

**Grand Opening of Bromley East Charter School
October 12, 2001**

**Draft Remarks
Governor Bill Owens**

I am so pleased to be here this morning. This is such a special day for the students, faculty and parents of Bromley East Charter School – you should all be proud of what you have accomplished.

Listening to Dr. Unruh, Mr. Gogerty, Congressman Schaffer and all of the other speakers here today reinforced even more for me the dedication that the good people of Brighton have to education.

Students, I especially enjoyed your singing as a way to kick off this event. If I could start every one of my days with you singing *[insert name of song]* I would.

I want to commend all of you who were involved in making Bromley East Charter School a reality.

We often look to innovative charter schools as examples of schools that are showing marked improvement and setting higher standards through reform - I have no doubt that Bromley East will be one such school.

I am proud to say that I recognized the benefits of charter schools many years ago, and I have been working for equity and funding for charter schools since then. As a state legislator I was the original sponsor of Colorado's charter school law, and I have done everything possible to lead the fight to empower reform-minded parents and teachers to set up charter schools.

Most recently – since being elected Governor – I have focused my attention on funding. For too long, Colorado's school funding formula has short-changed charter schools and other schools in disadvantaged areas.

Last year, we took a major step toward providing equity in capital construction for our public schools, by setting aside \$10 million to aid poorest and public charter schools to renovate, build and fix their school buildings.

It is simply wrong that children who attend public charter schools must have their buildings paid for out of their school's operating funds, while children in public neighborhood schools have their school paid for out of additional, separate, capital funding.

We had two unequal standards at work and I worked with the legislature to give our charter students the equality they deserve, and ensure every child in *every* public school has a good, safe learning environment

I also signed legislation that provides third-party resolution to disputes between charter schools and school districts, allows charter schools to advertise in school district periodicals and newsletters, permits charter schools to retain any money remaining at the end of the year and allows charter schools to utilize more federal funds

Additionally, I signed legislation that clarifies the tax-exempt status of charter schools, clarifies that charter schools are public schools, and places charter school advocates and parents on district accountability committees.

Together with the legislature, we have provided equity for charter school students currently not receiving state or local capital construction dollars by requiring that, after the October count, each charter school will receive a capital stipend of \$322 per student - equal to 130% of the minimum capital reserve amount per pupil.

While I am very proud of everything we have been able to accomplish in helping charter schools, it is you who deserves the bulk of the credit. You saw the need, you introduced and developed the plans, you raised the money and you made this all possible.

Congratulations and thank you for your commitment to seeing that every child in Colorado receives a quality education that prepares them to succeed.