

Mary Ellen McGraw Ed.D
1712 Milford Neck Road
Milford, DE 19966
302-542-1880

Dear Review Committee Members,

I am submitting this letter in support of the renewal for Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security (DAPSS). I have worked with the school in several capacities for the last four years. I understand both the student population that it serves and the unique benefits that are afforded the students. In addition, I have worked with the staff as they strive to meet the needs of the student population that they serve. My review of research literature related to what students see as ways to keep them involved in schools concludes that DAPSS is meeting those needs and particularly the needs of its own student population.

Research related to the size of high schools suggests that the size of the student body, staff, and building can actually contribute to some students becoming lost in the cracks. Working in the school over the past four years I have been able to see this very point play out with many of the students. The majority of the students at DAPSS needed to be in an environment where other students did not dominate the classroom discussions. They needed to be thrust into engagement with learning themselves rather than to remain as passive learners. The class sizes are, in the most part, smaller than the classes experienced by many of these students prior to entering in DAPSS. Not only does this provide more attention during instruction it also has heightened student involvement in problem solving and discussion. I can show you examples of students who are emerging as leaders who would never have done so in their previous educational setting.

Wayne and Walberg point to the fact that in smaller high schools both the staff and students feel more a part of the school. The fact that these students may have the same teachers over multiple years is a plus for this population. First, the teachers know their students better and they focus on the individual needs of the student. They understand not only the academic needs of the student, but also the personal and emotional needs. Data obtained by ASCD in a survey of high school students across the nation related to why they dropped out of school noted that only 56 percent of students said that they could go to a staff person for help with school problems; only 41 percent said that they could talk to an adult in school about personal problems. The researchers recommended that each student have a personal relationship with at least one adult in the school. Students at DAPSS have the support and relationship with not one but multiple staff members. There is a sense of belonging and ownership among students and teachers that are generally not present in larger schools. Every staff member in this school arrives early, stays late, and has taken on a unique role in the lives of the students at the school. Staff and students truly feel that this is their school and they take enormous pride in that fact.

The same report stated that thirty-eight percent of the students felt they had too much freedom and not enough rules in their lives which led to them dropping out of school. Many of the students enter as ninth graders at DAPSS demonstrate lack of understanding in terms of discipline and conduct. To address both their content and their lack of study skills, the school has crafted and implemented classes to develop skills in both areas. Students are quickly inducted into the program and put through exercises to develop a clear understanding for how to take an active part in school and how to be accountable for their actions and learning. The design of these classes helps student to understand that with freedom come responsibility for behavior and academic progress. I have personally witnessed changes in the cadets as they move through this support. They understand and accept the fact that their actions and reactions reflect not solely on themselves but also on their school. Indeed, I have seen other students take an active part in reminding their peers of acceptable behaviors.

In terms of academics the ASCD report recommendation is to make school more engaging through real-world, experiential learning. Students want to see the connection between school and work. Students enrolling in DPASS come from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, and educational experiences and all are seeking that very thing, a school that connects what they are learning to a potential career in the future. I can assure you that such connections are an everyday part of the school experience here. There is a harmony among the professionals that is clearly demonstrated in their commitment to having students understand the demands of the service careers and the skills necessary to be successful in that field. Examples how these connections are made have been clearly demonstrated through classes, field trips, and personal actions. The PE classes devote the first part of their block daily to the development of physical skills that would be necessary for the demanding tasks with these professions. Students are required to be certified in CPR. Criminal justice classes supports the understanding of laws taught in the regular social studies classes. An annual field trip is taken to the 9/11 Memorial in New York. The students come to that exhibit only after a deep understanding of the role played by the policemen and firefighters who gave their lives in the service of others. The students have recognized the sacrifices of local responders and police. I would say that there are not many students across the nation that have the same in depth understanding of these fields or demonstrate the same high respect for them as noted at DAPSS.

