

# Kentucky needs public charter schools

## An educator's plea for choice

BY: Gus LaFontaine

I was a public school teacher. Many of my closest friends still are, and my daughter attends our local public school. I know firsthand the challenges teachers face and the slow pace of systemic change.

I stepped away from traditional public schools over 15 years ago, not from a lack of faith in public education, but to create a better model for students, families and teachers. That journey led me to apply to open what could become Kentucky's first public charter school.

I believe more families – especially those with limited financial means – deserve real options for their children's education. Kentucky's teachers deserve environments where they are trusted, supported and

given the freedom to innovate. Public charter schools can deliver these opportunities.

Critics argue charter schools undermine the traditional system. I understand those concerns, but the current system – while serving many – certainly isn't meeting every student's needs. It's a one-size-fits-all approach that fails too many students.

To those in our traditional system of schools, let me ask: Are you satisfied with Kentucky's only public education option? If so, I'm happy for you. If not, you're not alone. I'm advocating for Kentuckians to have access to an additional public education model that operates successfully in all states bordering ours and in nearly every one – red and blue – across the nation.



Gus LaFontaine

The school we built 15 years ago, which I hope will eventually become a public charter school, wasn't designed to compete. We built it because we couldn't wait for smaller class sizes, better teacher support or systemic fixes that never came. Now, we want to offer this tuition-free, open-to-all public education model to others.

Here's what our school offers: Our teachers teach four days a week, with the fifth day for uninterrupted planning. They have hour-long lunches. Class sizes are capped at 16 students. There

is room to teach, collaborate and recharge.

Our students get three recesses a day and are free of the burden of excessive test preparation. They move, play and grow.

Critics claim charter schools will harm traditional public schools. But if we trust our public schools, why fear giving families options? Public schools will still have the largest budgets, most experienced teachers and best facilities. They're not going anywhere.

I believe in public schools. I also believe many families want options. Those goals can coexist.

Critics say only the privileged will benefit. But wealthy families already have options. For low-income families, single parents and students who don't fit neatly into – or

thrive in – a uniform system, having only one option limits them in ways I believe are unjust.

Kentucky teachers in traditional systems have ideas about how schools could better serve students and whisper to me that they're ready to innovate. A public charter school system in Kentucky would empower them to act on their ideas, fostering innovation that benefits students and families.

We must recognize that many families feel trapped in a standardized system and create schools that meet diverse student needs while empowering teachers. That's why I'm hopeful Kentucky's Supreme Court will soon rule that charter schools are constitutional under legislation passed by the General Assembly, enabling families,

students and teachers to finally have real choices within our public education system.

Gus LaFontaine and his wife, Kristin, founded LaFontaine Preparatory School, a nonprofit private school in Madison County, in 2011 after a tour of duty in Afghanistan with the Kentucky Army National Guard. A former public-school teacher, LaFontaine sought to create an innovative approach to early education. The school has grown from 13 half-day pre-kindergarteners to over 175 students in pre-K through fifth grade. LaFontaine has applied to convert his school to Kentucky's first public charter school. He's a party in a Kentucky Supreme Court case challenging the constitutionality of legislation funding public charter schools.

## Baptist Health Paducah invites community to Baby & Family Health Expo

PADUCAH, KY - Baptist Health Paducah invites all parents-to-be and growing families to its Baby & Family Health Expo on Tuesday, Oct. 21 from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Join physicians, nurses and other healthcare providers

in the Larry Barton Atrium located inside Medical Park 2 to learn how Baptist Health Paducah can care for families through all stages of life.

Whether you're beginning a family, or thinking about growing it, you will

have the chance to meet with an assortment of local vendors at the expo. The Baby & Family Health Expo will help individuals find the provider that is right for them and their family by having representatives from OB/GYN, Labor

& Delivery, NICU, pediatrics, primary care, family medicine and others in attendance.

