



July 28, 2015

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CITIZENS OF THE WORLD KANSAS CITY FIRST SCHOOLS APPROVED BY NEW MISSOURI CHARTER COMMISSION

Missouri Charter Public School Commission votes to approve charter for two elementary schools

Kansas City – [Citizens of the World Kansas City](#), part of a national public charter school network, announced today that the state’s new charter commission granted them their first sponsorship of charter schools in Missouri. The charter approval by the Missouri Charter Public School Commission marks a major milestone for the parents and community members who conceived of the idea for a new school in their community two years ago.

The Missouri Charter Public School Commission will now submit the charter application to the state board of education, which will then have 60 days to approve the charter.

Citizens, which focuses on serving economically and racially diverse student populations that reflect the demographics of their communities, aims to open two K-1 elementary schools in August 2016, adding a grade each year. They intend to be operating four schools including elementary, middle and high schools, at a full capacity of 1,750 students in the area bounded by State Line to the west, Prospect to the east, Union Station to the north and Brush Creek to the south.

“We’re thrilled to have gained the full support of the state charter commission after a healthy dialogue in the commission’s public meeting with members of the Kansas City community,” said Kristin Droege, Citizens of the World Kansas City’s executive director. “Our Kansas City schools were born of the community and a partnership with parents who have taken the initiative to bring even more families high-quality public school options, so it makes complete sense that they took part in the conversation leading up to the approval of our schools.”

The [Kansas City Midtown Community School Initiative](#) (MCSI), a group of Midtown parents and community members, committed last year to providing better public school options for families in the Midtown neighborhoods of Kansas City who were leaving for better schools outside the community. They issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify a high-performing public school model representing their values, and ultimately chose Citizens from the applicants.

“Committed Kansas City Parents with the MCSI established the dream of a high-quality public school in Midtown. Citizens answered the call and, living up to their reputation, have worked diligently in preparing to bring the dream to life through two excellent charter public schools,” said Douglas Thaman, executive director of the Missouri Charter Public Schools Association. “Now, the dream moves one step closer to becoming a reality for families in Kansas City. MCPSA applauds the efforts of every individual involved and looks forward to Citizens of the World charter public schools providing a high-quality education for the students in Kansas City.”

Missouri is the latest state to develop a statewide charter authorizer to provide independent oversight to its charter schools. Currently, 15 states and Washington, D.C. have independent commissions.

“Since the sole purpose of an independent charter commission is to oversee and hold charters accountable, and potentially work to share best practices among charters statewide, we look forward to our partnership with the commission to bring high-quality public school options to the Midtown community,” Droege said.

Citizens is a public charter school network that currently serves about 1,400 children across five schools in California and New York, 60 percent of whom are students of color, half qualify for free and reduced lunch and a quarter are English Language Learners. Citizens’ school model reflects the inclusiveness and diversity as well as the academic rigor that parents value (Citizens of the World Hollywood’s last state achievement scores put it in the top 6 percent of all Los Angeles public schools), while helping students realize their full potential and become true citizens of the world.

MCSI’s goal was to find a partner that would bring schools to the historically segregated community that not only reflected the socioeconomic, racial and cultural diversity of their town, but also used that diversity to cultivate character and understanding in all of their students. Midtown Kansas City is 49 percent White, 36 percent African-American and 12 percent Latino, more than half of the population makes under \$40,000 and 20 percent makes more than \$75,000. MCSI members believe that quality schools are critical to creating vibrant neighborhoods because they promote economic development, neighborhood stability and community growth.

Citizens’ immediate priorities include securing charter approval, identifying affordable facilities and continuing to engage families and local leaders.

About Citizens of the World Charter Schools

Citizens of the World Charter Schools are free, high-performing public schools that serve student populations that reflect the socioeconomic, cultural and racial diversity of the communities in which they live. Our mission is to impact and expand the conversation about what an excellent education contains, requires and accomplishes. We believe that a key outcome of a quality public education is to help students realize their full potential and become effective citizens through challenging and joyful learning environments that develop students’ self-awareness, empathy, and sense of responsibility for the broader world. We serve about 1,400 children across five schools in California and New York and will be expanding to Missouri in 2016. For more information, please visit: www.citizensoftheworld.org.

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