



## COMMUNITY MEMORANDUM

Date: January 14, 2023

To: The General Public and One City Stakeholders

From: Gail Wiseman, VP of External Relations

CC: One City Schools CEO, Board of Directors and Executive Team

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### THE CLOSURE OF ONE CITY SCHOOLS HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM AND ITS IMPACT ON PUBIC FUNDING

The mission of One City Schools is to seed a new model of public education that ensures young children are on track to succeed in a college or career preparatory program from birth through high school graduation. We began the 2022-23 school year by offering instruction in grades pre-K through 5th grade with new 6th, 9th and 10th grades.

Our pre-K through 6th grade school is fully staffed and is making great strides academically. Families with students enrolled are highly satisfied. We will accept applications for these grades for the 2023-24 school year beginning March 1, 2023.

In contrast, our 9th and 10th-grade high school program has candidly struggled this year. As a result, we made the difficult decision to close our high school program.

**We have prepared this memo to explain the reasons behind closing the high school program and how the closure will impact the per-pupil funding One City Schools receives from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for 9th and 10th-grade students moving forward.**

### CLOSURE OF ONE CITY HIGH SCHOOL

By December 2022, our One City Schools 9th- and 10th grade-program lacked a sufficient number of qualified subject-area teachers to staff the school. In early December 2022, we notified our UW System authorizer about scenarios that included stopping our 9th and 10th grade program if we could not address our teacher shortage challenge. In January 2023, our leadership team made the difficult decision to close our 9th- and 10th-grade program effective January 20th. Running a high school is hard work. Our team of One City educators was unable to create a school program that met our high standard of excellence.

On Thursday, January 5, 2023, we notified the families of 62 current 9th and 10th-grade students that the school would close on January 20th. We are working in partnership with local school districts to find high-quality school placements in the Greater Madison area for our former 9th and 10th graders for the remainder of the school year. All credits earned during the first semester will transfer to their next educational placement.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT ALLOCATION OF PUBLIC DOLLARS

In the wake of our announcement about closing the high school program, people have raised legitimate questions about what will happen to the state per pupil dollars we receive for educating students. A great deal of confusion exists on this matter, as funding formulas are complicated.

It has been asserted that One City Schools has received funding for 9th- and 10th-grade students for the entire 2022-23 school year and will not give back funds for the second semester. This is inaccurate.

We want to set the record straight about the amount of public dollars our high school will receive going forward. **The key takeaway—we will NOT receive state funding for 9th and 10th-grade students who are no longer enrolled at One City Schools.**

State per-pupil funds awarded to public charter schools are not distributed in a lump sum at the start of the school year; rather, the funds are distributed in four separate payments throughout the school year, based on two pupil count days (one in September, and one in January). One City Schools has received and expended funds for educating students for the first ‘count day’ in September. These funds were awarded on September 19, 2022 and December 5, 2022.

The second ‘count day’ when public schools are required to report enrolled students was January 13, 2023. Yesterday, we reported to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction that we have zero 9th and 10th-grade students enrolled, as we have already announced our intent to close the school for the remainder of the school year. As a result, **we will not receive any further funding for these 9th and 10th grade students from the Department of Public Instruction for the remainder of the 2022-23 school year.**

## CONCLUSION

While we wish the outcome had been different, we will work closely with local schools to ensure our families and students have a smooth transition to their new schools. We will not accept state or federal funding for our 9th and 10th-grade students for the remainder of this school year after our program's closure in 2023.