



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**COLORADO LEAGUE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS APPLAUDS STATE LEADERSHIP
FOR PRIORITIZING PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE AND INNOVATION
*Governor Polis, Senate President Coleman, and Speaker McCluskie Champion
Equitable Access to High-Quality Education Opportunities***

Denver, CO — [The Colorado League of Charter Schools](#) praised Governor Jared Polis, Senate President James Coleman, and House Speaker Julie McCluskie for their visionary leadership in prioritizing education innovation and opportunities for all students during their opening addresses to the 2025 legislative session. Their collective commitment to expanding access to high-quality public school options, particularly in the areas of highest need, is a crucial step toward ensuring that every Colorado student has an equal chance to succeed.

“In today’s [State of the State address](#), Governor Polis underscored the importance of creating innovative pathways for student success, highlighting the urgent need to address ‘education deserts,’ where far too many students are falling behind grade level. We fully support any and all efforts to make it easier for high-quality and innovative schools to start and operate in Colorado, giving parents the ability to choose the best option for their kids,” said **Dan Schaller, President of the Colorado League of Charter Schools**. “It was especially inspiring to see the Governor promote innovative schools like Global Village Academy North, which has demonstrated remarkable success in empowering students, especially English language learners, to achieve their full potential.”

“Eliminating ‘education deserts’ as President Coleman called for, fully aligns with our mission to ensure equitable access to high-quality public school options,” **Schaller** continued. “House Speaker McCluskie’s commitment to protecting progress for at-risk students, special education, English language learners, and rural schools reflects her deep understanding of the diverse needs of Colorado’s student population. This commitment will be instrumental in creating a system that provides all students with the quality education they deserve.”

The Colorado League of Charter Schools looks forward to collaborating with Governor Polis, Senate President Coleman, Speaker McCluskie, and state leaders during this legislative session to ensure that every student in Colorado has the tools they need to thrive. Together, we can expand educational opportunities, support innovative schools, and address the challenges facing our K-12 system, including declining enrollment and resource equity.

Excerpts from the speeches referred to above:

Governor Jared Polis

“And, we have a responsibility to guarantee every Colorado student has access to a quality education. This requires creating innovative pathways for students and schools to succeed; no excuses, no exceptions.

Today, tragically, there are “education deserts” – as President Coleman calls them – in Colorado where 90% of students - around 22 in a class of 25 - are behind grade level in math and reading. That is unacceptable.

We need to clear the way for these students to get back on track by making it easier for high quality and innovative schools to start and operate in Colorado, supporting students whether in a traditional district or a charter school, and giving parents the ability to choose the best option for their kids.

And there are great examples of what works! Global Village Academy North in Thornton serves over 50% low income students, and over 80% of 8th graders are at grade level or above in reading, and over 90% in writing. Yes, we CAN do it. This school is changing lives for the better, and we are thrilled Head of School Nicole Wetzell and Principal Chelsea Byrd are here with us today.”

Senate President James Coleman

“We must be a state where every child is guaranteed a high-quality education that prepares them to live well and realize their hopes. That isn’t the reality now. We still have important work to do to make sure every Colorado school is well-resourced and our education workforce is strong.

“The Colorado that we hope for must have a K-12 system that ensures equitable access to high-quality learning options within zip codes that have been historically and presently failed. In Colorado, there are pockets of our state where we have a lack of high-quality options that I think of as “education deserts”. Families shouldn’t be waiting to get into a great school, we must be doing all that we can to ensure that they are in one now. They have waited too long! That will change with us.”

[House Speaker Julie McCluskie](#)

“Like too many special education students in Colorado, Jeremiah, who is twelve, needed additional learning supports in school. Not every public school has the resources they need to adequately teach students with Down syndrome.

But when his parents found a special education program designed for his abilities, Jeremiah excelled. His academic achievement improved, as did his self-esteem. He found his calling.

If you haven’t heard of him yet, you soon will. His calling, it turns out, is acting, and he’s very good at it. Jeremiah is the star of the film “Color Book,” which tells the story of a single father raising his young son with Down syndrome.

The power of Jeremiah’s personal story, and his magnificent portrayal of Mason, help shape our understanding of the challenges we see in gaining access to a high quality education and safety net services in our communities. Exciting news! He has been nominated for the NAACP’s outstanding youth performance in a motion picture award.

I’m overjoyed that Jeremiah and his family are here with us today. Please give him a round of applause.

My goal this session is to protect the progress we’ve made for students like Jeremiah, by increasing funding for special education, at-risk students, English language learners, and rural schools.

The hard truth is that we will need to grapple with declining student enrollment. We will navigate this issue carefully while listening to our partners in public education. Our guiding principle must be to keep equity for our students at the heart of our decision making.”

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About the Colorado League of Charter Schools

The Colorado League of Charter Schools is a non-profit, membership-based organization dedicated to supporting charter schools in the state since 1994. Our mission is to improve student achievement by supporting Colorado’s charter schools, positively reshaping the public school landscape, and advancing opportunities for innovation and expanded high-quality public school choice.