

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)

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 [srader@coloradoleague.org](mailto:srader@coloradoleague.org) to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.



## Charting the Capitol Legislative Updates - November 2016

### Getting Down to Business

It's hard to believe, but the conclusion of this month's prolonged and contentious election means things are just getting started here in Colorado. Colorado's 2017 legislative session kicks off in less than two months, and we've got our work cut out for us if we hope to not only beat back the charter attacks and misinformation that are likely to arise, but also advance the cause of charter equity at the same time. Read on for a number of ways to get engaged in the coming months.

[2017 Legislative Agenda - Submit Your Feedback](#)

[State-Level Election Results](#)

[Get Involved in Charter School Advocacy](#)

[Your Investment in Action: Charter Maintenance and Capital Construction](#)

[Governor Releases 2017-18 State Budget Proposal](#)

[Other News of Note: Overtime Regulations, Standards, Data Privacy, and ESSA Latest](#)

### 2017 Legislative Agenda - Submit Your Feedback

The League's Board of Directors will vote to finalize our [2017 Legislative Agenda](#) on Thursday, December 8. Be sure to submit your feedback. What are the main challenges currently confronting your school? What are possible legislative solutions that could help address these challenges? We welcome input on these questions and any other considerations by **Friday, December 2**. Send your feedback to Dan Schaller, Director of Governmental Affairs, at [dschaller@coloradoleague.org](mailto:dschaller@coloradoleague.org) or at 303-989-5356 ext. 105. Once approved, we will be sure to circulate the final agenda in conjunction with the start of the legislative session in early January.

### State-Level Election Results

The outcome of the federal election has been well-documented - and we'll be sure to keep you updated on any education-related developments from the new administration as they unfold (case in point, just last Wednesday [President-elect Trump announced Betsy DeVos as his pick for Secretary of Education](#)). Because state-level policies and lawmakers play a central role in charting the course for K-12 education in Colorado, below we highlight the results of the many state-level races of importance for Colorado's charters and K-12 education in general.

**Colorado State House** - Coming into this election, the Democrats held a three-seat majority (34-31) in the Colorado House of Representatives. They managed to extend this lead on election day, adding three additional seats to their majority. Democrats now control the chamber 37-28. Outgoing Speaker Dickey Lee Hullinghorst will be succeeded by Denver Democrat Crisanta Duran, who will become Colorado's first-ever Latina Speaker of the House.

**Colorado State Senate** - Republicans held a slim one-seat majority (18-17) in the Colorado State

Senate heading into the November election. They held onto that majority (still 18-17), thus we head into 2017 with much the same state-level make-up as what we have experienced over the past couple years. Democrats control the House and Republicans control the Senate. Senator Kevin Grantham (R-Canon City) is set to replace Bill Cadman as Senate President.

**State Board of Education** - In a very close race that was finally decided just before Thanksgiving, Democrat Rebecca McClellan edged out incumbent Republican Deb Scheffel for a seat on the Colorado State Board of Education, handing control of that body to the Democrats for the first time in 46 years. What had been a 4-3 majority for Republicans now becomes a 4-3 majority for Democrats. The key question of who will become the new State Board chair (Republican Steve Durham has occupied that seat for the better part of the past two years) will be answered in the coming month.

**So what does this all mean for charters?** It's hard to say for sure at this point, but we are encouraged by the number of reform-minded individuals from both sides of the political aisle who will be serving at the state house this spring. Rest assured that the League will be working hard to ensure elected officials of all political persuasions are up-to-speed on charter public schools and charter public school issues.

**Invite elected officials to visit your school.** We strongly encourage you to invite elected officials in your area to come visit your school. The League is available to help make introductions and get legislators to your school. Contact Dan Schaller at [dschaller@coloradoleague.org](mailto:dschaller@coloradoleague.org) for assistance. It's recommended that you invite them to visit prior to the start of the legislative session, which begins January 11th.

### Getting Involved in Charter School Advocacy

The League will once again fight hard at the Capitol for charter public school equity and flexibility...but we can't do it without your help. Lining up legislators to visit your school is just one way to get engaged in ongoing advocacy efforts. Below are a number of other ways to get involved in the coming weeks and months. Please review these options carefully, forward them along to your school communities and/or networks, and encourage anyone who is interested to get engaged in some capacity. With over 110,000 children now attending charter public schools across Colorado, our strength lies in our numbers, *but only if those numbers are activated.*

Advocacy opportunities:

- Encourage your networks and school communities to [sign up for the Colorado Charter Advocacy Network \(COCAN\)](#). Many of you are already part of the COCAN listserve (if you received an email entitled "Time to Get Down to Business" early last week, that means you're already signed up), but that doesn't necessarily mean other members of your school community - i.e. parents, teachers, board members - are as well. By sending them [this link](#) and asking them to take just a few minutes to sign up today, you will ensure that they also receive regular emails and action alerts about important changes with likely impacts on charter schools.
- **Text message action alerts** are now also available by sending "Start" to 720-903-4229. Sign up today.
- **Become a charter advocate!** Whether a charter parent, staff or board member, alum or teacher, we are regularly on the lookout for natural leaders with a knack for speaking out on issues of choice and educational opportunity. If this describes you or someone you know who would be willing to make a more regular commitment to charter advocacy, have them contact Dan Schaller ([dschaller@coloradoleague.org](mailto:dschaller@coloradoleague.org)) and [click here for more details](#).
- To kick off this year's legislative session, **the League will be offering a free advocacy training the morning of Saturday, January 14.** We encourage all to attend to learn a number of tips and tools for effective charter advocacy. The workshop will take place in a soon-to-be-determined location in the Denver metro area, but remote access is also expected to be available. More details coming soon, but sign up to attend or receive further

information by contacting Dan Schaller at [dschaller@coloradoleague.org](mailto:dschaller@coloradoleague.org).

