

In The Matter Of:
The State of Delaware
Department of Education

In Re: Pencader Business and Finance Charter High School
Vol. II
February 13, 2013

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DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND DELAWARE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In re:)
)
PENCADER BUSINESS AND) Volume 2
FINANCE CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL)
)

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING

Delaware Technical
Community College
Stanton Campus
400 Stanton-Christiana Road
Newark, Delaware

Wednesday, February 13, 2013
6:30 p.m.

BEFORE: JOHN CARWELL, JR., Hearing Officer

APPEARANCES:

CATHERINE T. HICKEY, ESQ.
Deputy Assistant Attorney General

DONNA JOHNSON
State Board Executive Director

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1 MR. CARWELL: Good evening. I
2 declare this public hearing to be open.

3 My name is John Carwell, Jr. I'm the
4 director of the Charter School Office for the
5 Department of Education. I have been appointed
6 to conduct this public hearing.

7 The charter of the Pencader Business
8 and Finance Charter High School was placed on
9 formal review by the Department of Education with
10 the assent of the State Board of Education. As
11 is required by law, the matter was referred to
12 the Charter School Accountability Committee,
13 which has issued its final report in this matter.

14 This joint public hearing is being
15 held by the Department of Education and the State
16 Board of Education to assist in the decision of
17 whether the criteria set forth in the remedial
18 action in the Delaware Code has been satisfied.
19 This hearing provides the school an opportunity
20 to respond to the final report of the
21 Accountability Committee, which recommended that
22 the school's charter be revoked, and also to
23 receive public comment.

24 This is the second public hearing for



1 this formal review. The first public hearing was
2 held on Monday, February 11, at 6:30 p.m. At the
3 request of the school, the Department scheduled
4 today's hearing here in Delaware Technical &
5 Community College's Stanton Campus. Today's
6 hearing was posted February 6th, 2013 at the
7 Charter School Accountability Committee's
8 official place of business, on the Department of
9 Education's official website, and on the State
10 Public Meeting Calendar on the State's official
11 website on February 6, 2013. The Department and
12 the State Board of Education also issued a joint
13 press release about today's hearing.

14 A court reporter is present so that a
15 record of the hearing can be made. It will be
16 necessary for each speaker to clearly identify
17 his or herself before speaking so that the court
18 reporter will be able to note who you are.

19 The record of this hearing will be
20 provided to the Secretary of Education and
21 members of the State Board of Education, together
22 with any written or electronic comments received
23 at or before this hearing, which in this case
24 includes 82 electronic comments. We discovered



1 several duplicates in the process, so we're in
2 the process of actually validating the final
3 count.

4 I will turn to Ms. Hickey for a
5 little logistical information.

6 MS. HICKEY: Thank you. Good
7 evening. I want to remind everybody that this is
8 a continuation of the public hearing that we
9 began on Monday. Anyone that had the opportunity
10 to speak at that time has had their opportunity
11 to make public comment, and so we won't have any
12 duplicate comments in order give everybody who is
13 here this evening who wishes to make comment the
14 opportunity to do so. Thank you.

15 MR. CARWELL: Thank you, Ms. Hickey.
16 Just one ground rule as well. As we want to be
17 able to maximize the comments from everyone this
18 evening, so if you would please hold applause so
19 we can make sure everyone has a chance and
20 opportunity to speak.

21 So first, we will hear from any
22 representatives of the school who wish to comment
23 on the committee's final report. Then we'll take
24 comments from anyone else who desires to speak.



1 So just by a show of hands, I would like to see
2 how many people wish to speak tonight.

3 Okay. Thank you.

4 If anyone who has raised their hand
5 and wishes to speak and you have not signed the
6 sign-up sheet, would you please do so now. And
7 we'll go off the record to allow that to happen.

8 Back on the record. So another
9 procedural piece is that we will allot five
10 minutes for representatives of the school and any
11 group that wants to speak and three minutes for
12 other individuals who want to speak. A
13 timekeeper is present, my colleague,
14 Donna Johnson, and she will hold up time-clockers
15 just to help you know where you are in the time
16 limit.

17 At this point, we'll accept comments
18 from anyone who desires to speak -- actually,
19 representatives of the school, to be specific.

20 MR. WILLOUGHBY: My name is Barry
21 Willoughby. I'm not going to speak again. I
22 have two exhibits I want to enter into the
23 record -- I think we marked the first one A last
24 time -- Exhibit B, a letter from Charles Baldwin



1 of the Charter School of Delaware, and Exhibit C,
2 a letter from a parent in support of the school.

3 (Exhibits B and C received in
4 evidence.)

5 MR. CARWELL: Thank you,
6 Mr. Willoughby.

7 MR. CARWELL: Thank you. So I
8 believe the first on the list is Mr. McIntosh.

9 MS. HICKEY: Just make a note for the
10 record that we did get a couple, two or three
11 written comments at the conclusion of Monday's
12 portion of the public hearing. Those have been
13 marked as exhibits to the transcript. So we will
14 renumber or reletter whatever we receive today so
15 that it's not confusing. Thank you.

