

OHIO GADFLY DAILY



Good charters are good choices: Farah's story (Columbus Collegiate Academy)

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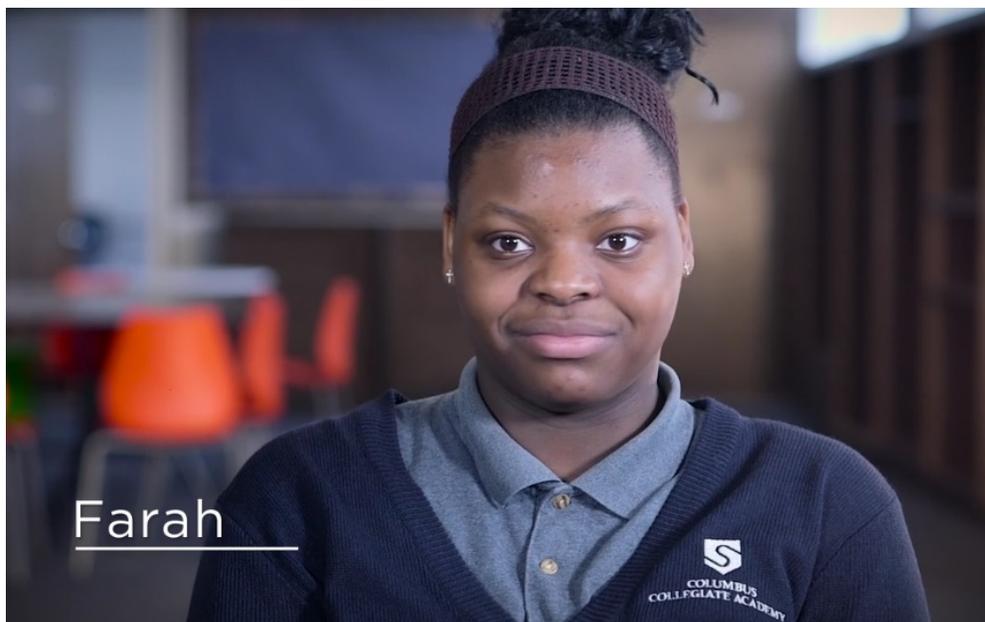
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Parents make choices about their child's schooling based on a variety of factors: location, safety, convenience, academics, extracurriculars, support services, and more. Many families choose their school by moving to the neighborhood of their preference, thus exercising "choice" when making homeownership decisions. It's important to recognize that not all families have the same luxury. In fact, *many* don't. For the most part, parents living in poverty can't just up and move themselves to a neighborhood with higher-performing, better-programmed, safer schools. Yet their children deserve high-quality educational opportunities, too, in schools that work for them based on their unique learning styles, interests, and needs.

If we believe that parents of all income levels and backgrounds deserve the same choices we exercise for ourselves and our own children, then Ohio's high-performing charter schools deserve our unwavering support. The 21,000+ events held across the nation last week for [National School Choice Week](#) demonstrate the pressing need—and support for—quality school options. [Columbus Collegiate Academy](#) (Dana Avenue campus), one of the city's highest-performing middle schools, helps its eighth graders achieve math and science proficiency at a rate that's more than double what the district achieves. Meanwhile, its eighth-grade reading proficiency rate is thirty-seven points higher than the district's. It achieves this despite nearly all of its students being economically disadvantaged.

Impressive data only tell part of the story. Hearing directly from parents and students sheds much needed light on how life-changing a good charter school option can be. Consider the story of just one student, Farah, who in the video below shares how she felt unsupported and was "made fun of"

at a past school. (Given that [one in five students reports being bullied](#), we know Farah is not alone.) Switching to Columbus Collegiate Academy gave Farah a sense of safety—arguably a prerequisite for learning given that we know [bullying increases a child's risk](#) of having poor sleep and facing anxiety, depression, and other hardships.



But Farah, like many students from similar backgrounds, was far behind academically. She admits, “I was ‘an all Fs kid.’” Columbus Collegiate’s culture of high expectations, hard work, and relentless commitment to the idea that *all children can and will learn* helps Farah find a sense of self-efficacy and visualize a path to success.

Take a look at [Farah’s inspiring story](#) about the difference a good charter has made in her life.

For more student perspectives, check out [Shyanne’s story](#), as well as profiles on [several](#) other [students](#) attending [high-performing](#) charter schools.