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COLORADO LEAGUE of  
CHARTER SCHOOLS  
*focus on achievement*

## NEW SCHOOL NEWS

### January 2015



#### **Special Quality Outcomes and Targeted Supports Edition**

We hope 2015 is starting out to be a great year for all of you! The Colorado League of Charter Schools is excited to continue to support new school developers with not only the vast array of services that we have been providing for over 20 years, but some new ones as well!

This first newsletter of 2015 is intended to provide an overview of the targeted supports for new schools provided by the League's New School Development department. From the earliest stages of development through the end of year one, we strive to meet your needs with critical and timely supports every step along the way, and the vast majority of our services are free!

This newsletter will also introduce some newly created supports, including: *Onboarding Your New Charter School - a League Training for Newly Approved Schools* and, the *Year 1 Spring Visit- the Culmination of the League's Targeted New School Supports!* We hope that you find this information helpful and, as always, if you have any questions don't hesitate to reach out!

Happy New Year!

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## Six Quality Outcomes: Planning Backwards From the End of Year 1

Picture the end of your school's first year and imagine that the following outcomes are all solidly in place:

- Qualified and Competent School Leadership
- Sound Operational Practices
- Functional Governing Board
- Effective Academics and Instruction
- Robust Performance Management Plan
- Clear, Mission-Driven School Culture

Whether you are already in the middle of year one or you are just developing your elevator pitch and mission statement, we share your desire to start your school with the strongest foundation possible.

### Targeted Supports Overview

Everything that the League's New School Development department does is geared towards supporting new school developers, and new schools, around the above six Quality Outcomes. The supports we provide are targeted for each stage of development. Below is a list, from the earliest stages of charter school development to the end of year one, of the targeted supports that the League's New School Development department provides.

#### Targeted Supports in the Developing Year(s) (Application Development):

- Face-to-face/phone meetings with developer/team to discuss authorizer landscape, statutory requirements, application process, resources, etc.
- Planning timeline documents, model and sample application sections, budget templates and other resources
- Ongoing technical support as needed
- Planning grants designed to significantly contribute to the actual charter application
- Extensive two-stage application review with verbal and written feedback
- Mock interview with verbal and written feedback
- Fiscal sponsor services
- [Calendar](#) of critical trainings and events

#### Targeted Supports in Year 0 (Post Application- Approval before Opening):

- Readiness checklist, purchasing calendars, sample contract language, etc.
- Access to the League's [online charter school job board](#)
- Directory listing for your school on the [League's website](#)
- [Calendar](#) of upcoming, critical trainings and events
- Brokering connections and collaborations
- Face-to-face meetings as needed
- **NEW! Onboarding Your New Charter School- A League Training for Newly Approved Schools** (more information will be announced soon for the 2015 newly approved schools):
  - Establishing Qualified and Capable Leadership

- Implementing Sound Operations
- Foundations for Functional Governance
- Unpacking your Application to Ensure Effective Academics and Instruction and a Robust Performance Management Plan
- Setting a Clear, Mission-Driven Culture
- Meet the League: A League Services Overview and Staff Introduction

### **Targeted Supports in Year 1 (Opening Through End of Year):**

- Connection point to other League staff/departments
- Document reviews: board agendas and minutes, financial transparency posts, etc.
- Model documents
- [Calendar of critical trainings and events](#): governance, finance, Rtl, data teams, UIP, SPF, assessments, etc.
- Critical connections: administrator, board and business manager cohorts, etc.
- Readiness checklist review (see survey below)
- **NEW!** Year 1 Spring Visit--The Culmination of the League's Targeted New School Supports. Continuous improvement is a critical process for schools to begin early! As such, League staff offers an optional visit to your school in the spring of Year 1 to conduct a friendly review in alignment with the Six Quality Outcomes: 1) Qualified and Competent School Leadership, 2) Sound Operational Practices, 3) Functional Governing Board, 4) Effective Academics and Instruction, 5) Robust Performance Management Plan, and 6) Clear, Mission-Driven School Culture. Verbal and written feedback will be provided following the visit. For recipients of the CSP grant, we would only recommend this visit if you are NOT in Year 2 of the CSP grant as CDE conducts a Year 2 CCSP Grant Site Visit for those schools. (The League's spring visits are, of course, voluntary but are strongly recommended and will be coordinated with schools upon request.)
- **NEW!** The "I Don't Have Time for This Survey" Survey for Year 1 Schools! We know that you are busy, but this survey is actually your friend! This is where we ask you to trust us! We have seen so many schools in their first year miss some of the critical pieces that are addressed herein and this is our way of making sure they are on your radar. Also, the answers to this survey will help inform our year 1 visit. Please make sure that your Head of School (or Academic Leader), Business Manager and Board President all complete this survey. We definitely want the input from folks who are serving in each of these positions. Each school that fills out the survey will have access to an individual report of the survey findings which can be used as a tool to keep track of progress. [Click here to access the survey.](#)

## **Important Reminders and Events**

### **2015 Colorado Charter Schools Conference**

*Today's Students. Tomorrow's Leaders.*

**February 26-27, 2015 | Denver**

**Register Now! Special Rates for New School Developers.**

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. Choose

from over 60 Breakout Sessions taught by those who know the topics best - your charter school peers.

Whether you are a new charter school leader, business manager, board member, teacher or new school developer, the Colorado Charter Schools Conference has something for you!

Developing Schools receive a discount to attend (\$130 per person for 1 day or \$230 per person for both days).

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isit [www.cocharterconference.org](http://www.cocharterconference.org) for all of the details and to register.

