched, what NACSA hopes to accomplish, and how it hopes to accomplish it.

Thank you again for your participation in our January meeting. Do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Ben Rarick
Executive Director

Tbj

Jeff Vincent, *Chair* • Randy Dorn, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*
Dr. Bernal Baca • Amy Bragdon • Kevin Laverty • Phyllis Bunker Frank • Elias Ulmer
Bob Hughes • Dr. Kristina Mayer • Matthew Spencer • Cynthia McMullen
Mary Jean Ryan • Tre' Maxie • Connie Fletcher • Judy Jennings
Ben Rarick, *Executive Director*

Biography of Alex Medler



Alex Medler is Vice President, Policy and Advocacy for the National Association of Charter Schools (NACSA). Medler has been a national expert on charter school policy since the opening days of the movement, analyzing the first laws in 1992.

Medler began his work with charter schools when he worked with state policymakers and researched major education reforms for the Education Commission of the States (ECS) from 1992 to 1997. At ECS, Medler studied the first charter school laws that were proposed and debated, and he documented the political and programmatic implementation issues occurring around the nation. Medler received an Expert Appointment to the U.S. Department in 1997, where he served until 2001 in a variety of capacities including directing the Public Charter School Program. At the Department, Medler led a national research and technical assistance effort and served as the Department's principal expert on charter schools, providing guidance to the White House, the U.S. Secretary of Education, and other senior leadership within the Department. He also has direct experience as a charter school authorizer.

Medler was a founding board member and board chair of the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI), a statewide charter authorizing entity. From 2004 to 2009, he worked at the Colorado Children's Campaign, a children's advocacy organization in Colorado that strives to improve the lives of children in the state by addressing a broad array of policy issues. He joined the NACSA team in 2009.

Medler has written extensively on education reform and worked with policymakers at the local, state and national level to improve education. Medler earned his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Colorado at Boulder, and a B.A. in Politics from the University of California Santa Cruz.