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## Charting the Capitol The 2018 Legislative Session Kicks Off

Happy New Year and welcome to the 2018 Colorado Legislative Session!

The Second Regular Session of the 71st General Assembly officially commenced yesterday. Below are a number of updates related to the legislative agenda that the Colorado League of Charter Schools plans to prioritize between now and May. Read on for further details on how to remain informed and engaged over the coming months ensuring the best possible legislative outcomes for Colorado's charter public schools and their students.

### 2018 Legislative Priorities

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#### In Case You Missed It: The League is Hiring an Associate Director of Organizing

### 2018 Legislative Priorities

Each year the League conducts an extensive process of outreach and feedback to arrive at our annual legislative agenda. This year was no exception. Whether it was through member or partner referral or through the more formal mechanism of our bipartisan Governmental Affairs Committee, we received a number of suggestions for what to focus on this year. These priorities were formalized and approved by the League's board at its monthly meeting in early December.

This agenda will guide the League's work at the Capitol over the coming months. Thank you to everyone who devoted time and energy to its development. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns related to any of the items contained in it.

### Legislative Updates throughout the Session

Throughout the 2018 session, we will provide you with the following legislative communications to make sure you are up-to-date on events taking place at the Capitol. They will include:

- **Weekly "Legislative Lunch" Calls** - The League will host weekly conference calls with up-to-the-minute details on the preceding week's legislative developments. These calls will take place over the lunch hour at noon on Fridays and can be accessed by dialing 1-800-977-8002 and inserting access code 9299699#. Legislative Lunch calls will begin on Friday, January 19, and continue every Friday at noon through May 11.
- **Legislative Update Newsletter: Charting the Capitol** - Legislative Updates called Charting the Capitol will be emailed to you every 2-3 weeks throughout session. This newsletter provides frequent updates on developments in the legislature and how they may affect charter schools. If you do not currently receive this newsletter, please [click here](#) to sign-up today. Contact Kerri Barclay, at [kbarclay@coloradoleague.org](mailto:kbarclay@coloradoleague.org) if you have any questions.
- **COCAN Action Alerts** - If something arises at the Capitol that requires more immediate attention, we will use the Colorado Charter Advocacy Network (COCAN) to send Action Alerts to you. The Action Alert will ask you to contact your legislator about a pressing charter issue. COCAN makes it easy for you to contact your legislator by using pre-formatted messages crafted by the League. If you are not already signed up to receive COCAN emails, [please register today](#).



## Help Us Organize Your Parents and Families for ACTION

Speaking of COCAN, *we need your help* growing the ranks of informed and engaged charter advocates across Colorado. As charter school leaders and supporters across the state, you are in a unique position to help us activate your communities - the parents, families, staff members and former students that make up your networks.

That's why we're asking you to send the following message to your community encouraging them to sign-up for our Colorado Charter Advocacy Network (COCAN) today. COCAN is the vehicle by which we keep charter school staff and supporters informed about pressing issues affecting charter schools. It's also the means by which we activate the Colorado charter school community in defense of charter school students and their interests. Please help us by both clicking here to sign-up and/or update your information today and by distributing the following message to your community encouraging them to sign-up as well.

Unless we work together to get organized and activated, we will never be able to counter the attacks being leveled by our opposition. We're counting on you to help engage your community and ignite the grassroots support that will ultimately enable us to succeed.

## Charter School Advocacy Day at the Capitol

Please be sure to join us for the third annual **Charter School Advocacy Day at the Capitol on Tuesday, March 13 from 8:00 AM - 1:30 PM**. Attendees will learn about the legislative process, garner helpful tips about effective advocacy, understand current education bills with likely impacts on charter schools, and visit the Capitol to engage with elected officials. Charter middle and high schools from across the state are encouraged to bring a group students to participate in this important day. Additionally, charter school parents, teachers, board members and supporters are all welcome and encouraged to sign-up. *The more charter school advocates who attend, the stronger the message we can send to legislators about the importance of charter public schools and their students.* Click here to register.



## Governor's Revised Budget Projects Even More for 2018-19 School Funding

When Governor Hickenlooper first released his proposed 2018-19 budget earlier this fall, it included good news for schools in Colorado. Specifically, it called for a \$70 million buy-down of the so-called Budget Stabilization Factor (formerly the Negative Factor), which would result in an average per-pupil increase of approximately \$343 per student heading into next school year.

Last week these projections grew even stronger when, as a result of new revenue coming from improved economic conditions and the newly adopted federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the Governor amended his budget proposal to increase the buy-down by another \$30 million to \$100 million in total. Additionally, the Governor proposed extending last year's \$30 million investment in rural schools (SB17-267) by another one-time \$30 million rural school appropriation next school year.

The Governor's budget proposal is just that - a proposal - and nothing becomes official until the legislature finalizes the budget this spring. However, it's a positive sign that the Governor has chosen to prioritize school funding in this fashion. We will be sure to keep you posted as the conversation around the budget progresses throughout the legislative session.

## Your Investment in Action: Charter Advocacy Helps Limit Damaging Impacts of Federal Tax Reform

The League's advocacy efforts are not just limited to the Colorado legislative session and state-level affairs. If there is a federal issue in need of attention, we will engage there as well, which we did to positive effect late in 2017 as the tax reform debate unfolded in Washington, D.C. At issue were so-called Private Activity Bonds - which many Colorado charter schools have relied upon to finance their facilities - and whether these bonds would remain tax-exempt going forward. With your help, the League swung into action, sent a number of emails and letters to members of Colorado's Congressional delegation, and was able to add its strong voice to those advocating for the preservation of this important facilities financing mechanism. While not all aspects of the final legislation were positive for charter schools, we were able to stave off its most damaging provisions, which is a testament to the strength of the charter school community when united. THANK YOU to everyone who responded to our calls for action (Action Alerts) and contacted their legislators. It really does make a difference.

## ICYMI: The League is Hiring for an Associate Director of Organizing

In order to expand and enhance our advocacy offerings, the League is hiring for a new Associate Director of Organizing.

The ideal candidate will be committed to the charter public school sector and the mission and vision of the League. We are seeking candidates who have experience working in a senior organizing role and successful work experience in low-income communities and in multicultural team environments. This candidate will possess a deep understanding of and appreciation for relational organizing as well as the ability to act with civility, motivate, and empathize and communicate with people from all walks of life.

The Associate Director of Organizing is a full-time position that will connect and mobilize a network of parents, teachers, and supporters statewide to advocate for charter school initiatives and priorities. This person will work in conjunction with the advocacy team to develop short- and long-term organizing goals, strategies and target areas.

Please share this opportunity with your networks and with anyone who might be a good fit for this position. **The deadline for applications is Friday, January 19.**

Lastly, if you have any questions about specific issues, proposals, bills, etc. that arise over the next several months, don't hesitate to email or call me at the contact information listed below.

Thank you. Here's to another successful legislative session!

Sincerely,  
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