

From: Columbia Public Schools (CPS) <CPSComm@cpsk12.org>

Date: Monday, December 15, 2025 at 1:15 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Columbia Public Schools: Protecting the CPS Experience

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Dear CPS Families,

The Board of Education wants to make you aware of a current issue affecting Columbia Public Schools and our community. As you may know, Boone County (and only Boone County) was targeted by the legislature for charter school expansion in 2024. Now, Frontier KC has applied to open a charter school and Saint Louis University, the school's sponsor, has approved it. The application awaits approval from the State Board of Education.

Our biggest concern about charters has always been how they are funded. They take public taxes – including local dollars – directly from the existing public school district. Meanwhile, charters are not accountable to local taxpayers. Their boards are not elected and they are run by private entities. In its first year of operation alone, Frontier projects taking roughly \$4 million in tax dollars from CPS. By year five, that number grows to more than \$9 million. The annual cut to our budget from this and future charter schools would be devastating.

This is not an argument against parent choice. Parents can choose now to send their children to a private or parochial school, and there are scholarships for 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.

CPS takes great pride in offering exceptional opportunities at every school level – from The Boone County Nature School, to middle school foreign language classes, to a first-class Career Center and early college, just to name a few. CPS is also proud to support students with a variety of needs, whether academic, emotional or developmental. We have thousands of participants in fine arts, athletics and other extracurricular activities. It all adds up to the "CPS Experience" and it is what the Board believes every child in our community deserves.

Bluntly, it will not be possible to continue to provide the CPS Experience if our funding is diverted to a duplicate school system. That is a reality we are prepared to fight against on behalf of the students we were elected to serve.

Today, we filed a lawsuit against the State of Missouri, the Attorney General and the State Board of Education opposing charter expansion in Boone County. The legal justification for our claim is that the law allowing charters to expand into Boone County is unconstitutional as it targets a single county with no rational basis. This action was taken thoughtfully and unanimously by the board. We believe deeply that your children deserve the excellent public education CPS provides, and we are fiercely committed to protecting it.

Sincerely,

The Columbia Board of Education

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