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# GREAT SCHOOLS COLORADO

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*Welcome to the September Great Schools Colorado Newsletter:*

As we enter a new season, September brings both reflection and celebration for our community. This month, we pause to honor important national observances while continuing to build momentum for the year ahead.

## **Notable Observations & Recognitions in September**

- Labor Day — September 1, 2025
- National Day of Remembrance – September 11, 2025
- Constitution Day – September 17, 2025
- National Hispanic Heritage Month – September 15–October 15, 2025

These observances invite us to reflect on service, civic responsibility, and cultural heritage—values that continue to shape and strengthen our charter school community across Colorado.

## **Funding Focus: Grant Management Tips & Tools**

### **Budget Reviews in Progress**

As part of the grant review and readiness process, schools are now participating in individual budget review and coaching sessions with [Lumen Impact Group](#). These conversations strengthen draft budgets, provide tailored feedback, and ensure alignment with CSP requirements and compliance expectations. The goal is to help schools enter the award phase with approvable, compliant budgets.



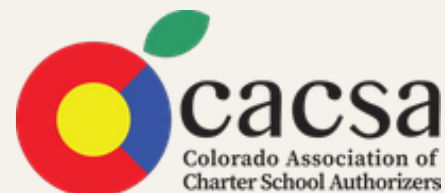
Lumen, highlighted in last month's **TA Spotlight**, is a key technical assistance partner supporting Great Schools Colorado CSP subgrantees. They provide expert financial coaching and practical tools to help schools maximize resources, maintain compliance, and align budgets with long-term priorities.

These budget reviews are one of many **compliance checks and technical assistance activities** completed internally to support schools in building strong foundations for launch and sustainability.

## TA Spotlight: Meet Your Technical Assistance Partners

### Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers (CACSA)

CACSA plays a vital role in advancing high-quality authorizing practices across the state. Through its tools, resources, and training, CACSA strengthens the capacity of authorizers to support thriving charter schools and ensure accountability. This work directly supports our Absolute Priority of promoting best practices for authorizers, and CACSA continues to be a trusted partner in building systems that sustain excellence and equity in charter school oversight. Learn more about CACSA at [coauthorizers.org](https://coauthorizers.org).



At the [Leadership Summit 2025](#) on October 10, CACSA's Executive Director, Mackenzie Khan, will [lead sessions](#) focused on engaging new and emerging authorizers. With deep expertise in charter schools, systems design, research, and strategic planning, Mackenzie brings valuable leadership to Colorado's authorizing community. More information on registration for the Leadership Summit can be found below.

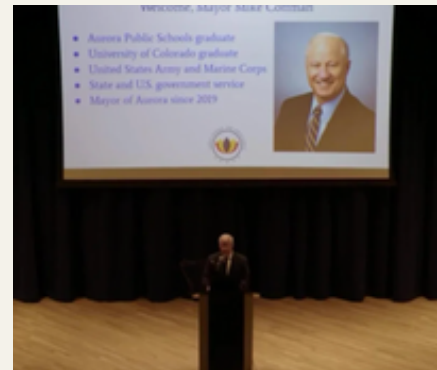
CACSA is currently soliciting feedback from authorizers through a brief, anonymous survey. The input collected will shape future training, resources, and supports for the entire field. You can access the survey [here](#).

## Charter School Stories: Voices from the Field

## Lotus School for Excellence Recognized by Aurora Mayor

On the first day of the 2025 school year, Aurora Mayor Mike Coffman visited the Lotus School for Excellence to read a formal proclamation recognizing the school's outstanding achievements in front of the student body.

The Class of 2025 earned over **\$6.25 million** in scholarship offers, achieved a **100% graduation rate**, and reached a **96.4% college acceptance rate**, with admits to prestigious institutions like MIT, Yale, Harvard, and Columbia. Mayor Coffman's proclamation applauded the school's dedication to academic excellence, inclusivity, and community partnership. Principal Ermek Bakyt credited this success to a data-driven, structured approach that supports first-generation college students and cultivates civic awareness and leadership.



### Policy Pulse: What's Happening Nationally

Charter school enrollment continues to grow nationwide, adding an estimated **100,000 students** this year, even as district schools saw a decline of about **150,000 students**. Analysts attribute this growth to families seeking strong academic rigor and better college and career preparedness. The trend underscores the importance of policy discussions around choice, funding equity, and accountability as the public education landscape shifts.

### ICYMI: Annual Finance Seminar 2025

More than 100 charter school leaders gathered at this year's [Annual Finance Seminar](#) to explore the policies, tools, and strategies shaping charter finance and operations.

#### Highlights included:

- Board policy updates for CDE-compliant budgets
- Multi-year financial planning tools
- Scenario modeling in today's climate

- Individualized grant support (SFIG & BEST)


**Access session recordings, decks, and materials [here](#)** to revisit insights and share with your team.



## Professional Learning Picks: Save the Dates

Stay connected with upcoming Colorado League programs and learning opportunities designed to support school leaders and teams.


### Leadership Summit 2025

 October 10, 2025 | 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM | The Ritz-Carlton, Denver

Join charter school leaders from across Colorado for an exclusive day of learning, connection, and inspiration. The Leadership Summit is designed specifically for school executives, board members, and decision-makers who are shaping the future of public charter education.



### Colorado Annual Charter Schools Conference 2026

 February 26–27, 2026 | Denver Marriott Tech Center

We're excited to announce the 2026 Annual Colorado Charter Schools Conference—your premier two-day event to connect, learn, and grow with educators, leaders, and advocates statewide. Featuring inspiring keynotes, engaging breakout sessions ([RFPs now open!](#)), and valuable networking, this is your chance to gain insights, explore innovative practices, and celebrate the charter school movement.



## Final Notes & Office Reminders

As always, feel free to reach out at any time with questions. For general information please reach out to use at [greatschools@coloradoleague.org](mailto:greatschools@coloradoleague.org). For technical assistance, please contact us at [GSCsupport@coloradoleague.org](mailto:GSCsupport@coloradoleague.org).

**Please note:** Bright will be out **September 17–26** and Tanesha will be out **September 25–October 3**.

— The Great Schools Team at the  
Colorado League of Charter Schools

*Tanesha, Bright, and Dawna*

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