The staff of this school is very cohesive. They have worked diligently to create a program for the school that includes the aspects of Common Core State Standards and the specifics of the careers showcased by their charter. Their administrators have worked to include them in decisions and listen to their concerns. Within the school is a true learning community, carefully developed and nurtured by the administration, where team building and concerns for students and colleagues permeates. There is no doubt it takes time, effort, understanding, and persistence to build unique programs to service students. There should be no doubt that all of that is exhibited in the staff and administration of this school. They openly seek support and development in best practices. They welcome observation and feedback.

All are growing in their awareness and application of strategies to support the goals of Common Core and in the use of formative assessment through a direct study of the works of Rick Stiggins and Dylan Wiliam. This is their first year considering the formative assessment practices, which have been proven to increase learning, and the staff is accepting the challenge. I know the power of assessment for learning and I believe that implementation of the strategies can and will move this school to the forefront. However, I am a realist and know that it will take at least three years before staff, students, and parents are comfortable with these new techniques.

All of the above are indicators of ways this school provides an education and educational setting that clearly adheres to the reasons it was afforded a charter. There are no other schools that would fill the gap created in its absence and the students who are flourishing here would be forced to return to schools that were not meeting their needs previously. I urge you to continue to allow the school to develop the students in its charge and to provide them with insights and real world connections that only this unique pathway can accomplish. Additionally, I request that they be given the time to complete their professional development in assessment for learning and have the times necessary to be able to accomplish the work and see the gains that are certainly in their future.

Respectfully,

// Mary Ellen McGraw //

Mary Ellen McGraw

Background in Education and Educational Leadership

If I were on your committee I would assuredly want to know the educational background and credentials of the person submitting a recommendation. To that end, I am including part of my resume that is most related to the details that I have provided in my letter.

Knowledge of Teaching and Learning

Beginning in 1998 and continuing to date I have had the honor and privilege of working with Dr. Charlotte Danielson. I am a certified trainer of the *Framework for Teaching* and have used it effectively while working with new and experienced teachers. In 2011, I was selected to join her panel as several companies developed their administrator credentialing program. These programs were designed and calibrated to attest to the skills and knowledge of an administrator in terms of their ability to accurately identify evidence of practice within the classroom. I serve as an "expert evaluator" for Educational Impact, which offers the credentialing process nationwide. You may find the information related to this process as it was implemented in Hillsborough School District Florida of interest. The Gates Foundation reviewed the results of the process as they were addressing concerns around teacher quality and how to determine effectiveness. As I worked with Dr. Danielson I was asked to present relative to new teacher mentoring and induction at two of her conference on teacher effectiveness.

I am one of the nation's first nine hundred National Board Certified Teachers. My certification is as an Early Adolescence Generalist, which required me to pass certification in middle school ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Performing Arts. I went through and passed the rigorous scoring process for NBPTS (only 60% of those trained were allowed to conduct live scoring). In this role I scored both portfolio and assessment center work. All successful candidates, including myself, have to demonstrate clear, consistent, and convincing evidence that their teaching increased student achievement.

In both cases I demonstrated my competence in assessing the quality of the teaching and the impacts on student achievement. I have used these skills when working with teachers at DAPSS.

Knowledge of Assessment for Learning

I continue to work with three of the noted names in this field- Dr. Dylan Wiliam, Dr. Rick Stiggins, and Dr. Ken O'Connor. Through my work and research related to assessment practices I became a trainer in assessment under Dr. Stiggins. His work is directly based on the work of Dr. Wiliam from the UK. From 2006 to 2009 I was a presenter at Dr. Stiggins' International Assessment for Learning Conference in Portland, Oregon. While I was working with several sites in Delaware Dr. Wiliam, then at ETS, became another of my mentors in the field. Because I have had the good

fortune to work directly with the authors and under their direction I bring a deep understanding of formative assessment and the impacts it has on learning to the schools. The shift to true formative assessment is a monumental task for many teachers, especially those at the high school level. I have been in schools that are implementing these practices with fidelity and understand the challenges that the shifts have on staff, students, and parents. Dr. O'Connor and I have known each other since 1993 when we both worked for Skylight Professional Development. As he developed his fifteen fixes for broken grades those of us working in the company were trained and served a sounding boards before the work was published. Just as I understand the challenge and impacts of formative assessment, I have an equal grasp of grading processes and how to build an effective grading program that increases not only student achievement but also the ability of students to accurately assess their own work. Students who are able to self-assess have been found to achieve in twenty weeks what it would take other students thirty-eight weeks to achieve (Wiliam 2011).

