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Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Colorado League of Charter Schools. Don't forget to add [info@coloradoleague.org](mailto:info@coloradoleague.org) to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

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COLORADO LEAGUE of  
CHARTER SCHOOLS  
*focus on achievement*

## NEW SCHOOL NEWS

### January 2014



#### Special 2014 Colorado Charter Schools Conference Edition

Don't miss important information in this issue about the [2014 Colorado Charter Schools Conference](#), including recommended break-out sessions to attend, grants that might help you fund your attendance and complete registration information!

#### Welcome

New school developers at every stage of development will find news and resources in this newsletter to better ensure that they develop a quality charter school. Never hesitate to contact Lori Ventimiglia and Kathy Zlomke in the New School Development office at the Colorado League of Charter Schools for questions, sample documents or other resources that you are looking for as you develop your school.

Lori Ventimiglia- Director, New School Development  
Colorado League of Charter Schools  
303-989-5356 x113  
[lventimiglia@coloradoleague.org](mailto:lventimiglia@coloradoleague.org)

Kathy Zlomke- Program Manager, New School Development  
Colorado League of Charter Schools  
303-989-5356 x104  
[kzломke@coloradoleague.org](mailto:kzломke@coloradoleague.org)

#### Planning Grant Updates

#### Apply Now for a Planning Grant

Whether you are in the very earliest stages of developing a charter school,

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#### Contact Us

Colorado League of  
Charter Schools  
New Schools Division  
[Lori Ventimiglia](#)  
[Kathy Zlomke](#)  
303-989-5356

have been approved and are working on opening your doors or are somewhere in between, we have planning grants to address your new school development needs at every stage! Thanks to the generous contributions from the the Anschutz Foundation and the Daniels Fund, planning grant funds are available for developing groups across the state. [Click here](#) to access the guidelines and applications.

## **New Planning Grant Opportunity**

Your feedback has led us to understand that there is a need for a more flexible planning grant for groups who find themselves somewhere in between the "just getting ready to submit our application to the authorizer," and "we've been approved but haven't yet received other significant start-up funding" stage of new school development.

We have created the \$2,500 Flex Grant to accommodate a wide variety of unanticipated expenses that arise when in this stage of starting a school. Flex Grant funds can be used to hire consultants to help flesh out various aspects of school design including, but not limited to, scope and sequence, facilities consultation, budget development, etc. In addition, these funds may be used to pay for printing, marketing, facility development, professional development, additional governance training and student outreach/recruitment. These funds may also be used to pay for the 501c3 filing fee with the IRS or to hire a lawyer to review the 501c3 application. The Flex Grant application was designed to be easier to fill out than other planning grants, as most of you have done the critical charter application work that the other planning grants are designed to feed into. And, for those of you who are still spending down another planning grant, this grant can be awarded concurrently! Please visit our website (<http://www.coloradoleague.org/membership-and-services/developer-grant-opportunities.php>) for the application, self-scoring rubric and updated planning grant guidelines. We hope you find this a value-add to your new school development process and, as always, please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions at all!

## **Colorado Charter Schools Conference**

### **2014 Colorado Charter School Conference**

[\*\*Register Now!\*\*](#)

**February 20-21, 2014**

**Hyatt Regency Denver Tech Center  
7800 E. Tufts Avenue, Denver**

Join us at the largest gathering of the Colorado charter school community, the Colorado Charter Schools Conference. The conference will feature over 60 breakout sessions including a Kick-Off Workshop designed specifically for new school developers. The conference sessions cover a wide range of charter related topics - school leadership, teacher effectiveness, governance, finance, human resources, legal issues, facilities, and more. Join over 700 attendees at the [Colorado Charter Schools Conference](#) to learn and share best practices in all areas of a charter school, from the classroom, to the business office, to the board room, and more. Meet other new school developers, hear about lessons learned from those who have already been down the path of the developing a school and attend sessions in all areas of charter school governance and operations to better develop a quality application!

## Special for New School Developers

### FREE Kick-Off Session and Discounted Rates!

New school developers receive a deeply discounted rate - \$125 for one day and \$225 for two days. Register today at:

<http://www.coloradoleague.org/news-and-events/registration-info.php>. When you are asked during registration about your affiliation, select "\*\*New School Developer | (You are a member of a founding group currently in the process of developing a new charter school)" to receive the discounted prices.

