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### Centers of Excellence Initiative

#### ***Four charter schools to partner and share exemplary practices to support excellence for all students***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: New York, NY** – The National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools (NCSECS) has launched its *Centers of Excellence Initiative* to proactively work with four charter schools -- located in Colorado, Indiana, New York and Washington, DC -- that are providing innovative services to students with disabilities to serve as models so that more schools can effectively teach and support students with disabilities.

Co-founder and Executive Director of NCSECS, Lauren Morando Rhim explained, “Through an examination and vetting of student outcome and enrollment data, school leadership and a strong cultural and professional commitment to developing exemplary programs for students with disabilities, we have identified four terrific schools willing to work with us this academic year. Together, we are committed to documenting best practices and providing technical assistance that promises to positively impact students and foster knowledge regarding replicable high quality charter programs that can be successfully shared across a region, a state, and within charter networks.”

The four schools selected for the NCSECS Centers of Excellence Initiative are:

- Denver School of Science and Technology, Denver, CO
- Paramount School of Excellence, Indianapolis, IN
- Brooklyn Laboratory Charter School, Brooklyn, NY
- Two Rivers Public Charter School, Washington, DC

The 2016-2017 initiative is part of NCSECS' strategic priority to identify, document, support, and promote provision of exemplary services for diverse learners in charter schools. Over the coming year, NCSECS will conduct case studies to identify key practices, policies, and structures that may be used as models of best practices for students with disabilities. As a part of this initiative, NCSECS will conduct interviews, review documents, observe classrooms and daily school systems, and provide customized technical assistance developed in collaboration with the schools.

Morando Rhim concluded, “It is our goal to do all we can to document dynamic learning opportunities, forge new partnerships and address barriers that may impede charter schools’ ability to enroll and effectively educate students with disabilities. We are committed to identifying and supporting charter schools that build systemic capacity so teachers and school leaders are equipped to provide what students need. This initiative is perfectly timed to do that.”

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