May 19, 2016

Dear St. Louis Public Schools,

There is a quote saying, “coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.” In April, when the charter public school community in St. Louis joined together with St. Louis Public Schools to support the first tax levy in 25 years we felt an important step had been taken. Great news; we were all coming together to benefit every public school student in the City of St. Louis!

On April 11, 2016, when the Special Administrative Board filed a motion holding the State in contempt, claiming the Department, since 2006, overpaid the charter schools in St. Louis by including the 1998 sales tax within the local effort payment that is deducted from the SLPS state payment, we were shocked, unaware and a big step back was taken. While the Motion is not filed directly against the charter public schools it directly impacts the charter public schools. The Motion demanding the State pay over $40 million dollars to the District will legally have to be taken from the charter public schools (Missouri Revised Statutes 160.415.2. (3.) The impact to these public schools could be devastating.

We agree, the St. Louis Public Schools Special Administrative Board and Administration have a fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers of the City of St. Louis. Charter public schools do not take money away from the District. Citizens tax themselves to pay for public education. The State has twice indicated these tax dollars belong to charter public schools’ children. The bottom line is this. If St. Louis Public Schools prevails, charter public schools’ students could lose everything. But if St. Louis Public Schools withdraws the Motion no District or charter public school students loses any resources meant for their education.

The parents of the 10,500 charter public school children have followed the law. They have chosen a charter public school in their public district. We are certain you would agree that these charter public school children are not worth less than other public school children.

We are 100% in solidarity with you that we should all work together for equitable funding. We stand ready to do so! But, in order for this to happen, we are asking you to withdraw the Federal Motion and take the threat away. We’ve come together before. Let’s keep together and work together to achieve success for ALL public school students in St. Louis!