- Lastly, looking for some **ready-made talking points** on Colorado's charter schools and the results they are getting for Colorado's kids? Click [here](#) and [here](#) for two recently developed resources that serve to highlight some of the latest and greatest charter successes.

**Now more than ever the Colorado charter public school community must come together to inform the public about all of the great opportunities charters are providing for children. Please activate your communities and spread the word about how your school's families and staff can get involved.**

### **Your Investment in Action - Charter Maintenance & Capital Construction**

The League's advocacy efforts are a year-round commitment, and there are two ways in particular that your investment in the League has produced results in the past month alone.

For one, we successfully advocated for a [more expansive definition of maintenance](#) under the new Charter Capital Construction guidelines recently released by CDE. Under their initial proposal, maintenance would have been restricted to very limited circumstances involving "substantive maintenance" on "large capital investments." Under the revised guidance, that definition has been expanded to encompass "activities required to keep spaces, structures and infrastructure in proper operating condition in a routine, scheduled, or anticipated fashion." The League advocated hard for a definition that was consistent with the intent of the legislation we helped pass last session, and if you have not already, we encourage you to [check out the revised guidance here](#).

Secondly, there was an attempt coming out of an interim legislative committee to run a bill that would take \$5 million out of the Charter Capital Construction Fund (20 percent of the overall dollars available) and divert it to a competitive grant program for the technology needs of all schools. This is clearly not why the capital fund for charters was created in the first place, and so the League sprang into action, lined up our allies, and successfully defeated this attempt to take much-needed dollars away from charter schools.

These are just a couple of the recent ways in which your investment in the League is paying off. We thank you for your continued trust and support.

### **Governor Releases 2017-18 State Budget Proposal**

Earlier this month, Governor John Hickenlooper released [his proposal](#) for the state's 2017-18 budget. Under this proposal, while the full obligation of the so-called "negative factor" would not be met, the overall budget for K-12 next year would see an increase of 2.45 percent. What this would mean in terms of per pupil funding is that schools would receive an average of \$7,606 per student, or about \$180 more than they're receiving this year.

While the Governor's proposal is just that - a proposal - and many more conversations need to happen between now and when the state's final budget is set by the legislature in the spring, this is an encouraging early sign that schools may see a modest increase next year. [Click here](#) for further details on the Governor's proposed budget from *Chalkbeat Colorado*, and we will be sure to keep you informed on how conversations on this topic unfold in the coming months.

### **Other News of Note: Overtime Regulations, Standards, Data Privacy and ESSA Latest**

**Injunction Blocking New Overtime Regulations** - On November 22, 2016, a federal district court in Texas granted a preliminary injunction that temporarily blocks the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) from implementing and enforcing its [recently revised regulations](#) on the white collar exemptions to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Charter schools should note that this is only a temporary injunction, not a permanent one. The injunction simply prevents [the regulations](#) from going into effect on December 1. There will be a decision issued at a later date on the actual merits of the case, so changes in the FLSA salary threshold for exemption may be back. If you have any

questions on how the injunction will impact your school, please contact Jessica Johnson at [jmjohnson@coloradoleague.org](mailto:jmjohnson@coloradoleague.org).

**Colorado Academic Standards** - On Wednesday, November 9, the Colorado Department of Education launched an [online standards review system](#) to inform their planning for the upcoming review and revision of the standards that must be completed before July 1, 2018. This [online tool](#) was created to enable all Coloradans to provide specific feedback on each and every expectation within all 10 content areas of the Colorado Academic Standards. The online system will accept feedback through Friday, December 30. All public feedback submitted to the online system will be provided to content area committees that will be providing revision recommendations to the State Board of Education. All interested parties are encouraged to participate.

**Data Privacy** - The roll-out of HB16-1234 (the Student Data Transparency and Security Act) continues, and as part of this roll-out, CDE has developed the following FAQ resource: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/dataprivacyandsecurity/questionsandanswers>  
**It is important to note that, for purposes of this act, charter public schools are their own Local Education Providers (LEPs), so please know that any LEP references here do apply to individual charter schools as well.**

**Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** - The latest iteration of the federal education law, known as the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015. States, including Colorado, are now sifting through the law's implications and working to develop state plans that comply with its requirements. We encourage you to keep a close eye on developments by signing up for CDE's periodic ESSA e-newsletter [here](#). Additionally, [click here for resources](#) that provide a quick overview/introduction to ESSA and some of its key decision points for states.

Sincerely,

The League Policy and Advocacy Team

Dan Schaller  
Director of Governmental Affairs  
[dschaller@coloradoleague.org](mailto:dschaller@coloradoleague.org)  
303-989-5356 x105

Jessica Johnson  
General Counsel / Director of Policy  
[jmjohnson@coloradoleague.org](mailto:jmjohnson@coloradoleague.org)  
303-989-5356 x121

Nora Flood  
President  
[nflood@coloradoleague.org](mailto:nflood@coloradoleague.org)  
303-989-5356 x109

Kerri Barclay  
Communications Manager  
[kbarclay@coloradoleague.org](mailto:kbarclay@coloradoleague.org)  
303-989-5356 x125

Colorado League of Charter Schools, 2696 S. Colorado Blvd.,  
Suite 250, Denver, CO 80222

[SafeUnsubscribe™ {recipient's email}](#)

[Forward email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by [dschaller@coloradoleague.org](mailto:dschaller@coloradoleague.org) in collaboration with

**Constant Contact**   
Try it free today