

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, November 20, 2025

For more information, contact:

Chelsea Cross, Director of Communications
City Forward Collective
media@cityforwardcollective.org

City Forward Collective Condemns MPS School Board's Abandonment of Process & Single-Year Renewal for Carmen Schools of Science & Technology-Northwest
MPS' Actions Ignored Support from 1000+ Community Members, And Disregarded The District's Own Charter Review Committee's Recommendation

City Forward Collective, along with our advocacy partner CFC Action Fund (together, CFC), condemns the Milwaukee Board of School Directors for voting six to two to renew the charter for Carmen Schools of Science and Technology-Northwest for only one year, despite the MPS charter school review committee's recommendation of a three-year renewal term.

The following statement can be attributed to Colleston Morgan Jr., Executive Director of CFC:

"Let's be clear: tonight's action by the Milwaukee Board of School Directors is not about accountability. It is not leadership. Instead, this decision is yet another instance of failed stewardship by the School Board – another action rooted in misinformation and ideology that puts special interest agendas over the educational needs of students and families.

The 550+ students & families, and 60+ staff members of the Carmen Northwest community deserve better than arbitrary, last-minute decisions that leave the school in limbo. Students and schools need clarity, transparency, and consistency from the School Board—not the chaos and confusion sown by MPS' actions over the last week.

When School Board members privilege ideology over performance, special interest group priorities over the authentic voices of students, families, and staff, and personal vendettas over persistent community needs, they drift from their core mission: ensuring every Milwaukee child has access to a high-quality education."

This political vote made that failure unmistakably clear: the Board continues to follow the lead of narrow special interest groups, ignoring the voices of community members when it doesn't suit their ideological agendas.

Said Morgan, "Tonight's decision is yet another example of a School Board unwilling and unable to follow its own processes, nor to make decisions grounded in facts, data, and what's best for Milwaukee's students and families. This is a bad decision, made in bad faith, and rooted in bad facts.

More than two-thirds of MPS' Black students are trapped in schools that failed to meet lowered state expectations last year. And more than half of MPS' schools performed worse than Carmen on state assessments. True accountability means MPS should first focus its efforts on addressing the unacceptable performance of the 80 MPS schools - more than half of the district - that had lower proficiency rates than Carmen Northwest."

Morgan continued, "This flawed decision, and the process failures surrounding it, once again call into question the School Board's stewardship of our city's public school system. A cascade of failures has [rightfully broken the Milwaukee public's trust and confidence in the School Board](#), with just 32% of respondents expressing trust in the School Board in CFC's recent polling.

Rather than doing the work to fix its own shortcomings, the School Board is instead taking actions at the behest of special interest groups to undermine its own charter authorization processes, advancing a misinformed and misguided political agenda over the needs of Milwaukee's students and families, while further accelerating MPS' enrollment declines and blowing another \$2M+ hole into the district's \$100M+ structural budget gap.

MPS should be recognizing and supporting public schools that are delivering for kids — regardless of their operating structure — not moving the goalposts when it is politically convenient. The Carmen Northwest community, and all Milwaukee residents, deserved better. Milwaukee's voters should take note — they will have the opportunity to hold School Board members accountable for their actions at the ballot box."

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

- Carmen Northwest [earned a three-year renewal recommendation](#), scoring 75.7% on MPS' own charter renewal scorecard.
 - Notably, MPS School Board President Missy Zombor served as a member of the district's Review Team which made this recommendation.
- 80 MPS district-operated schools — more than half of the district — had lower levels of student proficiency than Carmen Northwest, according to [CFC's analysis of 2024 School & District Report Cards](#).
 - This includes every MPS-staffed and district-operated school within a 3-mile radius of the Carmen Northwest campus.
- Should the Milwaukee Board of School Directors fail to renew Carmen Northwest's contract, CFC estimates that MPS stands to lose more than \$2.5 million in annual revenues. This includes
 - More than \$750,000 in lease payments for the Carmen Northwest building, and
 - More than \$2 million tied to MPS' ability to raise local property tax revenues and receive state aids based on Carmen Northwest's student enrollment

- MPS' conduct has been scrutinized in a series of recent reports, including [operational](#) and [academic](#) audits ordered by Governor Evers, a [financial audit](#) ordered by the Legislative Audit Bureau, and a [review of MPS' human resources functions](#) by the Council of Great City Schools

For more on City Forward Collective's position, please read the full opinion piece from Colleston Morgan, CFC's Executive Director, published on Tuesday, in advance of tonight's vote, on CFC's Substack: [The Accountability Mirage – Why The MPS Board's Carmen Decision Tells Us Everything We Need To Know](#)

—

City Forward Collective envisions a city where every Milwaukee child receives an excellent education that prepares them to thrive at a high-quality school of their choice. We advance our mission to secure Milwaukee's future through informing, engaging, and catalyzing transformation across Milwaukee's K12 school ecosystem. Learn more about our work at www.cityforwardcollective.org

—

CFC Action Fund is a 501(c)(4) organization whose mission is to secure Milwaukee's future by electing champions and advancing policies to ensure that every Milwaukee child receives an excellent education at a high-quality school of their choice. For more information, visit our website at www.cfcactionfund.org

###