



From: Michelle Baumstark <@cpsk12.org>
Sent: Monday, December 15, 2025 1:09:54 PM
To: STAFFALL <STAFFALL@cpsk12.org>
Subject: Columbia Public Schools: Every Building. Every Student. Every Day.

Please see the message below from the Board of Education.

Dear CPS Employees,

The Columbia Board of Education wants to make you aware of an unfolding issue that has great potential to affect Columbia Public Schools. Frontier KC has applied to open a charter school in Columbia and Saint Louis University, the school's sponsor, has approved it. The application now awaits approval by the State Board of Education.

The Columbia Board of Education has submitted an official letter of objection to the State Board of Education based on misleading claims, erroneous assumptions, lack of demonstrated need, and a failure by Frontier KC to follow statute during the application process.

Our chief objection to charter schools in Columbia has always been that they divert funding away from Columbia Public Schools to pay for a duplicate school system that is privately run and not accountable to our community. In the first year of operation alone, Frontier projects taking roughly \$4 million in tax revenue from CPS with no clear benefit to the community. Twenty years of data show that charters do not outperform other public school districts, and almost half close their doors, leading to disruption for students and families and a waste of taxpayer dollars.

This is not about parental choice, as charter proponents would have you believe. Parents have always had the option to send their children to a private or parochial school, and there are scholarships available to families in need. Public education exists to serve all children, and charters simply do not. They have many ways to be selective in their enrollment. In addition to requiring parents to volunteer, charter schools can adopt selective enrollment boundaries and set attendance requirements. Charters choose the children they want to serve and use state and local taxpayer money that would otherwise come to CPS to pay for it.

Our duty as board members is to make decisions that prioritize the children of our community and to ensure they get the instruction, support and opportunities that will nurture them into becoming the best versions of themselves. We believe deeply in the work all of you do to make that a reality, and we are grateful for you. We are prepared to fight any action that would harm your efforts.

To that end, the Board of Education filed a lawsuit today against the State of Missouri, the Attorney General, and the State Board of Education, asserting the statute allowing charters in Boone County (and only Boone County) is a so-called "special law" that targets our community and is therefore unconstitutional. The decision to file suit was made thoughtfully and unanimously by the Board after

much discussion. We will keep you updated over the coming months as we stand for the rights of every child in our community to receive the public education they deserve.

Every Student. Every Building. Every Day.

Sincerely,

The Columbia Board of Education

Michelle Baumstark
Chief Communications Officer
Columbia Public Schools

1818 W. Worley Street
Columbia, MO 65203

(573) 214-3960

www.cpsk12.org



The mission in Columbia Public Schools is to provide an excellent education for all students and the vision is to be the best district in the state. The district's core values are trust, integrity, collaboration, transparency, empathy, and grace

Columbia Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, or use of leave protected by the Family and Medical Leave Act, in its programs, activities, or with regard to employment. The Columbia Board of Education is an equal opportunity employer.

The district has a collective equity statement: Columbia Public Schools, through action and in partnership with families and the community, will uphold the values, policies, and practices that promote cultural competence. We will accept, embrace, and empower students and staff in their individual identities to establish and sustain human dignity, justice, equitable treatment, and inclusiveness in the classroom and workplace.