



## **ACLU of WI: Sex Segregation Won't Fix the Racial Achievement Gap in Madison**

Letter Issued to School District Outlines Concerns Over Legality of Sex-Segregated Charter School Proposal

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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MADISON, WI –The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin continues to oppose sex segregation in a proposal for a charter school that will be considered by the Madison Metropolitan School District later this month. This week, the ACLU issued a letter to the school board outlining its concerns with the research and legal justifications for single-sex education in the Madison Preparatory Academy plan.

The ACLU agrees that students of color in Madison deserve better educational options. However, as coeducation is not the cause of the racial achievement gap, it isn't a reasonable solution. There is too great a potential for discrimination in sex-segregation. Research cited in the proposal in support of single-gender education are unscientific, biased or don't actually conclude that sex segregation alone is what contributes to student success. [What has been proven in academic studies and journals](#) is that these programs reinforce harmful gender stereotypes and perpetuate the discredited idea that boys and girls learn so differently that they shouldn't be educated in the same classroom.

The ACLU's response also points out that the Madison School Board will violate the law if it approves a public school that is segregated on the basis of sex if the school shortchanges girls, or if the educational programming is based on sex stereotypes. These stereotypes include the discredited theory that boys and girls learn differently and require different teaching methods—a theory that is widely held by proponents of single-sex education, including Madison Prep's backers.

Throughout the debate on this charter plan, the Madison community has been given a false choice: either support the entire charter proposal or be a part of a racist status quo. There is no reason that a coeducational school that implements the International Baccalaureate program would not be just as effective without needlessly separating boys and girls. Recent

coeducational successes in Milwaukee support this. All students deserve an equal education regardless of their race or gender.

When resources are scarce, schools must focus on what works, like smaller class sizes, increased attention to curriculum, and greater parental involvement. A link to the letter to the MMSD school board is available on the ACLU of Wisconsin website.

For updates on what civil libertarians in Wisconsin can do to stop the abuse of power, visit our [webpage](#), like us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on Twitter [@ACLUofWisconsin](#) and [@ACLUMadison](#). Read more news and opinion on civil liberties in Wisconsin on the [Forward for Liberty](#) blog. The ACLU of Wisconsin has approximately 6,500 members who support its efforts to defend the civil liberties and civil rights of all Wisconsin residents.

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