

This is a direct response to an opinion piece henceforth referred to as the “letter,” published in the *Mirror* on December 23rd regarding Montrose Classical Academy (MCA). The name, known as “author” is irrelevant, but a response is needed to ensure the community is well-informed. The letter projects political bias and employs Alinsky’s tactics by framing MCA as a conservative effort, targeting its board and leadership to make the issue about ideology rather than education. It freezes the target by portraying MCA as uncooperative and dismissive of public schools, while polarizing the community with a false dichotomy between public school success and MCA’s exclusivity. This projection falls short, as parents like me, from diverse political backgrounds, are stepping up to support MCA, demonstrating broad community demand and shattering the notion that this is merely a conservative agenda. The focus remains where it should be: on our children.

It is imperative that the voices of parents, who have the most at stake in their children’s education, are not drowned out by those who lack the same personal investment in their future. Like many parents, I became involved after hearing misleading arguments against MCA. I attended the same informational webinar about MCA and immediately recognized the value this school could offer families. Many parents and supporters felt similarly, coming out in strong support at the community input meeting. I and others with no prior affiliation have come together in support of a shared goal: expanding school choice in Montrose. In contrast, most opposition attendees were prompted by the author or individuals affiliated with divisive online political groups, often repeating their talking points.

The letter claims MCA should be private, but this argument is riddled with contradictions. Pope John Paul II Academy already provides a private, Catholic classical curriculum, yet families still advocate for MCA as a public option. MCA fulfills a critical need for affordable, secular classical education, accessible to families who cannot afford private schools or prefer a non-religious approach. Making MCA private would exclude disadvantaged families, undermining the very principle of public education. The letter also contradicts itself by claiming there is insufficient data on Liberty Common School while simultaneously concluding that it only serves “model students.” This assumption is false. Email Liberty Common’s principal, and you’ll learn that around 20% of students in their Aristotle school receive IEP, ELD, READ Act, 504, or ALP services.

Montrose Classical Academy is not attacking public schools but offering families another proven option through a Core Knowledge classical curriculum, which has shown success in improving academic outcomes. With less than 200 students projected to enroll out of the 6,000+ in the district, MCA would be just a drop in the entire public school system. This isn’t about replacing or competing with public schools but expanding opportunities for students to thrive in different environments. The author’s attempt to pit MCA against public schools incites unnecessary division, when both can coexist and complement each other to benefit all Montrose students.

Support for MCA transcends politics. At the community meeting, a self-identified Democrat spoke in favor of the school, illustrating its broad appeal. Parents from across the political spectrum are volunteering, applying for board positions, and joining the steering committee to support MCA’s success. The District Accountability Committee (DAC) also demonstrated substantial support with a 10-3 vote to approve MCA. However, despite this, the Montrose County School District (MCSD) board ultimately chose not to approve the application, citing that the “list of items to address became too long.”

This decision raises concerns about transparency and responsiveness to community input. The MCSD board appeared to prioritize a third-party review over the voices of parents and the DAC’s recommendation. This prompts important questions: Why encourage parents to advocate

for their children if the school board does not consider their input? What is the purpose of having a district accountability committee if its recommendations are overlooked?

The author portrays the board as virtuous and MCA as antagonistic, but this characterization is misleading. While the board claimed the process was clear, it attempted to introduce unnecessary complications. MCA submitted its application on time, but MCSD argued that "days" referred to business days rather than calendar days, which could have caused significant delays. MCA sought legal clarification, confirming that "days" refers to calendar days, as specified in Colorado statutes for charter school applications. Fifteen days after submission, MCSD returned the application to MCA, requesting additional information not required by state statute or the district's own LBD-R policy. Instead of appealing the decision to label the application "incomplete"—which MCA was fully entitled to do—MCA addressed the requests and resubmitted the application within the statutory timelines. This was not a matter of MCSD being gracious but rather MCA adhering to protocol. The author's emotionally charged language to frame MCSD's actions as virtuous is a manipulation tactic to bolster the board's credibility. When dealing with facts, loaded language is unnecessary.

Since the CACSA review was central to the board's decision, let's examine the details. MCA's application was rated as Fully Developed in 3 areas, Mostly Developed in 10, and Partially Developed in 6, with no Not Developed main sections. The Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers (CACSA) provided a clear roadmap with seven milestones to guide MCA's success. While partially developed items are expected to evolve during the startup phase, the denial resolution is egregious because it overcomplicates the issues and misrepresents the application's quality.

Over 40 items cited in the denial resolution can be immediately refuted by referencing the application itself or through basic knowledge of the topics. This approach undermines transparency and fairness by presenting challenges that are either already addressed or mischaracterized. Here is a link to the denial resolution with subject matter expert commentary and action items if applicable:



Given this information, it should come as no surprise that parents are stepping up to support MCA. We feel no hostility but are empowered to seek justice, transparency, and accountability. Proceed cautiously when told to trust without verifying. We will continue working with the MCSD board to address any deficiencies and make Montrose Classical Academy a reality. If you are interested in this school option, make your voice heard using the QR Code below.

