DUTCHTOWN
MAIN STREETS

4219 VIRGINIA AVENUE
SAINT LOUIS, MO 63111

DUTCHTOWNSTL.ORG

OCTOBER 27, 2025

TO: ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

RE: URGENT NEED FOR ACTION ON CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL

St. Louis Public School Board Members and Staff,

We, the undersigned members of the Board of Dutchtown Main Streets and neighboring residents near Cleveland High School write to urge the Board of Education to act decisively in transferring ownership of the Cleveland High School property to the City of St. Louis to position it for development or otherwise place the responsibility for abating the nuisance on St. Louis Development Corporation and the Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority.

For nearly two decades, the Cleveland campus has stood as a growing liability to the Dutchtown neighborhood. The vacant building has, unfortunately, become a symbol of disinvestment and inaction in an otherwise resilient community. Neighbors have endured repeated fires, vandalism, and public safety hazards stemming from the property. While the district has shown sincere interest over the years in finding a suitable developer, time and circumstances have made it clear that redevelopment cannot occur without immediate intervention and the partnership of the City of St. Louis and St. Louis Development Corporation.

The neighborhood surrounding Cleveland High School is home to a diverse community of young families, immigrant entrepreneurs, and long-time residents working hard to stabilize and rebuild the South Side. Our community, in line with the Gravois-Jefferson Historic Neighborhoods Plan, is united in the vision that redevelopment at this site must reflect the priorities of the Gravois-Jefferson Plan: namely, equitable growth, accessible green space, and increased affordable housing opportunities that serve the families of our neighborhood.

The sale of the Cleveland property to the City would be a tangible act of good-faith partnership between SLPS and the community it serves. It would also allow the district to convert a longstanding nuisance into both a community asset and a financial benefit for current students. The City, through SLDC and the Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority, has both the mandate and the means to stabilize, secure, and ultimately guide redevelopment consistent with the community's goals, or if redevelopment is not possible, demolish the building in response to community need.

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We respectfully ask the Board of Education to seize this opportunity to demonstrate its shared commitment to Dutchtown's recovery and St. Louis's future. A prompt sale of this property will help restore safety and dignity to the surrounding blocks, while opening the door to investment aligned with the City's Economic Justice Action Plan and the community's long-standing calls for affordable, family-oriented housing development.

The time to act is now. In years past, opportunities for partnership and progress around Cleveland High School have been missed, leaving the property and its surroundings to decline further. Today, however, the Board has the opportunity to turn the page, correct past missteps, and set a new precedent for collaboration with the community and St. Louis. By finalizing the sale to the City, the Board can demonstrate a renewed commitment to transparency, shared problem-solving, and genuine partnership with residents who remain eager to move forward together.

Thank you for your leadership, your understanding of the dire circumstances, and your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to continuing to work with you toward a safer, stronger, and more equitable Dutchtown and public school district.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of Dutchtown Main Streets
and the Undersigned Community Members of Dutchtown: