

August 25, 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians of the Collegium Community,

Collegium is one of the largest charter schools in Pennsylvania. As such, members of our community are frequently educating the public on what it means to support CCS and the PA charter school movement. Whether it's answering questions about CCS during a neighbor's birthday party or sharing CCS enthusiasm with a coworker, we are all accustomed to educating the general public about parental choice in education.

If the saying is true, and "there is no such thing as bad publicity," we should be thankful to HBO and *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*. Why? A recent episode – trending on YouTube and exceeding 4 million views - included a segment highlighting a few examples of U.S. charter school corruption. The video and it's popularity will no doubt lead to questions, which in turn provides us with an opportunity to set the record straight.

The lesson can start with some of John Oliver's opening remarks. "Charters are basically public schools that are taxpayer funded, but privately run." Not true. Collegium is not privately run and our Board of Trustees provides oversight. In fact, all PA charter schools are public schools overseen by a Board. Any CCS parent/guardian choosing to watch the video will undoubtedly recognize additional inaccuracies.

Often true with comedy, John Oliver paints broadly for a quick laugh. It's expected; he's a comedian. I just can't bring myself to laugh at corruption at any school - public, charter, or private. The facts behind the jokes - corrupt schools swindling communities simply trying to educate their children - are no laughing matter when children are paying the price.

Over the years, the CCS Community faced many challenges. When called upon, members of the Collegium Community dutifully embraced the cause. Most recently, charter school families across Pennsylvania successfully defeated an unfair special education funding proposal that would have negatively and drastically impacted PA charter schools. In response to *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, what additional actions am I asking of the Collegium Community? Nothing, really. Just keep getting together with friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers and answering their CCS-related questions.

Essentially, please just keep advocating for Collegium in your local communities.

Respectfully,



Dr. Antoinette Rath
CEO