1. Purpose

Consistent with the SRC’s commitment to acting as a top-quality authorizer of high-performing charter schools, the SRC adopts this policy to ensure that the Charter Schools Office (“CSO”) prioritizes a commitment to excellence in education and in authorizing practices and has the resources necessary to conduct its authorizing duties effectively and efficiently.

2. Personnel

Effective July 1, 2014, the Charter Schools Office and the Executive Director shall report to the SRC. The CSO shall be led by an Executive Director of the Charter Schools Office. The Executive Director position shall be a cabinet position in District leadership. The Charter Schools Office will coordinate with District offices, including the Office of General Counsel, the Office of Auditing Services, the Office of Strategic Analytics, the Office of Student Enrollment and Placement, the Office of Procurement Services, the Office of Food Services, the Office of Facilities Operations, the Office of Transportation, the Office of Research and Evaluation, the Office of Specialized Services and the Strategy Delivery Unit. The Executive Director may issue procedures describing CSO functions, structure, and staff member responsibilities. The procedures shall be published and available on the District web site. The District shall ensure that the CSO has a staffing level appropriate and sufficient to carry out all authorizing responsibilities. The SRC shall ensure appropriate and sufficient funding of the CSO.

3. Quality Charter School Authorizing

The CSO shall conduct the following authorizing functions on behalf of the SRC, in a manner consistent with national standards for high-quality authorizing:
a) Establishing clear, high standards for charter school academic, operational, and financial performance in collaboration with other District departments, charter schools, and community stakeholders;

b) Organizing and conducting the application process for new high-quality charter schools when the SRC is accepting new applications;

c) Conducting ongoing performance evaluation and compliance monitoring;

d) Using comprehensive academic, financial, and operational performance data to make renewal, nonrenewal, and revocation recommendations to the SRC;

e) Reviewing charter school modification requests;

f) Evaluating the CSO’s work regularly against national standards for quality authorizing and recognized best practices;

g) Supporting parents, students, community members, and other stakeholders in being well-informed about charter school performance; and

4. Providing Operational Support to Charter Schools

The CSO shall provide the charter schools with certain operational support, including, but not limited to:

a) Responding to questions and concerns in a timely manner;

b) Assisting with operational functions as stipulated in the charter agreement; and

c) Providing information about pertinent changes in authorizing policies and procedures.

d) Providing technical assistance, such as professional development and performance improvement planning support, to charter schools boards and leaders as capacity allows and in cooperation with members of the charter sector.

5. Resources

The CSO shall engage high-quality expertise and leadership for all areas essential to charter school oversight through staff, contractual relationships, and/or collaborations with outside organizations.
6. Ethics Policy

To promote and protect public trust and confidence in the integrity of the CSO, CSO employees shall comply with The School District of Philadelphia Employee Code of Ethics. No CSO employee or former CSO employee may accept employment with any charter school, charter management organization, charter school real property operators, management entities, or charter foundations with whom the CSO employee or former CSO employee dealt in an official capacity for a period of twelve (12) months after the CSO employee or former CSO employee left the District by resignation, retirement or termination.