Along with meeting providers, the Baby & Family Health Expo will include:

Guided Tours: See the renovated Mother/Baby suites

with guided tours happening every 30 minutes throughout the expo.

Vendors: Visit with Baptist Health Paducah-affiliated and community vendors.

Family fun: Enjoy a kid's craft table with coloring books and Play-Doh.

Giveaways and door prizes: From car seats to breast pumps, door prizes will be announced every 20 minutes throughout the event.

All community members are invited to attend this free event.

## Kentucky's Charter Schools

### A New Era of Choice and Controversy

Charter schools in Kentucky represent a relatively new chapter in the state's education system. Although charter schools have been authorized by law since 2017, their implementation has faced significant delays due to funding and political debates. In 2022, the Kentucky General Assembly passed legislation requiring state and local education funding to follow students to charter schools, effectively paving the way for their creation.

Charter schools are

publicly funded but operate independently of traditional school districts. Supporters argue that they provide families with more educational choices and foster innovation through flexible teaching methods and specialized curricula. They believe that charter schools can raise academic performance by encouraging competition and accountability.

Opponents, however, worry that diverting funds from public schools could weaken already under-resourced districts, particularly in

rural areas. They also question whether charter schools will serve all students equitably, including those with special needs.

As of 2025, Kentucky's first charter schools are in early stages of development, with applications emerging in major cities like Louisville and Lexington. Their success or failure will likely shape the future of education reform in the state, influencing debates over school choice, funding priorities, and the role of public accountability in education.

## Public Notice

Applicant Patti's Enterprises, LLC, having the mailing address of 1793 JH O'Bryan Ave, Suite 1, Grand Rivers, KY 42045, hereby declares its intention to apply for a Quota Retail Drink License. The licensed premises will be located at 1793 JH O'Bryan Avenue, Suite 1, Grand Rivers, Kentucky 42045, and will be operated under the name Calvin Swine's Moonshine & More dba Calvin's. Patti's Enterprises, LLC is the sole member and owner of Applicant. Applicant's designated manager is Michael Lee Grimes of 151 Wabash Ave, KY 42045. Any person, association, corporation, or body politic may protest the granting of the licenses by writing the Dept. of Alcoholic Beverage Control, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601, within 30 days (DRS 243.430) of the date of this legal publication.

(10-17-25, LL, 1x)

### ORDINANCE NO. 05-2025 CITY OF GRAND RIVERS, KENTUCKY

#### ANNUAL TAX RATES

WHEREAS, the City of Grand Rivers annually sets tax rates based upon the 2025 tax roll assessment for the assessment of taxes; and

WHEREAS, the City of Grand Rivers has reviewed the proposed tax rates as based upon calculations provided by the Pennyroyal Area Development District,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF GRAND RIVERS, KENTUCKY AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1: Annual Tax Rates:** The annual tax rates, based upon the current assessment, for real and personal property in the City of Grand Rivers shall be:

Real Property Tax Rate	.263
Personal Property Tax Rate	.3788
Inventories	.3788

**SECTION 2: Discount and Penalty:** All taxes due as set forth herein shall be subject to a discount of two percent (2%) for all tax bills paid on or before November 30, 2025. All taxes due as set forth herein shall be subject to a flat penalty of ten percent (10%) if paid after December 31, 2025 and an additional monthly penalty of one-half of one percent (0.5%) for all bills paid after February 1, 2026.

**SECTION 3: Governmental Revenue:** All revenue received from taxes as set forth herein is for governmental purposes for the operation of City government.

**SECTION 4: Severability and Enactment:** All ordinances, orders, resolutions, motions or parts thereof insofar as some may be in conflict herewith are repealed.

This ordinance shall be published and take effect thereafter.

Date of First Reading of Ordinance: September 9, 2025

Date of Second Reading of Ordinance: October 14, 2025

Date of Publication of Ordinance:

Ordinance published in: Livingston Ledger

Ordinance Referenced: Minutes Book , Page



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