The work around the effective use of assessment for learning at its beginning at DPASS. However, the staff's openness to embrace the concepts and to make changes in both the way they assess and grade is encouraging. When they have completed this process, one that should take about three years, the gains found in the studies conducted by Dr. Wiliam will be seen.

Knowledge of Common Core State Standards

In 2012, after retiring, I began my work as a consultant with Renaissance Learning Company. This company has focused more time and resources on developing understanding of the CCSS platform than any that I have encountered. They have worked with the writers of the standards and demand that all company employees develop a deep understanding in the standards, content, and learning progressions. In this role I have worked with twelve states to provide professional development related to CCSS. In addition, I am part of the CCSS Math Panel for the company as we explore best practices in the implementation of the standards. One major reason for my selection is that I trained for the Ministry of Education in Singapore for three weeks in 2002. During that time, I gained major insights into how one of the world's top performers in mathematics teaches the content to the students.

Edward & April Lanette
242 Riveredge Drive
New Castle, DE 19720

Delaware State Board of Education
Charter School Accountability Commission

October 5, 2014

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to express our appreciation for The Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security, also known as DAPSS. Having raised our children in a home school and private school environment, we were very involved with their high school choice. After much research both children chose DAPSS for the unique classes it offers in Fire, Police, and EMT careers, as well as the TAC OPS, and sports programs. As parents, we chose DAPSS because of the integrity and drive for excellence demonstrated by the staff in a way that teenage students can relate to. The unique curriculum and leadership opportunities are also impressive.

Our children are happy here. The dedicated teachers are always willing to go the extra mile to provide additional assistance when needed. We appreciate how DAPSS is continually looking for ways to improve the student experience. An example of this is in the Freshman Seminar class. Most all freshmen are overwhelmed with entering high school. This class offers guidance on this transition and teaches knowledge and study skills that will benefit them throughout life. Our daughter has blossomed and gained confidence through this class. Our son has already had the opportunity to use life-saving skills he learned in DAPSS Public Safety courses first-hand when he helped a stranger who was struggling with a life-threatening situation. He cared for him until the paramedics arrived. There are more cadets with similar stories. DAPSS not only offers their cadets an excellent opportunity to grow academically and socially, but is also teaching them important skills to make a difference in everyday life, and the students are its proof!

As a parent on the finance committee, I was always impressed with the commitment and sacrifice made to keep the budget balanced. There was always attention paid to details to make wise decisions that get the most out of each dollar spent. This is reflected in the building DAPSS now calls home, and in many other aspects of the school.

DAPSS has become an essential building block for our children and they love their high school. Our family is honored to be a part of its foundation. We hope you see the importance and positive impact this unique charter school has made on the community it serves and make DAPSS a consistent high school choice in Delaware for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Ed & April Lanette

Rob & Tracy Sweetman
28 Tyre Avenue
Newark, DE 19711

October 6, 2014

Delaware State Board of Education,
Charter School Accountability Committee

To Whom It May Concern:

Since the inaugural year and establishment of the Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security, our daughter Courtney Sweetman has been a student. It is through this institution that we have not only watch our daughter grow academically but also socially, physically and develop and build a confidence that we do not believe she would have achieved through going to a main line public high school.

Before her acceptance into DAPSS Courtney was homeschooled from 5th through 8th grade and as parents we were looking for an excellent fit for her that would meet her needs and also help her to become integrated into a greater social venue. Once Courtney attended her first open house, she was determined that she was going to be a student at DAPSS. Every open house afterwards from then and until now Courtney has made sure she has attended. Not only as a student who was looking for a place to be educated, but also as an educated student who wishes to share her experience with other potential candidates about how beneficial DAPSS is as an institution.

