



COLORADO LEAGUE *of*  
CHARTER SCHOOLS

## 2024 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Colorado League of Charter Schools (the League) is dedicated to promoting innovation and choice in public education through the support and advocacy of Colorado's more than 260 charter schools serving over 137,000 students. As we embark on the 2024 Legislative Session, we are committed to advancing policies that empower charter schools, foster educational excellence, and provide families with the public school options that best meet their children's needs.

### FUNDING EQUITY

Even with recent gains in charter funding, it is still estimated that the typical charter school student in Colorado is funded at 85-90 cents on the dollar as compared with his or her traditional public school peers. No public school student's education should be valued less simply because of the type of public school they attend.

The League will prioritize policies that address this ongoing inequity with a particular focus on ensuring the legislature makes good on its promise to fully fund CSI Mill Levy Equalization beginning with the 2024-25 school year. Understanding the various ways in which all of our schools would benefit from additional resources, the League will also advocate for legislative adoption of Governor Polis' proposed 6.6% increase to per-pupil funding.

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### FACILITIES ACCESS & AFFORDABILITY

Unlike most traditional public schools, the typical charter public school has to dip into PPR by approximately \$1,200 per student to pay for facilities needs. This translates into significantly fewer resources that can go into the classroom, student learning, teacher salaries, and more. Charter leaders are finding it increasingly difficult to find affordable facilities that can be used for school purposes, and when they do, it is incredibly challenging to pay for them. We need policies that address these ongoing issues.

During the 2024 Legislative Session, the League will pursue additional funding for the Colorado Charter School Capital Construction Fund. Established to address the unique facilities inequities charter schools face, the fund currently stands at approximately \$400 per student. While this is a vast improvement over where it was just 10 years ago (~\$95 per student), it still falls far short of true equity and is in danger of declining unless alternative funding sources can be secured. If we can prioritize additional state resources for the fund, it could unlock substantial new matching dollars from the federal government that would enable Colorado to cut into the remaining disparity even further.

The League will also pursue legislation aimed at removing any legal barriers to school districts wanting to share bond resources with the CSI schools located in their geographic boundaries. As it stands right now there is some question as to whether school districts that voluntarily want to share bond proceeds with CSI schools in their boundaries can do so under existing statute. League legislation would seek to address this.

## AUTHORIZING CONSISTENCY

While Colorado charter schools are held to high standards of accountability, there are little to no such similar standards for the authorizers who oversee them. This creates a patchwork of practices across the state where charter schools can experience very different authorizing realities depending on the district in which they are located.

This inconsistent and often unfriendly environment is not only unfair, it also serves as a significant disincentive for high-quality schools to consider expanding, replicating or opening. The League will continue to investigate and promote policies aimed at removing this inconsistency and instead ensuring there is a more consistent set of standards and practices by which all authorizers operate.

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## AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY

This agenda item underscores the League's commitment to safeguarding and enhancing charter schools' autonomy and flexibility, which are essential for fostering high-quality educational innovation. Consistent with years past, the League will continue to protect against infringements on core charter autonomies in such areas as staff credentials, educational programming, and hiring decisions.

The League was a leading voice in advocating for the preservation of public school rights and responsibilities as part of the debate related to SB111 (Public Employees' Workplace Protection) last legislative cycle. Consistent with commitments secured in [Governor Polis' signing statement](#) on the bill, we will continue to push to ensure our remaining concerns are addressed via both the rule-making process and statutory clean-up this coming session.

The League will join others in pushing back against proposed PERA policies aimed at increasing near-term contribution rates and requiring that substitutes hired by third-party contractors be added to the PERA pool. We also seek to pursue legislation that ensures all staff and educators are subject to the same evaluation privacy protections currently afforded to just licensed teachers and administrators.

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## OTHER CRITICAL ISSUES

- Protect the core features of our state's accountability system to ensure that comparability is maintained and that families continue to be empowered to make the most informed public school choices possible
  - Support policies that advance quality and achievement for all Colorado public school students, with a particular focus on closing opportunity gaps for some of our state's most historically underserved student populations
  - Where aligned with League principles, support policies focused on holistic approaches to the urgent issue of school safety and on ensuring all students in Colorado can attend school in a safe and secure environment
  - Support aligned policies aimed at effectively enhancing teacher recruitment and retention in today's challenging staffing environment
  - Support aligned policies focused on mitigating the acute behavioral and mental health challenges currently facing students
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**With this legislative agenda, the League is committed to advancing the charter school movement and strengthening the educational landscape for all children. Together with our partners, supporters, and lawmakers, we aim to build a brighter future for students and families through high-quality, innovative public school options.**