



# MEDIA RELEASE

Contact:  
Derek Phillips  
School Communications Specialist  
1201 Main Street, Suite 300  
Columbia, SC 29201  
(803) 849-2463

**For Immediate Release – February 7, 2019**

## **Charter Institute at Erskine hosts public forum to address racial composition in schools**

**COLUMBIA** – The Charter Institute at Erskine held a public forum to discuss racial composition in charter schools on Thursday, January 31 in Columbia. Charter school leaders, members of the South Carolina Charter School Alliance, business leaders, community and board members were all in attendance.

The purpose of the forum was to address the issue of potential racial imbalances within South Carolina Charter Schools and to educate schools regarding South Carolina law which requires charter schools to recruit diverse students. By South Carolina law, a school's deliberate failure to recruit diverse students may result in the school's closure.

South Carolina Law 59-40-70 states, "A finding by the board of trustees or area commission that the applicant or charter school is operating in a racially discriminatory manner justifies the denial of a charter school application or the revocation of a charter."

Topics of concern discussed throughout the forum heavily focused on transportation and challenges with school locations. Public charter schools do not receive funding from the state for transportation.

The 13 schools sponsored by the Charter Institute at Erskine were asked to develop a plan to include measurable goals regarding the racial composition of each school. Schools are expected to ensure their racial composition goals are in alignment with South Carolina law.

"We expect Public Charter Schools to put forth every effort to ensure their doors are open to all students in their communities," said Cameron Runyan, CEO of The Charter Institute at Erskine. "Measurable goals regarding racial composition will help us hold schools accountable for their efforts. The Institute is committed to moving the needle when it comes to charter school improvement and racial composition will be a focus of those efforts."

180-year-old Erskine College established the Charter Institute at Erskine in 2017 to improve public education across the state of South Carolina. The Institute currently sponsors 13 charter schools with nearly 10,000 students. Four additional schools are scheduled to open in the fall of 2019. For more information, please visit [www.erskinecharters.org](http://www.erskinecharters.org).

###