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MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD WELCOMES MARIAN SCHUTTE AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JACKSON, MS – The Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board announced today that Marian Schutte, of New Orleans, will begin work as Executive Director on November 3, becoming the first employee of the newly created state agency. The board voted unanimously to hire Schutte at their September board meeting and her salary was then vetted and approved by the state Personnel Board as state law requires.

“We are thrilled that Marian has accepted this position,” said Board Chairman Tommie Cardin. “Her experience overseeing and monitoring charter schools from a state agency perspective coupled with her experience as a teacher inside a charter school, make her uniquely qualified for this position.”

Schutte is stepping down from her post at the Louisiana Department of Education where she was the Portfolio Office’s Executive Director of Policy and Planning. There she oversaw all policies related to Louisiana’s Portfolio Programs of more than 90 state-authorized charter schools across Louisiana. She led the process of overhauling Louisiana’s charter school renewal standards resulting in higher expectations for charter school evaluations and a separate evaluation framework for alternative charter schools.

She was also a middle school Spanish teacher at a charter school in New Orleans’ Recovery School District. “Through this experience I witnessed the power and positive impact that a high-quality charter school can have on a child’s life,” said Schutte. “I truly believe in a charter school’s ability to close the achievement gap.”

Schutte earned a master’s degree in public policy from Vanderbilt University and a bachelor’s degree in political science from Tulane University. Her arrival coincides with the second cycle of the authorization process where she will be able to guide the board as they reach final decisions in early December.

On August 15, 2014, the board received letters of intent from ten organizations to apply for new charter schools through its fall 2014 RFP process. Of those, seven organizations submitted applications on the September 15 full proposal deadline. The board

announced today that two applications meet a minimum threshold and will proceed to the comprehensive evaluation stage. Mississippi State law allows for up to 15 schools to be authorized per year.

To date, the Board has approved one charter school operator, RePublic Schools, Inc. The school, Reimagine Prep, is a college preparatory middle school and was unanimously approved by the board during the first application cycle and is set to open in South Jackson in the fall of 2015. Reimagine Prep will start with 120 5th grade students and add a grade level each year until it reaches capacity – 440 students in grades 5 – 8.

“The board has set the bar high for schools to become authorized in Mississippi, and Marian’s expertise will bring added value to attract both high quality operators and help navigate grassroots efforts in communities that would like to see better educational options for their children,” Cardin added.

About Mississippi’s Charter School Authorizer Board

In the 2013 Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature, the Mississippi Charter Schools Act of 2013 (House Bill 369) was passed to establish charter schools in the State of Mississippi. The Act also called for the creation of a new seven member board to manage and oversee the charter school system.

The board’s mission is to create a rigorous and comprehensive application process and to hold public charter schools accountable to high standards of quality. The board is an independent state agency that exists to authorize high quality public charter schools throughout Mississippi. To learn more, visit charterschoolboard.ms.gov.

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