Proposed Midtown charter schools could soon be approved for 2016 opening

By Cody Newill
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Educators behind two proposed elementary charter schools in midtown Kansas City are eagerly awaiting approval next week by the Missouri State Board of Education.

The Midtown Community School Initiative approached Citizens of the World Charter Schools last year in hopes of opening two schools in Kansas City. CWC operates charters in New York and Los Angeles. They hope to open the Kansas City schools next fall.

The group has the backing of the newly formed Missouri Charter Public School Commission and in January earned grants totaling more than $2.6 million to make the schools a reality.

The State Board of Education will review the CWC’s application Tuesday. CWC Kansas City Executive Director Kristin Droege says she’s confident that the plan will be well received.

"Of course it's never done till it's done, but both [the Missouri Charter Public School Commission] and the Department of Secondary andElementary Education have thoroughly vetted our application," Droege said. "They recognize it will be a quality education program, a fiscally sound plan and will meet all compliance regulations."

The goal of CWC schools is to bring together a diverse group of students and teachers. Droege says both local charter schools and the Kansas City Public Schools have been supportive of the project.

"I've visited about 15 [charter schools in the area] so far, and they're very supportive," Droege said. "I really attribute all of the support to the fact that this started with parents here. This is really what the city wants."

If approved Tuesday, the CWC will start looking for facilities in the midtown area, teachers to fill the schools and eventually open up enrollment to area families.

Droege says the schools would open kindergarten and first graders in 2016, then add a grade per year until the school is K-12.

Droege says the CWC hopes to expand by 2027 to have four schools with elementary, middle and high school classes.

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