



## For Immediate Release

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## 10th Annual Wisconsin Charter Schools Conference to take place March 22-23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010 in Madison

*“QUALITY HAPPENS” is Theme of This Year’s Interactive Conference*

**Madison, WI – March 12, 2010** – The 2010 Wisconsin Charter Schools Conference will take place March 22-23<sup>rd</sup> at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center in downtown Madison. The Conference will feature interactive sessions; hands-on examples of innovative learning in classrooms; networking; a coaching room open throughout the conference; and keynote speakers that highlight the importance of quality in and around each classroom, and the impact that quality has on the learning of students everywhere.

Featured speakers at the conference include **Greg Richmond**, President and founding board member of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers and establisher of the Chicago Public School District’s Charter Schools Office; **Ursula Wright**, the Chief Operating Officer for the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools; **Sarah Archibald** of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education at UW-Madison and the Value-Added Research Center; and **Richard Halverson**, an associate professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Also speaking at the Conference will be:

- **State Senator John Lehman** (D-Racine), Chair Senate Education Committee
- **State Senator Luther Olsen** (R-Berlin), Ranking Minority Member, Senate Education
- **State Representative SONDY POPE-ROBERTS** (D-Middleton), Chair, Assembly Education Committee
- **State Representative Brett Davis** (R-Oregon), Ranking Minority Member, Assembly Education

John Gee, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Charter Schools Association, spoke about this year’s event. “This year’s Conference is especially important for all public schools across the state, including public charter schools,” Gee stated. “Now that Wisconsin will not have access to the Race to the Top funds, the focus of our state will turn to the \$86 million in DPI (Department of Public Instruction) funds that are to be used over the next five years to start 130 new charter schools.

“This conference will provide the tools, resources, and connections to ensure these new schools will focus on quality,” Gee continued. “The bottom line is that for anyone who is looking to start a new

charter school, is looking to enhance an existing charter school, or wants to apply learnings from charter schools to traditional public school settings, this conference is the place to obtain all the needed information and to meet the appropriate people.”

Monday afternoon will feature a special session to include hands-on exhibitions of academic projects, and approximately 50 charter school students will be in attendance. These students and their projects will showcase the wide range curriculum and teaching methods that quality public charter schools employ across the state.

The Conference will run from 7:30 a.m. – 7 p.m. on Monday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, and from 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Registration is available on-line at the WCSA website and at the door. Keynote speakers, mini-conference sessions and hands-on demonstrations are scheduled throughout both days, with set times for keynote speakers to address the entire conference audience. Full conference and schedule information is at: <http://www.wicharterschools.org/vnews/display.v/SEC/2010%20Wisconsin%20Charter%20Schools%20Conference>

The 2010 Charter Schools Conference is sponsored by the Wisconsin Charter Schools Association and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

### **About Wisconsin Public Charter Schools**

Charter schools are independent public schools that are free to be more innovative and are held accountable for improved student achievement. As of September 2009, there are more than 200 charter schools in operation in Wisconsin, serving more than 30,000 public school students.

### **About The Wisconsin Charter Schools Association**

The Wisconsin Charter Schools Association (WCSA) is a statewide voluntary membership organization of charter public schools and friends of charter public schools. WCSA's mission is to promote unprecedented levels of student success by helping to build the capabilities of charter public schools in Wisconsin. Wisconsin Charter Schools Association, P.O. Box 1704, Madison, WI 53701, [www.wicharterschools.org](http://www.wicharterschools.org); 608-261-1120.

### **ABOUT THE SPEAKERS**

#### **About Greg Richmond**

**Greg Richmond** was a founding board member of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), serving as the chair of the board from 2000-2005. In 2005 he became NACSA's full-time President. Under his full-time leadership, NACSA's national influence has expanded substantially, including a significant role in the re-opening of New Orleans schools as charter schools, in-depth training of California Department of Education staff, a multi-authorizer training and development project in New York City, and multi-year projects in Florida and Ohio.

From 1994 to 2005, Richmond worked for the Chicago Public Schools, where he established the district's Charter Schools Office. Under his leadership, Chicago was the first urban school district in the nation to release an RFP, requesting educators and community organizations to start charter schools. He also established the nation's first district-funded capital loan fund for charter schools and developed model accountability and monitoring practices.

From 2003 to 2005, he launched Chicago's Renaissance 2010 initiative as the district's Chief Officer for New Schools Development, under Arne Duncan, then the CEO of the Chicago Public Schools. In that capacity he continued to work with the district's charter schools, as well as small schools, contract schools and new, autonomous district-operated schools.

Richmond serves on many boards and committees, including the Aspen Institute's Commission on No Child Left Behind, Tulane University's Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Advanced Certification for Educational Leaders Steering Committee and the Haitian Development Fund.

### **About Ursula Wright**

**Ursula Wright** Ursula Wright is the Chief Operating Officer for the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Her primary responsibilities include partnering with her direct reports to develop and implement the programmatic aspects of the Alliance's strategy and annual budget. Before assuming her current position in February 2009, Ursula served as the Chief Financial Officer at the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools for three years.

Prior to joining the Alliance, Ursula worked in the private sector for more than a decade. Her most notable positions leveraged her expertise in corporate finance, operations, and business development at some of the nation's most recognized firms, including The Chase Manhattan Bank, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Cassidy & Associates, and a General Electric subsidiary.

Throughout her career, Ursula has made the time to give back to her surrounding communities. One of her most notable accomplishments is serving as a founding trustee of Achievement Preparatory Academy – a charter middle school located in the eighth ward of Washington, D.C.

Ursula earned an Economics degree from Spelman College and a Master of Business Administration from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. Her keynote is entitled, "Building quality charter schools: good intentions are not good enough."

### **About Sarah Archibald**

**Sarah Archibald** is passionate about reforming the public schools such that all children have the opportunity to get a great education. Thoroughly educated at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Sarah has a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science, a Master's in Policy Analysis and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. For more than ten years, she worked in education research, primarily at the Consortium for Policy Research in Education at UW-Madison but also at the Value-Added Research Center. Her research delved into such issues as resource allocation, school reform, professional development, school finance adequacy, teacher effectiveness, human capital management, charter schools and more.

This year, she is on loan from the University to Governor Doyle to assist with Wisconsin's Race to the Top application. Sarah has consulted nationally with states and school districts on such issues as school finance adequacy, instructional improvement and effective resource allocation. She has also taught graduate courses at UW-Madison and is currently training to be a yoga instructor.

**About Richard Halverson**

**Richard Halverson** is an associate professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is co-director of Games, Learning, and Society at UW-Madison, an internationally known research group that investigates how cutting edge learning technologies can reshape learning in and out of schools. Richard Halverson is co-author (with Allan Collins) of *Rethinking Education in the Age of Technology: The Digital Revolution and Schooling in America*.

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