

2025 Legislative Agenda

The Colorado League of Charter Schools (the League) champions innovation and high-quality public education options by supporting and advocating for the state's 263 charter schools, which collectively serve more than 135,000 students. In today's challenging political landscape, the League will pursue a robust policy agenda focused on empowering charter schools, advancing educational excellence, and addressing the needs of all students.

Specifically, the League will prioritize the following policy topics during the 2025 Legislative Session:

- Defending the Charter Sector
- Autonomy and Flexibility
- Authorizing Fairness and Consistency
- Funding Equity
- Supporting Alternative and Innovative School Options

1) Defending the Charter Sector:

Last year's [HB1363](#) gave us a very clear sense of what opponents think of charter schools and how they'd like to undermine them. While League efforts were successful in defeating this dangerous proposal, we expect similar attempts to come forward this year and into the future. When confronted by such existential threats, the League will vigorously defend the sector by proactively identifying, countering, and blocking any proposed legislation that endangers the [foundational principles](#) upon which charter schools thrive.

2) Autonomy and Flexibility:

The League is committed to safeguarding and enhancing charter schools' autonomy and flexibility, which are essential for fostering high-quality educational innovation. The League will continue to protect against infringements on core charter autonomies in such areas as staff credentials, educational programming, and hiring decisions. This includes pushing back against ongoing attempts to preclude charters from pursuing waivers from new laws. It also includes repealing rules and regulations that are needlessly burdensome and do not have an impact on student achievement.

3) Authorizing Fairness and 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 pursue policies aimed at removing this inconsistency and ensuring that it is easier for operators to open and/or expand in different parts of the state, with a particular focus on those places where students currently do not have sufficient access to high-quality educational opportunities.



4) Funding Equity:

Recent charter school victories have made significant strides in narrowing funding inequities between charter and non-charter schools. These include securing full funding for CSI Mill Levy Equalization as well as significantly increasing both the state facilities dollars and federal facilities match. However, these achievements are already facing potential threats, putting this hard-won progress at risk. The 2025 session will necessitate protecting these gains in a very difficult budget environment.

Additionally, the state's [Moral Obligation Program](#) is reaching its limit and we will need to ensure the cap is raised so that more charter schools can continue to have access to the low-interest financing that this program provides.

5) Supporting Alternative and Innovative School Options:

The League will continue efforts to support and enhance innovative public school options that are desperately needed for countless students across the state. The League will also pursue legislation that positively impacts Alternative Education Campuses (AECs). Charter schools disproportionately serve students in AECs. Nearly 6% of charter school students are enrolled in AECs, which is three times higher than non-charter enrollment. By law, AECs must enroll students at high risk of dropping out, and the League will advocate for policies that make it easier for AECs to secure the funding needed to support their high-need student populations effectively.

OTHER CRITICAL ISSUES

- **Accountability:** 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.
- **Achievement Gaps:** 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.
- **Teacher Quality:** Support aligned policies aimed at effectively enhancing teacher recruitment and retention in today's challenging staffing environment.
- **Best Practices:** Highlight "what's working" across schools and find ways for underperforming schools to partner with high-performing schools across similar demographics.