## Recommended Break Out Sessions for the New School Developers

While, in general, the New School Developer has a different set of needs than operating schools we recognize that each of you come to the conference with unique backgrounds and experiences. Therefore, please carefully review the [break-out sessions](#) to see what best fits your specific needs. That said we have found that there are certain break-out sessions that are highly appropriate for most groups in the new school development stage and have outlined a possible break-out schedule for you below:

### Thursday, February 20

#### 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM: All Things New School Development- FREE!!

Attend this session to hear from the League, CDE's Schools of Choice office, and Get Smart Schools and get a brief overview of support services they offer. Additionally hear from two New School Developers around their experience with the following:

Designing around a school model-

- Choosing a model and defining how that flows through everything you are doing
- Demographic analysis and choosing a location for your school
- Meeting standards for both the model and state requirements
- Developing a staffing plan and schedule around the model
- If time allows, discussion of hiring to fill identified needs

Operational planning and implementation-

- Finance and fundraising
- Organizational governance and politics
- Facilities needs from opening to full build-out
- If time allows, discussion of future capacity and development

### 1:00 PM - 2:15 PM:

#### Training and Retraining: The Relationship of Hiring and Professional Development

Hiring strong teachers is the most important task leaders perform. So how can hiring be used to reveal challenges and opportunities that teachers are likely to face? How can data gathered during the process be used to drive Professional Development decisions for the entire staff? This workshop will explore the relationship of hiring to a school's PD program, and to the successful retention of quality teachers.

OR

**Every Board Can Fundraise!**

In this workshop, participants will explore four key areas of board involvement in charter school fundraising, addressing their most frequently-cited objections and learning how to expand their comfort zones. We'll also discuss what we can do to effectively recruit, orient, and retain outstanding volunteer fundraisers. Together, we'll learn why it's so important to treat charter school board members as partners as we work toward achieving our schools' goals.

**2:30 PM - 3:45 PM:**

**Leading Change**

Educational leaders today are working in unpredictable and challenging circumstances with greater financial constraints and diminishing resources. The ability to innovate, and to develop and grow a culture of innovation will be critical to solving our current challenges and creating schools that work for the future. This workshop will introduce participants to the types of thinking and an approach to strategy development that promotes and supports sustained innovation in the educational setting. Through a disciplined process of creating, leaders can create and communicate compelling visions, design systems and structures to support the vision and organize the talents of their team to achieve those results by creating momentum and alignment toward shared goals.

**4:00 PM - 5:15 PM:**

**New School Developer Open Forum**

The Colorado League of Charter Schools' New School Development staff will be available during this time frame to answer burning questions, share resources, look at application sections that you might be struggling with, etc. This will also be a chance to meet and connect with other groups who are at varying stages of new school development.

**Friday, February 21**

**7:45 AM - 8:45 AM:**

**Featured Panel: Colorado State Assessments Forum: Priorities, Challenges and the Road Ahead**

Recent state assessment changes have resulted in many questions, concerns, and fears about the state's accountability expectations for all public schools including charters. Hear from the Colorado Department of Education's top leadership on this hot topic, including current updates and issues that are being addressed. This session will provide an opportunity for charter schools to share their perspectives and big picture concerns.

**9:00 AM - 10:15 AM:**

**Colorado School Finance Overview and Update**

Colorado school finance and funding can be challenging to understand. Join this session to gain a better understanding of Colorado's school finance system. Participants will learn more about the current state of public school finance, any potential impacts for charter schools based on the current legislative session, and get answers to any questions that they have related to public school finance.

**OR**

**Media Roundtable: Effective PR from a Reporters Perspective**

Learn about media relations from those who know it best - local reporters and media experts. In this session, journalists will candidly answer burning questions, such as: how to effectively pitch a story, how reporters really feel about press releases, what happens when you ignore a reporter's phone

call, and more. In addition, learn how journalists "sell" stories to their editors, who really writes story headlines, what reporters believe are the most interesting education stories in the media right now, and why relationships with reporters matter. There will be plenty of time for Q&A.

**12:45 PM - 2:00 PM:**

**Board Work that Matters: Developing Structures for Accountability, the UIP and Key Performance Indicators**

Successful governing boards are proactive. Whether building a meeting agenda or reviewing school performance data, the best boards intentionally and deliberately design the focus of the conversation and the monitoring practices. The critical bridge to identifying the work that matters most is the development of sound and sustainable structures. Attend this workshop and learn about effective board structures for accountability, the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP), and your school's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

**2:15 PM - 3:30 PM:**

**Systems to Support Effective Teaching: Strategies to Strengthen Evaluations and Compensation for Staff**

Senate Bill 191 sparked a lot of discussion in the charter school community around staff evaluation practices. While the expectations for charters are not necessarily dictated by the statutory changes of SB 191, charter schools have always had the ability to develop strong systems that include recruitment, retention, evaluation, and compensation strategies that are innovative and focus on high expectations and continuous improvement. This session will look at practices at two different schools and their evaluation and compensation systems and models as well as provide an overview of work at the state level in the Educator Effectiveness Council from the perspective of the charter school representative on that Council. Come be prepared to learn about the building blocks that have helped these schools strengthen their practices and share out your strategies and questions that can be informed by your peers and may end up being shared at the state level through the Council.

