



Charter Schools Institute *The State University of New York*

Charter Schools Institute Names Thomas J. Franta, Esq. Staff Attorney

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Albany - Charter Schools Institute Executive Director Jonas S. Chartock announced Monday the appointment of Thomas J. Franta, Esq. as Staff Attorney. In his new role, Mr. Franta will be responsible for analyzing initial and renewal applications for charter schools to ensure compliance with applicable state/federal laws and Institute requirements; performing due diligence for new and existing charter schools with regard to management contracts, opening requirements and facilities agreements ; monitoring existing schools for compliance with applicable state/federal education and general laws, rules and regulations, charter agreements, corrective action plans, probation plans and remedial action plans; assisting with the drafting and updating of Institute policies and procedures, and handling the charter revision process for schools seeking to amend their charters.

“We are excited to welcome Thomas to the Institute,” said Chartock. “His extensive knowledge of education law and his prior experience working with school districts in New York State will be of great value to us.”

Ralph A. Rossi II, Institute Vice President and General Counsel, said, “We are very happy to have Thomas on board to help us streamline the processes related to charter revisions, school renewals and general legal support. His legal skills will help the Institute to better serve the schools authorized by the SUNY Board of Trustees.”

Mr. Franta most recently served as an Associate Attorney at O'Hara, O'Connell and Ciotoli where, practicing primarily in education law, he represented public school districts, administrators, teachers, and students throughout central and northern New York on a wide variety of matters. Prior to his service at O'Hara, O'Connell and Ciotoli, he worked in the Law and Appeals Bureau of the Onondaga County District Attorney's office and as a law clerk for Nottingham, Engel & Kerr in Syracuse, New York.

A Marine Corps veteran, Mr. Franta received his Juris Doctor degree from Syracuse University College of Law, where he was a member of the *Syracuse Law Review*, *The Digest*, and the Moot Court Honor Society, and his Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh.

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The Charter Schools Institute was created by the SUNY Board of Trustees to help it in carrying out its responsibilities under the Charter Schools Act. Guided by the rigorous standards set by the SUNY Board of Trustees, the Institute's oversight of SUNY authorized charter schools is comprehensive, including: evaluating initial applications for the opening of charter schools; providing technical assistance and guidance to schools where necessary; requiring schools to take remedial action or placing schools on probation; conducting a comprehensive evaluation when a school applies to renew its charter; and reporting to the school and the public on each school's performance and progress.

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