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Pause of CCS' closing plan shows power of the people

Your Turn

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Guest columnist

Despite national fallout from the controversial Project 2025 and an ongoing trail of public-school closures across the country, Columbus parents like me remain hopeful about the power of people joining together to change our education system.

Recently, a powerful local coalition of parents, teachers and public education advocates won a much-needed pause to the public-school closure crisis here in Columbus.

Thanks to our organizing efforts, the Columbus school board agreed to pause the school closures and gather more comprehensive community feedback before proceeding.

This is a testament to the power of our unified voice.

This hard-won pause is not just a 'pause.' It's a beacon of hope for Columbus parents, educators and community members who have voiced their concerns and shared their stories about the importance of our Columbus city schools.

We commend the board for listening to the community and recognizing the need for a more inclusive and thorough decision-making process.

Project 2025 a threat to children

Thanks to this pause, we can now work with the board to explore innovative solutions to strengthen our Columbus city schools.

We can provide our kids with safe classrooms and up-to-date learning resources that will help them grow and thrive. We can find cost-saving opportunities that realign our resources so that our schools are more energy-efficient, sustainable and infrastructurally sound.

We now have a unique opportunity in Columbus to reimagine how we can strengthen our public schools. Together, we can ensure every child in our city has access to a high-quality Columbus city school education, regardless of their zip code or family income.

As a parent wanting to ensure a bright future for my own children, I'd be remiss to say that I'm not worried about the deeper implications of Project 2025 on our public education system.

The people's power is undeniable

This horrific, extremist agenda will slash funding for already-struggling public schools across the country and leave it up to states and parents to choose schools for their own children. It will take away our kids' ability to learn a diverse, critically sound curriculum that helps them to become thoughtful citizens.

While things feel hopeless at a national level, I'm reminded of the undeniable power of our people.

I remember the dozens of parents and teachers who faithfully showed up to our tailgate actions and consistently testified at school board meetings to protect our kids. I remember the strategy sessions we held as a coalition to ensure that we remain a powerful, strategic and united force in advocating for our public schools. I remember the collective joy, laughter and struggle we shared as a Columbus community that cares about our children and their future.

Community decisions cannot and should not be made without the community. We will keep fighting.

Jason D. Marshall currently presides over the Columbus Board Watch. Board Watch holds the Columbus Board of Education accountable to the Columbus community.

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