

Background/research/situation analysis The 2024–2025 school year began with enthusiasm and excitement across Columbia Public Schools (CPS). On opening day, 18,838 students arrived on campuses eager to embark on another year of high-quality learning. Teachers and staff were well-prepared, welcoming students and families into classrooms and setting the tone for a successful academic year. CPS is the fourth-largest school district in Missouri, encompassing 39 schools and three support facilities across 303 square miles. As a district committed to excellence, CPS continuously prepares its schools and staff to ensure a seamless start to the academic year. The first day is about more than just logistics—it's about building relationships, setting expectations, and fostering an environment where every student feels supported and ready to learn. Research and community feedback highlight the importance of a strong start to the school year in establishing academic engagement, emotional well-being, and long-term student success. CPS's commitment to creating welcoming, engaging learning environments is reflected in the positive experiences of students, teachers, and families on opening day.

Goal To celebrate and communicate the successful launch of the 2024–2025 school year while emphasizing CPS's commitment to fostering engaging, inclusive, and high-quality learning environments. Increase awareness of CPS's successful school year launch and strengthen community confidence in district operations and academic preparedness.

Objective Share the Story (Create Awareness) - Our video will document the first day of the 2024–2025 school year, highlighting student excitement, teacher readiness, and community engagement. The video will include footage of students arriving at schools, meeting teachers, engaging in classroom activities, and participating in school-wide discussions about expectations and curriculum. Key moments—like kindergarten introductions, high school math lessons, and new student registration—will illustrate the district's commitment to providing a welcoming and well-organized start to the academic year. The video will be shared across CPSTV, social media, the CPS website, and school

newsletters to maximize community engagement. Key Messages 1. A Strong Start for Success: CPS is dedicated to ensuring a smooth and engaging start to the school year, setting the stage for student achievement. 2. Community and Connection: Teachers and staff are committed to creating welcoming, inclusive environments where students feel supported and ready to learn. 3. Ongoing Growth: CPS is actively enrolling and preparing for continued growth, ensuring every student is ready for academic success.

Strategies 1. Digital Storytelling: Produce high-quality video content including interviews with students and teachers that seamlessly blends event coverage with personal testimonials, ensuring the story is both engaging and informative. 2. Multi-Channel Distribution: Air the video on CPS-TV and promote it through internal newsletters and encourage attending schools to share the video on owned social media channels to maximize reach. 3. Engagement: Using the CPS-TV distribution platform, capture viewership information. Evaluation Since airing on August 28, 2024, the viewing audience has watched the story 462 of times. Additionally, it has been viewed 34 more times on-demand. The video was also shared on the Sharing the Gold internal newsletter and with our local media for use in their own broll with credit to CPS.