

**Frequently Asked Questions**  
**Widener Transfers Ownership of Widener Partnership Charter School**  
**to Chester Upland School District**  
**May 2022**

**Why is Widener University transferring ownership of the Widener Partnership Charter School (WPCS) to Chester Upland School District (CUSD)?**

This shift will strengthen the partnership between Widener and CUSD, allowing the university to more broadly improve education in Chester in areas that are best aligned with its strengths. With strong, responsible leadership in place at CUSD, university leaders feel confident that now is the right time for a successful transition.

**When WPCS becomes part of the CUSD, what kinds of services will Widener be offering across the district?**

Currently, Widener undergraduate and graduate students and professors work in the WPCS in a variety of capacities, from student teaching to providing supplemental support in social work, clinical psychology, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, and special education. Widener and CUSD will seek opportunities to expand similar services to other schools with the potential to benefit more students in the district.

**Widener is also extending its generous scholarship offer to all academically-eligible CUSD graduates and to Chester Upland faculty. Why?**

Widener is extremely committed to education, partnership, and stewardship in Chester. The university continues to make significant investments in the community and in the CUSD. Currently, WPCS students who meet Widener admission criteria during their high school years are eligible for scholarships of \$100,000 over four years to pursue an undergraduate education full time at Widener. Under the new arrangement, this same financial opportunity will be offered to all graduates in the district who meet Widener's admissions requirements. CUSD teachers and administrators will also be offered scholarships to complete graduate work at Widener.

**How will the student experience change when the WPCS becomes part of the Chester Upland School District?**

Students at WPCS should see few changes in the coming school year, with school leadership and teaching staff remaining as stable as possible. CUSD plans to carry on the same great academic programs that are already in place. WPCS Principal Kareem Goodwin will continue leading the school and the district looks forward to his partnership. Students at WPCS will now have access to the same kinds of extracurricular programs and athletics that CUSD students do.

**Will WPCS become a public school or will it remain a charter school?**

WPCS will become a public school district school, and the CUSD will ensure the student experience at WPCS continues to be outstanding and the school remains an area leader.

**Will current WPCS students be able to remain at WPCS, even if they don't live in the attendance zone for the school?**

Yes. All current WPCS students will be able to remain as students at school through the end of eighth grade.

**Will new attendance boundaries be established for other students to attend WPCS?**

This has not yet been determined, but CUSD will examine this after the transfer.

**Will WPCS get a new name?**

Yes. CUSD will develop a process to select a new name for the school as it is officially incorporated into the school district under PA Department of Education guidelines.

**Will the school year calendar be the same as the Chester Upland calendar?**

Yes.

**Will WPCS remain as a K-8 school?**

For the next two school years, WPCS will remain a school for students in grades Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. CUSD will be evaluating the configuration of all its schools for future years.

**What will happen over the summer?**

CUSD will work with WPCS staff to ensure that all certifications required by the PA Department of Education for public school educators are up to date and in place. WPCS faculty and support staff will become members of the CUSD's bargaining units. We will communicate thoroughly with WPCS staff throughout the summer to make the transition as smooth as possible.

**How much is CUSD paying Widener to acquire WPCS?**

The District will purchase WPCS for \$9.1 million. While Widener has received higher offers from other interested buyers over time, university leadership recognized that partnering with CUSD would allow Widener to positively impact the greatest number of students in the Chester community. Under the plan, the district will issue a bond to cover the cost of acquiring the school. Currently, under PA charter regulations, CUSD pays Widener approximately \$5.1 million each year in subsidies. Those payments fall off the District's rolls once the school becomes part of the District.

**What impact will acquiring the WPCS have across the district?**

WPCS is a model school in the community and CUSD looks forward to benefitting from its success by applying some of its best practices and programs across the district.