Courtney through her process in the school has achieved the Principal's Award, was recommended for the TACOCS cadet program at the school her freshman year and is now an officer and not to mention her striving to make honor roll each and every semester which recently allowed her to be inducted into the National Honors Society.

The curriculum has been challenging and beneficial, pushing Courtney academically to do her best, and the specialized programs each school year from freshman to Senior has allowed Courtney to broaden her horizons in the firefighting and emergency medical services fields.

Courtney is a cadet with the Wilmington Fire Department Explorers Program thanks to the influence and direction of the staff and involvement of DAPSS and shares monthly activities with fellow classmates and students of other high schools who share her desire and motivation to be a Firefighter/EMT. Courtney is also a volunteer cadet at her hometown fire company in Newark, DE, Aetna Hose Hook and Ladder Company, Inc. She has achieved many courses through these venues and with the direction of her instructors and staff at DAPSS will by the end of her senior year have the certifications of National Registered Emergency Medical Technician, Delaware Emergency Medical Technician and NFPA Firefighter 1 certification.

With these certifications Courtney will be provided with many avenues for employment and career opportunities in her desired field.

It is through the commitment and dedication of the staff and support systems at DAPSS that my daughter is who she is today and has achieved so much. Our biggest concern was that when Courtney mainstreamed back into the school system she would be lost in the masses, through DAPSS she was not only mentored, educated, encouraged, motivated and challenged but she has blossomed into a beautiful young woman with a bright future ahead of her and give many options and opportunities through the commitment DAPSS provided for her success.

In my final thought, I wish to express my gratitude for the establishment and my greatest regret of this school is that it did not exist for myself and others as we grew up. It is definitely a greatly needed and appreciated asset to not only the students, their parents but also to the community in which they all serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob & Tracy Sweetman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Rob & Tracy Sweetman

Stacy Baldwin
16 Anna Ave
Bear, Delaware 19701

September 30, 2014

State Board of Education
Charter School Accountability Committee
Dover, Delaware 19901

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you in regards to the upcoming charter renewal consideration for Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security, DAPSS. My son, Andrew Baldwin, has attended DAPSS from the day the doors of the school opened; he will be graduating this year.

DAPSS fills a desperate need in Delaware for a high school that holds high expectations of self-discipline. For various reasons—many socio-economically related—a majority of the students of DAPSS would not be able to attempt the level of academic rigor required the very first day at other Delaware charter high schools. The DAPSS freshman student population arrives in the fall aimless yet passionate. They fight in bursts against mediocrity yet they oftentimes want to throw in the towel and work full time at their afterschool jobs. They are the ubiquitous “C” student.

“C” students many times deeply desire to become “A” students. And, they do not forsake this desire when they step into high school. Therefore, they need, they deserve, a high school that will challenge them academically and, at the same time, will patiently stand by them as they grow into their new “A” student identity. DAPSS teachers do this. They provide after school help, they moderate extra-curricular activities, and most importantly, they demand self-discipline—the key ingredient to “C” student metamorphosis. The only way for this evolution to occur is student emancipation. Until a student takes responsibility for his or her education, that student will forever be spinning wheels.

A curriculum centered upon public service—firefighting, emergency medicine, police patrol—is a curriculum that demands self-discipline. DAPSS students unwittingly mature every day in the classroom because every day their teachers are presenting to them cutting edge ways in which they can serve and protect others. DAPSS curriculum moves students out from behind their own shadows of insecurity. It is practically impossible to feel insecure when you’re putting your life on the line for someone else. The confidence never leaves the student but moves with them to their academic courses. Proof is in the gradual, steady improvement of grade reports.

