UNIVERSITY NEWS RELEASE
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY™

**JOSH REINHART**
**PUBLIC INFORMATION COORDINATOR**
***jdreinhart@eiu.edu*** **|** **EIU.EDU/NEWS**
**O: 217-581-7400 | C: 815-325-8888**

Joint News Release from EIU and CUSD1.....July 1, 2026

# EIU, CUSD1 partner to support Charleston Middle School following June 17 storms

*(Charleston, IL)* – Eastern Illinois University and Charleston Community Unit School District #1 (CUSD1) are working together to provide temporary accommodations for Charleston Middle School following June 17's EF-2 tornado, which caused considerable structural damage to the middle school's campus at 920 Smith Drive on Charleston's east side.

The framework for the partnership will be discussed during a special CUSD1 Board of Education meeting Wednesday, July 1. If approved, the agreement, which would begin August 1, provides Charleston Middle School provisional space at EIU's Coleman Hall, located at the intersection of Fourth Street and Garfield Avenue on Eastern's campus. The partnership would ensure 7th- and 8th-grade Charleston Middle School (CMS) students can begin their 2026-27 school year with minimal disruption while allowing district leaders to fully assess damages and determine the scope of repairs necessary for students, teachers and staff to safely reoccupy the school following renovations. A final agreement is expected for consideration at CUSD1's regularly scheduled July meeting. Following CUSD1 approval later this July, Executive Committee members representing EIU's Board of Trustees are expected to fully finalize the agreement ahead of its August 1 start date.

The partnership reflects a mutual commitment to supporting students and serving the broader community following June 17's devastating storms. Both organizations will continue working closely together to ensure student learning and safety remain the top priority. CUSD1 will keep CMS families informed throughout the process and provide more information to students, parents, and families as more specific details emerge.

"We intend to provide our Charleston Middle School students continuity in their education as we navigate these circumstances together," said CUSD1 Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Kristen Holly. "By working collaboratively, CUSD1 and EIU will minimize disruptions to learning and confidently ensure our CMS families and their students will have a safe, welcoming place to begin the school year."

"Charleston CUSD1 is extremely grateful to Eastern Illinois University for its quick response and generous support following the tornado damage at Charleston Middle School," said CUSD1 Superintendent of Schools Chad Burgett. "With the middle school unavailable to students and staff at the start of the school year, EIU immediately stepped forward to help identify and provide space for classes this fall. Their willingness to act quickly during a challenging time reflects the strength of our community and the value of having such a dedicated partner in Eastern Illinois University. We sincerely appreciate EIU's leadership, flexibility, and commitment to supporting our students, staff, and families as we work through this transition."

Julie Everett, chair of Eastern Illinois University's Board of Trustees, echoed the sentiment of CUSD1 leadership.

"Our institutions share a responsibility to serve our communities, especially when unexpected challenges arise," Everett said. "This partnership allows EIU to meet an immediate need while keeping the focus where it belongs—on students, their success, and the well-being of our neighbors."