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Charting the Capitol Interim Report - September 2017

Still Much Work to be Done

With the successful passage of House Bill 1375 on mill equalization, the 2017 legislative session was certainly a banner one for charter public schools in Colorado. While this accomplishment was an important one, we recognize that there's still plenty of work to be done. There's still work on funding, innovation, and equity, and perhaps most importantly, there's still plenty of work to be done to ensure every child in Colorado has access to high-quality educational opportunities.

So we're certainly not resting on our laurels and have remained hard at work ever since the last legislative session concluded in May. As we gear up for another legislative cycle in January, we wanted to be sure to update you on some of the legislative latest as well as solicit your feedback on our ongoing priorities. Please continue reading for updates on:

[2018 Legislative Agenda: Your Suggestions Needed](#)
[Charter School Election Activity Do's and Don'ts](#)
[Invite Current and Future Elected Officials to Visit Your School](#)
[Coming Next Week: School Leader's Guide to the 2017 Legislative Session](#)
[Register Today: 2017 Charter School Policy & Facility Summit - September 25](#)
[What Makes Your School Unique? Share Your Stories](#)

The 2018 legislative session will begin January 10. At that time, we will return to regular distribution of this newsletter. Should you have any questions, concerns or suggestions in the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact us.

2018 Legislative Agenda: Your Suggestions Needed

Your suggestions form the backbone of our legislative agenda each year, and now's the time we need to be hearing them. It takes time to build a concept into a legitimate legislative proposal, so if you have ideas for what we should be pursuing this coming legislative session, please don't hesitate to share them with us. Specific questions to consider include:

- What are the main challenges currently confronting your charter school?
- What do you see as the major issues impacting the charter sector as a whole?
- What are possible legislative solutions that could help address these challenges?

We welcome input on these and any other challenges/priorities you may have, and invite you to contact Dan Schaller, Director of Governmental Affairs, at dschaller@coloradoleague.org or 303.989.5356 ext.105 with suggestions.

At the same time, the League's Governmental Affairs Committee, which is comprised of policy partners and a broad cross-section of charter school representatives from across the state, just began its work for the 2018 legislative cycle. Over the coming months this group will help the League prepare for and navigate the 2018 legislative session, including advising us on creation of our 2018 policy agenda. [Click here for a current list of committee members](#) should you wish to reach out to any of them to share your thoughts.

In November, we will distribute a draft of the League's 2018 legislative agenda to League members for review and feedback.

The Do's and Don'ts of Election Engagement

Election season is upon us, and with it comes a lot of questions about ways in which charter schools can and cannot get involved. To assist in answering these questions, we developed a short one-pager that provides an overview of the key do's and don'ts of charter school involvement in electoral activity. [Click here to access this resource](#), and be sure to consult your school's legal counsel should you have any specific follow-up questions related to this guidance.

Invite Candidates and Legislators to Visit Your School

While official charter school involvement in electoral activity can be fairly limited, that does not mean that schools cannot interact at all with current and future elected officials. In fact, so long as outreach is handled in an unbiased fashion that is open and extended to all equally, candidate engagement can be a great means of building relationships and educating candidates on both charter schools in general and your school in particular.

For this reason, we encourage you and your community to reach out and engage candidates by doing some of the following over the coming weeks (prior to election day):

- Invite candidates to tour your school
- Invite candidates to a roundtable discussion to meet school board members, parents and other community members
- Host a candidate forum/debate alone or in conjunction with other charter schools in your district
- Inform parents and your school community on the importance of the election and why their vote matters

Please [click here](#) to access details and contact information about the candidates running for school board in your district. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need assistance in lining up these activities with individuals running for office in your jurisdiction.



At the same time, we also strongly encourage you to reach out to current elected officials in your area to invite them to your school for a tour. Now is the ideal time to be reaching out to them as once the legislative session starts in January, state lawmakers are less able to accommodate meetings and school visits. [Click here to find contact information for your current elected officials](#), and please let us know if there is anything we can do to assist in your outreach efforts (see above for photos from a recent visit to Mountain View Core Knowledge Charter School by Senate President Kevin Grantham that the League helped coordinate). Legislators love seeing and hearing from students, and they enjoy connecting with their constituents and hearing about their successes, so don't miss this opportunity to reach out and show off the great things that make your charter school unique.

Coming Next Week: School Leader's Guide to the 2017 Legislative Session

The League is once again in the process of developing our annual overview of last year's legislative session for our members. *A Charter School Leader's Guide to the 2017 Colorado Legislative Session* provides an easy-to-read document to help you 1) learn about the education-related bills passed in 2017 and 2) understand how these changes directly impact Colorado charter school operations. Be on the lookout for its official release next week, and we encourage you to take a look so you can get up-to-speed on all the legislative changes that took place last year and how they may impact your school moving forward.

Register Today for the 2017 Charter School Policy & Facility Summit

Don't miss this opportunity to learn important information about ongoing policy and legal updates and hear from elected officials and others about what they believe will impact the upcoming

legislative session. [Click here to register](#) for the League's 2017 Charter School Policy & Facility Summit being held on Monday, September 25, at the Arvada Events Center. Register today because time and space are running out! Topics on the agenda for the day include:

Policy

- School Safety 2.0: Resources and Best Practices for a Post-Claire Davis World
- Regulation Round-Up: From Data Privacy to Transportation, Updates from CDE on Recent Regulatory Developments
- Legislation of Note from the 2017 Session: Sexting, Mill Sharing, and What You Need to Know
- Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District: Implications for Charter School Special Education from the Supreme Court's 2017 Endrew F. Decision
 - Presenter: Paul O'Neill, The National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools
- Elected Official Panel

Facilities

- Facility Financing: Identify Affordability and Attract Funding
- Facility Construction: 10 Critical Steps to Success
- Due Diligence: Be Cautious with Contracts and Clauses
- How to Design and Operate a Charter High School
- Charter School Facilities Initiative: Preliminary Findings from the 2017 Colorado Survey
- School Finance Updates

Registration is set to close on Friday, September 15, so be sure to [register today!](#)

What Makes Your School Unique? Share Your Stories

We all know charter public schools are positively impacting tens of thousands of children across the state. However, these positive contributions often get overshadowed by the increasing amount of negative news that opponents of charters schools generate.

The League, working in conjunction with national partners, is trying to change that narrative. We're making a concerted push to line up and pitch as many positive stories about Colorado charter schools as possible, and for that we need your help.

Is your school doing innovative and ground-breaking work, perhaps particularly with historically underserved student populations? If so, tell us about it. Does your school have a compelling story to share about your school's creation, development, or strong track record of success? We want to hear it. Are there individuals at your school with unique backgrounds whose stories are worth profiling? Let us know. Be sure to reach out and share with us the great things happening at your school. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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