A career in public service demands professionalism and professionalism demands self-discipline. DAPSS students’ corps drills, strict uniform compliance, and endless practice of public safety skills and strategies are not for pomp and circumstance. DAPSS curriculum graduates young men and women equipped and motivated to properly represent Delaware through acts of service. I’m not sure any school board would desire anything different. What better way for the accountability committee to foster Delaware education than to celebrate along with graduating an entire class—not one teen threw in the towel—of focused, professional, self-disciplined young adults?

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration,



Stacy Baldwin

Delaware State Board of Education, Charter School Accountability Committee,

I am writing today to tell you how much my son loves his school. DAPSS has been

A joy to work with and my son is thriving in this environment. My husband and I

Feel this school will build tremendous futures for all who attend. With the educator's consistent effort to make sure each child feels empowered through gained knowledge

and experience. We as parents are so lucky to have the opportunity to choose Charter

as an option. The curriculum is designed to meet each child's individual

needs and propel them to a remarkable sense of accomplishment. My son went

into his second year (2013/14) and had the opportunity to take two math classes at the same time thus giving him more knowledge and ability.

The fact that DAPSS stepped outside the box to give my son more was nothing less

than incredible! FYI an "A" in both classes!!!! The teachers give of themselves and the students

are reaping the academic benefits of their hard work. We are so pleased and grateful that DAPSS

is an option for our child and every child who has the desire and heart to be selfless putting others first.

This is a high school that should be celebrated, where would we be without our first responders?

Think about it, one day one of these students may be called on to save your life. We need to embrace this institution and count our blessings that it came to fruition.

THEY ARE TEACHING OUR NEXT GENERATION HOW TO SAVE LIVES.

Respectfully,

M.L.Newton

October 2, 2014

State Board Charter Committee

Re: Charter Renewal - The Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security

This letter is in regards to our experience with my sons school DAPSS. DAPSS is the only high school in the area that not only teaches college preparatory courses but also prepares students to be first responders.

As my son Edward was preparing to enter his high school years, DAPSS was gearing up to open their doors. This was unbelievably the best timing for our family. We were finishing up a long 2 years of middle school for Edward, he was bored, miserable and unchallenged. When we heard about a new charter high school opening their door that had a focus on first responders we had to check it out. Edward had been interested becoming a volunteer fireman since he was a little boy. Edward was for the first time in a while excited about school. After looking into more information, we were able to go to the open house to see what DAPSS was really all about. We were hooked, this school was just what he needed. I submitted the enrollment application, Edward was accepted and has been attending DAPSS since his freshman year. It is hard to believe his time at DAPSS is coming to an end as he will be a part of the first graduation class from DAPSS.

Edward's experience at DAPSS has been a very rewarding one. He has been kept motivated and challenged. The curriculum the school uses keeps the students engaged along with the TacOps program they have incorporated into one of their core programs. I have seen such a change in my sons overall outlook on his schooling. When my son was just a freshman he was placed in a couple of honor classes and has excelled in them that his has all honor classes in his senior year. He was also one of the first 10 students to be inducted into DAPSS National Honor Society. Edward has also been a part of the TacOps program since his freshman year that he has now a Master Sergeant. I believe that with the core values of DAPSS (*Fidelity to Others, *Diligence to Succeed, *Scholarship in the Classroom) and the guidance of the TacOps program has helped mold my son. My son Edward continues every day to surprise me. He is currently a member of our local fire house and even talking about enlisting in the Marine's after graduation.

I believe that every child is different and that they learn differently. Some children in order to succeed need to like what they are doing and feel that they are valued. I am grateful that there was an opportunity for a new charter high school to open with a focus on first responders.

I hope that DAPSS will continue to receive there charter renewal so they may remain open to educate students. I know of one future student for them, Edward's younger sister whom just started her middle school years is talking already of the high school she wants to attend DAPSS.

Truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Judy DiMauro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Judy DIMauro

October 2, 2014

Delaware State Board of Education
Charter School Accountability Committee
John G Townsend Building
401 Federal Street, Suite 2
Dover, DE 19901

To Whom it May Concern:

As a parent of a student at The Delaware Academy of Public Safety School (DAPSS) since 2012, I am writing this letter in strong support of the renewal of DAPSS School's Charter.