**OR**

**Dealing with Discipline in Charter Schools**

Charter schools frequently develop their own disciplinary policy and process. With this autonomy, comes the obligation to ensure that the school's practice is legal. There are specific statutory requirements related to disciplinary actions and consequences that charter schools need to pay attention to including truancy, expulsion, withdrawals of students, and communication of these incidents with the school community. Colorado has wide variations in disciplinary practices and United States Department of Justice has just issued guidance on school discipline and civil rights issues. Come to this session to learn more about the legal issues related to student discipline and tips to take back to your school to strengthen your own practice.

**Did You Know?**

Planning grants can be used to pay for attendance at the Colorado Charter School Conference! With all of the professional development, governance and networking opportunities at the conference; it is recommended that at least two people from developing schools attend the conference. If conference attendance is a financial burden for your group, consider

applying for any of the planning grants (except Stage 5) to help cover the expenses, but act now- time is running out! Access our planning grants [here](#).

## Charter School Job Fairs

### 6th Annual Charter School Teacher Job Fair

**March 15, 2014**

**Peak to Peak Charter School, Lafayette, Colorado**

This is the largest teacher job fair in Colorado exclusively for charter schools and presents an excellent opportunity for schools and teaching candidates to participate in face-to-face interviews and discuss career opportunities. Teachers, counselors, administrators, and schools come from Colorado and surrounding states. Over 40 charter schools and 600 teacher candidates attend this annual event.

Online registration is now available; please visit the website at [www.CPDcolorado.org](http://www.CPDcolorado.org) or contact Jen Dauzvardis at [jen@CPDcolorado.org](mailto:jen@CPDcolorado.org) with any questions.

## Information from CDE Schools of Choice Office

CDE's Schools of Choice Office provides a variety of Technical Assistance events for developing, new, and continuing charter schools. You can learn more about these offerings, see their schedule of events, and register for their trainings at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/chartecalendar>.

CDE's Schools of Choice Office puts out a twice-monthly "SOC Update" email and other important announcements through its Charter School ListServ. To sign up visit: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/joinlistserv>

## Resources

### New Resource: Understanding Categorical Funding

[Click here to download](#)

### Charter Focus Winter 2014: Building a Positive School Culture

[Click here to download](#)

## Upcoming Events

### Charter School Regional Luncheon

*Hosted by CDE Schools of Choice Office*

**Date:** Wednesday, February 12 (Rescheduled from December 4)

**Time:** 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM (optional school tour 1:00 - 1:30)

**Meals:** Lunch will be prepared and served by Compass Montessori students

**Location:** Compass Montessori, 4441 Salvia Street, Golden

**Description:** Six luncheons will be offered throughout the 2013-2014 school year. Charter schools will host the luncheon at a restaurant near their school, followed by an optional tour of the school. These luncheons are an opportunity for school leaders, administrators, employees, and board members to network and broaden their knowledge, skills and resources.

**Registration:** Register by 8:00 AM on Monday, February 10 at:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/X8CLSCV>

## In Every Issue

The following three links are included in each newsletter as they are such valuable resources to keep on your radar:

### What is a Charter School?

Even 20 years into the life of charter schools in Colorado, it is amazing how many people don't really understand what charter schools are and that they are public schools. New and developing schools will find this video to be a great introduction at community meetings and other outreach efforts.



Video: What is a Charter School?

Additionally, the following link will be useful for you to remain focused on the facts in your community: <http://www.coloradoleague.org/colorado-charter-schools/charter-schools-fact-sheet.php>

### New School Development Resources

<http://www.coloradoleague.org/audiences/developers.php> - This is the New School Development page of the League's website. There are sample model documents, upcoming events, information about grants and much more on this page. Check back frequently for updates!

### CDE Schools of Choice Events Page

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/chartregstart.asp> - This is the events page for the Schools of Choice Unit at the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). This site should also be checked frequently as there are always important and relevant workshops and seminars for developing schools offered by the CDE Schools of Choice Unit.

### League Professional Development Trainings

If you are a new school opening this year, don't forget that the League offers important trainings to support you as you move into your implementation phase. See the link below for more information:

<http://www.coloradoleague.org/news-and-events/league-trainings.php>

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