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# NEWS RELEASE

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Irmo, South Carolina – Ascent Classical Academy of Irmo announced Tuesday, July 2, that the school will postpone its opening until the fall of 2025, following a unanimous vote from the governing board the same day.

This news follows the school’s most recent milestone of [announcing a temporary location had been secured for the 2024-2025 school year at St Andrews Presbyterian Church](#) in Irmo. The church planned to house the school’s K-8 grades in its opening year in the education wing, currently used for church education programs throughout the week, and that previously hosted the Ben Lippen school.

The temporary facility required minor upgrades to ensure it was ready to safely serve students. As allowed under state law, the State Superintendent of Education designated jurisdiction for the project to the Town of Irmo in April, that in turn, directed Ascent Classical Academies to submit permit requests through the town and its contractor, CC&I. Ascent’s application for the change of use was accepted by Irmo in early May. On June 26, after two months of discussions and plan reviews, the contractor unexpectedly withdrew from the project claiming the project exceeded the scope of work required in their contract with the Town of Irmo and the town’s leadership supported their contractor’s position.

“We are profoundly disappointed that the families and employees who committed to joining Ascent Classical Academy of Irmo will not have a school this year due to a dispute between the town and their contract building official on their scope of work. The town has an obligation to review all projects within their limits and they have not offered an alternative to revise their contract with CC&I or move this project forward, which in the best interest of the community. The town has effectively abandoned this project without notice, leaving hundreds of families suddenly without a school for their children that should be opening its doors next month.” states Derec Shuler, founder and executive director of Ascent Classical Academies. “Though today’s news is a step backward, I assure our families and future employees that we are committed to opening the doors on Irmo’s first tuition-free classical school next year.”

The school previously announced its permanent location on Koon Road, between Broad River Rd and I-26, would not be available for the 2024-2025 school year due to permitting delays at the state level. Now, the property is scheduled to close in August, and Ascent Classical Academies’ development partner is working to finalize permitting details and begin site work in September.

“This devastating setback does not reflect the community’s desire to see Ascent Classical Academy open its doors,” states Shuler. “From parent volunteers who began work on this effort two years ago to the staff who moved across the country to build something great in South Carolina, this school is both wanted and needed in our community.”

Ascent Classical Academy of Irmo, a tuition-free, K-12 classical school, would be the first of its kind in the greater Irmo community. The school will now open for the 2025-2026 school year on its permanent property at Koon Road. To view a proposed site plan, learn more about the American classical education offered by Ascent Classical Academies, or to sign up for campus updates, visit [irmo.ascentclassicalsc.org](http://irmo.ascentclassicalsc.org).