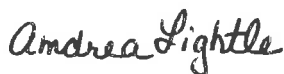
Since attending DAPSS School, my son has shown significant improvement in many academic areas in which he had previously struggled.

My son is a child with ADD. The smaller class sizes have been very helpful and have allowed my son to have greater interaction with his teachers which has been instrumental in his academic improvement and success.

Additionally, my son has benefited greatly from some of the course offered at DAPSS School. Public Safety being one of the courses he is currently taking that is not offered by our local school district high school. He has been able to utilize some of his training through the public safety course during his summer job as well as in everyday life.

In conclusion, this school has been extraordinary in both capacity and education. I could not see my son achieving everything he has achieved if he was attending a regular public high school.

Thanks you!



Andrea Lightle

October 2, 2014

State Board of Education-Charter school Committee

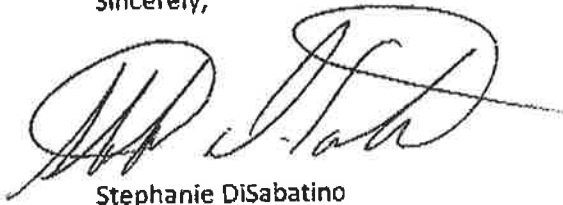
My name is Stephanie DiSabatino and my daughter Christen Custis has attended Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security since it opened and much to my excitement will be with the first graduating class.

In my opinion Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security is a great school for students who want to become a part of the service personnel for our community. The academics and training allow students to move right into their service career choice or to attend college.

I have found the staff to be caring, encouraging and driven to achieve the best for our children.

I have been very happy with the decision to send my child to Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security and have/will encourage other parents to see what they have to offer their child.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie DiSabatino', written in a cursive style.

Stephanie DiSabatino

**Delaware State Board of Education
Charter School Accountability Committee
October 2, 2014**

To Members of The Charter School Accountability Committee:

As a parent of a student at The Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security (DAPSS) in New Castle, I'm writing to urge you to support the renewal of our school's charter.

In the 2012-2013 school year and after considerable conversations and interviews with parents and school officials within New Castle County, I chose to send my son to DAPSS because of the faculty, staff and school leadership's focus on academics and character development.

During the past several years I've enjoyed seeing my son grow academically and mature into a responsible and respectful young man. I have also observed DAPSS continue to grow in student enrollment and the addition of highly qualified teachers. They have also grown physically by moving to their current location and later the renovations of additional classrooms.

My son will be graduating in 2016 and I can't see any reason why DAPSS would not successfully continue to mature long into the future.

Please support this valuable community asset for the benefit of our neighborhoods, our families and most of all, our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hugh J. Craig". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "H".

Hugh J Craig

October 2, 2014

State Board of Education
Charter School Accountability Committee

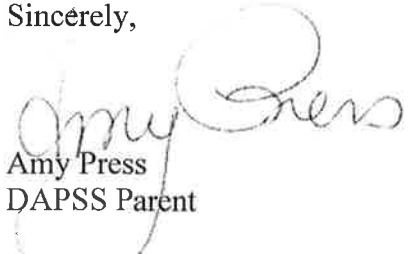
To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Amy Press and I am a proud parent of a cadet at The Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security (DAPSS.) Growing up in a small town, where a volunteer firefighter lived on almost every block, I always felt safe. I grew up appreciating and supporting that lifestyle commitment. Having later spent time on a fire truck myself, I experienced first hand how that availability of trained help made a vital difference in my community and how it does even more so today.

When DAPSS announced it's opening in the fall of 2011 we didn't have to think twice about where we were sending our son. Our son plans to pursue work in law enforcement but we know that the education he's realizing at DAPSS will benefit him far beyond any career choice. The academy's faculty and administration are committed to supporting the academic, art and athletic lives of cadets while enhancing the quality of life in our community. Although my son will graduate this year, the first graduating class of DAPSS, we will continue to support the school in the future because we believe in its success. Today's cadets will be tomorrow's leaders!

Thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Amy Press
DAPSS Parent

/AP

October 3, 2014

Delaware State Board of Education
Charter School Accountability Committee

Dear Board Members,

The Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security has provided my daughter with an excellent High School education and experience.

From the beginning of the first school year the faculty and administration have been involved with the students and parents. They have kept us informed, and have given us the opportunity to be involved with the process of building this school into a viable alternative for our children. The involvement of the first responder community has really been amazing as this has served to provide great hands on learning experiences for the students.

In the core classes (Safety and Security), the faculty has done a great job of getting their students motivated and have real life experiences to share with them. As the school grows, with each added Class, the academic faculty (Math, English, Sciences) has evolved and the school has been able to attract experienced teachers who can help the students more interested in college prep.

Overall, we have a high level of satisfaction with DAPSS. As the school grows, I have no doubt that it will continue to serve the community well. We would happily recommend DAPSS as a High School.

Bill and Julie Wheatley

Dear Department of Education, Charter School Accountability Committee,

Four years ago I was listening to the radio and heard about new school opening up. It was a charter school that specialized in the first responder's field. My son who was finishing up 7th grade at the time had been talking about joining the military and becoming a paramedic. I called the school and asked about my son shadowing for a day. He loved the school immediately. Throughout that year we visited several schools but just felt that DAPSS was the right fit. Coming from a very small private middle school to a public growing school felt right. We were concerned about going from a small school (200 students K-8) to a public school. We were concerned we would lose the closeness with the teachers but we were so wrong. This is a choice we will never regret.

The summer of his freshman year we saw that they offered PT. My son being very athletic and seeing this as an opportunity to meet cadets before school started decided to go. We did not know at the time that this PT was part of a small group of students in the TacOps (Tactical Operations) program. What we didn't know that at the end of that summer he would be accepted into TacOps. Another choice we will never regret.

Freshman year was great and his teachers were awesome. Our oldest son joined the Army National Guard and was gone for 6 months. When we told his teachers and the administration what was going on the enveloped us into their care. His teachers stepped in and stepped up. They would ask him how he is doing and what has he heard from his brother. They asked me how I was doing when they saw me. They really cared and it meant a lot to our family.

Last year was a difficult year for our son. He gave up on himself but not one of his teachers gave up on him. They had so many opportunities to say, "If he isn't going to try why should I?" Not a single teacher gave up on him. They worked with him, they helped him and went above and beyond what most teachers would have done. We were constantly in contact with them and every one of them had an open door policy and were willing to talk when we asked. Without their dedication to the cadets he probably would not have passed.

This year I could not be more proud to say my son is a cadet at DAPSS. They did a 9/11 ceremony that brought tears to my eyes. When I saw the pictures of cadets who are firefighters wearing their Dress Blues and fire gear I knew this school was/is going to produce young men and women that are above and beyond what is normal. But to see cadets who at such a young age have decided that they are willing to sacrifice themselves for others is beyond amazing to me. While not all graduating cadets will become a firefighter, police officer, paramedic, or even join the military they are still learning one of the most lacking quality in today's world. That quality, putting others before yourself. Doing for others who can't do for themselves. Being there and helping others in times of need.

To not grant DAPSS their re-charter will be doing a disservice to the people of Delaware. This school has the staff and administration to send out into this state and the country exceptional students. Not only academically but morally. Young men and woman who can impact others around them in ways no one can imagine. I am proud to be a parent of a DAPSS cadet and will always encourage others to check into this school. They have teachers who care

about their cadets. Teachers who go above and beyond to help each cadet succeed and be ready for the next phase of their lives. When I hear about other public schools that have 1,000 to over 2,000 students I ask how many students are slipping through the cracks. How many students are really getting the education they need to succeed? How many students are just a number and a money sign? That's not DAPSS this is a school that holds itself to the same creed it holds its cadets too. This school sets itself apart and above all others.

Thank you

Teresa Spade