WHAT WE BELIEVE
We believe in, act on, and speak to three pillars of our work: Quality, Choice, and Equity. Like three legs of a stool, each one is intended to be supported by and supportive of the other two. These three pillars are the platform on which we build the League's Principles, which follow below. The League's Principles are a necessary component of understanding why we do what we do, and what the League rallies around, advocates for, and supports in our member schools.

FIRST PRINCIPLE:
Putting Students First: All Colorado children, regardless of zip code or background, deserve access to high-quality public school options. The League and charter sector efforts revolve around taking action in the best interest of children and measurably improving students’ educational outcomes. This is the long-term, consistent benchmark that we check against for every strategy, project, tactic, or position.

Additional Principles:
Empowerment: Our current public education system is ill-equipped to consistently provide high-quality options to all learners because of a propensity for top-down, static, bureaucratic approaches. What we need instead is a bottom-up approach that empowers educators, families, and communities and allows for new thinking in the public education ecosystem to grow and spread.

Innovation: Charter schools epitomize an empowering approach to public education because of their unique blend of autonomy in exchange for accountability. Charter schools inject much-needed creativity and diversity into a public education system that far too often defaults to a one-size-fits-all approach that does not serve each student well. (over)
Diversity: Much like diversity of options and approaches strengthens the entire charter school space, so too does diversity of teachers and leaders elevate the entire sector. Relative to statewide averages, Colorado charter schools serve higher percentages of both students of color and English language learners. A growing body of evidence points to the distinct benefits these students receive from being taught by educators of the same race or background. Colorado’s charter school sector should continue to do its part to proactively and intentionally diversify the ranks of its teachers and leaders.

Charter schools are public schools, a part of Colorado’s public education ecosystem, and as such are open to all students, transparent with taxpayer dollars, structured as nonprofits, and subject to the same standards and assessments as all public schools in the state.

Autonomy and accountability lie at the heart of what makes charter schools successful. School-level controls over staffing, budget, and educational program allow charter schools to innovate and be responsive to student and family needs. That autonomy comes in exchange for increased accountability and improved student outcomes. All charter schools are governed by performance contracts that spell out the specific targets they are supposed to hit. If a charter school consistently fails to hit these targets, it can be closed. All public schools would benefit from being governed by similar standards and practices in autonomy and accountability.

Comparability to Inform Choice: In order for a system of diverse schools to thrive, we need a clear and consistent means of assessing the holistic quality of various educational options. Comparability across all public schools empowers parents and families to make the most informed school choice possible, and it helps us ensure that our public schools are serving all students well.

Invest in Success: We must prioritize students over systems, and outcomes over bureaucracy. Wherever possible, money should follow the child to the public school of their choice based on diverse student characteristics as opposed to system characteristics. We have historically focused far too much of our time and resources on schools and approaches that are failing. We must invest in proven models of success, particularly for our state’s most historically under-served students, so that those models and schools can expand and replicate to serve more children.