[Click here for a sneak peak to the breakout sessions on Thursday, February 26th.](#)

[Click here for a sneak peak to the breakout sessions on Friday, February 27th.](#)

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### **Planning Grants Available for Conference Attendance**

Thanks to the generous grants that both the Anschutz Foundation and the Daniels Fund, the League is able to offer planning grants to groups at various stages of charter school development. Given that the [Colorado Charter Schools Conference](#) is loaded with breakout sessions and networking opportunities that are critical in developing a quality charter school, we strongly recommend that planning teams at any stage of development (who otherwise would not be able to attend the conference) apply for a planning grant to cover Conference expenses. Please check with [Lori Ventimiglia](#) to determine eligibility.

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### **Spring Application Cycle Information**

If you are scheduled to submit a draft of your charter application to Kathy Zlomke for the League's comprehensive, two-part application review process, please make every effort to adhere to [the schedule](#) as any shifts can create a ripple effect with the other applications that are scheduled for review. Also, please read the Submission Ready Draft Application Guidelines below carefully.

#### **Submission Ready Draft Application Guidelines**

The submission ready draft application should answer the questions in the [Quality Standards](#) and be submitted with attachments emailed directly to Kathy at [kzломke@coloradoleague.org](mailto:kzломke@coloradoleague.org). We will need to receive an application draft at least eight (8) weeks prior to the authorizer's application deadline. This draft application should include critical appendices (i.e. a five-year budget with good assumptions, demonstrated interest in the school, bylaws, organizational chart and key job descriptions, calendar and schedule, and critical academic pieces to include research, standards and assessments). The application will be reviewed for completeness, and cannot be sent out to the review team members until the content narrative and appendices submissions meet a minimum standard.

Documents should be compatible with Word, however, the budget should be sent separately in Excel so the formulas can be checked. Applications will not be reviewed in a Google Document, electronic portfolio, or if they are password protected. The application should be searchable. If the application is too big to send as an attachment(s) to one email (no larger than 10MB/email preferred), it often works best to divide the application with the narrative and other smaller documents as an attachment(s) to an email, and the appendices as one, two or more collated attachments in a separate email(s). Numbering the pages of at least the narrative section is

critical so reviewers can reference issues by page number in order to have a common understanding of what is being addressed in the review feedback comments. It works best to number the entire document, but if the appendices are not numbered for the first review, they should at least be consistently titled (i.e. Attachment A, B, or C, etc.), collated in one or more email attachments (see above), and referenced by title and letter in the proper narrative section.

Once the first review is completed, the League will provide the developing team with a follow-up phone conference along with comprehensive written feedback of all application sections. The developers will then have an opportunity to revise the draft application based on the first review feedback, and resubmit the final draft, again in electronic format, for a second review at least four (4) weeks prior to the final authorizer submission deadline. This submission should be a polished document (i.e. a fully revised and edited cohesive proposal, with an appendix that is complete, an index that references each major section of the application and appendices, and the entire document numbered to match the index).

## Developing Schools: Mark Your Calendar

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#### Charter School Boot Camp

*Hosted by the CDE Schools of Choice Unit*

**Date:** Wednesday, April 8 and Thursday April 9

**Time:** 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

**Location:** TBD

**Cost:** \$20 per person, per day (coffee and lunch included)

**Registration:** Coming Soon

[Click here for more information and updates.](#)

## Approved Schools: Mark Your Calendar

### Charter School Teacher Job Fair

*Hosted by Peak to Peak Charter School*

**Date:** Saturday, March 14

**Time:** 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

**Location:** Peak to Peak Charter School, 800 Merlin Drive Lafayette

**Description:** The Peak to Peak job fair is the largest teacher job fair in Colorado exclusively for charter schools. The event 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 from Colorado and surrounding states can attend. Approximately 40 charter schools and 500 teacher candidates attend this annual event. [Click here for more information.](#) Early bird rates for schools ends February 13,

### Administrator Mentoring Cohort

(For school leaders in the spring of Year 0 or in Year 1)

*Hosted by CDE Schools of Choice Unit*

**Date:** Tuesday, February 10

**Time:** 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

**Location:** Prospect Ridge Academy, 2555 Preble Creek Pkwy, Broomfield

**Cost:** \$20 per person-Please bring a check or money order made out to The Colorado League of Charter Schools with your name/school in memo.

**Description:** A mentoring program that meets five times a year, geared toward new administrators or experienced administrators that are new to the charter school environment (though administrators outside these

categories are welcome). Administrators will work as a cohort team, work one-on-one with a mentor, and participate in site observations as they build leadership capacity among new charter school administrators.

**Registration:** [Click here to register](#) by 8:00 AM on Sunday, February 8

## Information from CDE Schools of Choice Office

Each month, this section will provide updates and resources from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE)'s 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>

The Colorado Department of Education administers the **Colorado Charter Schools Program** grant, which provides federal funding in Start-up and Implementation phases over a 3-year grant to new and significantly-expanding charter schools. Two application rounds (Tier I & Tier II) are offered each year, with the [RFP, information and documents for this Start-up Grant available online](#). See RFP for eligibility rules and application instructions.

### 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.

## In Every Issue

The following links are included in each month's newsletter as they are valuable resources to keep on your radar.

### Educating your Community

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.



### What is a Charter School?

Additionally, the following links will be useful for you to remain focused on the facts in your community:

[Charter School Facts](#)

[Charter School Infographics](#)

### New School Development Resources

The "Start a School" section of the League's website offers a variety of resources, sample model documents, upcoming events, information about grants and much more. Visit [www.coloradoleague.org](http://www.coloradoleague.org) and go to "Start a School".

### 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. [Click here for more information.](#) [Click here for a calendar of upcoming trainings and events.](#)

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