16 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.
17 Mr. McIntosh.

18 MR. MCINTOSH: Thank you. Frank
19 McIntosh, President of the Board of Pencader
20 Charter High School of Business and Finance.

21 Good evening. Thank you for making
22 it possible for our Pencader community to meet
23 with you on this date, at this hour, at this
24 location. We greatly appreciate it.



1 Thinking about what I would say this
2 evening led me to a central difference between
3 the viewpoint of the Accountability Committee and
4 ours. The committee dealt with a clock that goes
5 back some six years. This is a powerful reason
6 for the committee's recommendation. My clock
7 starts November 11, 2012. I am aware of what is
8 contained in your timeline and for me, all those
9 six years means is perspective. What I care is
10 about what happens from November 11. I cannot
11 change the past. I can only affect the future
12 and if you give me and the new team at Pencader
13 the opportunity, we will together make the future
14 a very bright place. That's what I am asking
15 for -- the opportunity to make a difference for
16 the students of our school and their hardworking,
17 loving parents.

18 My proven track record demonstrates
19 that I can turn situations around. I know how to
20 do it and I've done it successfully, and I will
21 do it again at Pencader. Let me tell you why I
22 am so confident of this.

23 Since November 11 we have
24 reconstituted the board because leadership issues



1 were a part of our past that needed to be
2 addressed. There are six new members, including
3 myself, and three holdovers. The three were
4 carefully selected because of their talent,
5 dedication, and knowledge. The six new members
6 were also carefully selected because of their
7 success in their fields, their commitment to
8 making Pencader a great school, and their
9 individual networks and knowledge that we can
10 access.

11 One of these individuals was pointed
12 out to be from a failed charter school, and that
13 reflected poorly on the decision-making of the
14 new board. This individual served one day on the
15 Moyer Charter School board and withdrew his name
16 because of what he observed. He is an upstanding
17 Delawarean. He had nothing to do with Moyer's
18 problems, but he has everything to do with
19 Pencader's future success.

20 It was clear that past
21 administrations had leadership issues. We
22 brought on one of Delaware's finest principals
23 over the past three decades, Frank Hagan, as the
24 assistant school leader. Mr. Hagan also brings



1 with him a year of charter school experience from
2 the Charter School of Wilmington, where he was a
3 highly successful placeholder to Chuck Baldwin,
4 current head of school at this highly rated
5 institution. Mr. Baldwin tells me that Frank is
6 his mentor.

7 Our board recently went through
8 training at a session where all nine members were
9 in attendance. We're also scheduling additional
10 and ongoing training first on an in-depth look at
11 school financing from long time Colonial School
12 District Business Manager, Bill Bentz. Finally,
13 Henry Clampitt of the Charter School of
14 Wilmington board will be providing ongoing
15 training based on the Brian Carpenter Model quite
16 specific to the vagaries of the charter school
17 environment. Mr. Clampitt expressed his support
18 for Pencader in person Monday night.

19 We know that the school has a very
20 dedicated staff. I refer you to the letter
21 submitted by Lois Hobbs of the Vision Network,
22 who praises our school for their hard work and
23 progress of students. Pencader is one of the
24 stars of Vision Network. "Pencader's team,



1 according to Lois, "began with us in the fall of
2 2011 and has grown quickly to in both their
3 understanding of the needs of the school and
4 their ability to implement change. This team has
5 expanded both in size and responsibility over the
6 last two years and is now a formidable asset for
7 change in their building. Together they have
8 developed a school-wide instructional focus,
9 deeply informed by their student achievement
10 data, and has begun implementing instructional
11 improvements that target their needs."

12 The Charter School of Wilmington has
13 opened their arms to us. It is not just Henry
14 that is willing to help, Head of School Chuck
15 Baldwin and chair of the board Irwin Becnel are
16 equally committed to helping us achieve success.
17 Bec and I us talk regularly about best practices,
18 the ins and outs of leading a charter school. He
19 has written to the Board of Education of his
20 support, and his letter is part of our
21 submission. The same is true of Chuck, who is
22 working with us on many levels that will help us
23 become a better school. He, too, has submitted a
24 letter on our behalf.



1 Honestly, we have not concentrated on
2 returning or recruiting next year's students. We
3 will begin that in earnest February 22nd.

4 In the meantime, we're lining up
5 support in that arena as well, headed up by board
6 member Dan Young, who has a strong background in
7 marketing. We will be working with Chuck
8 Baldwin, Yvonne Johnson of State PTA and Bob.
9 Andrzejewski of the Mentoring Council, former Red
10 Clay Superintendent, as the core group to put
11 together and execute plans to recruit new
12 students to Pencader. We have also recruited
13 parents to assist along with past and current
14 students.

15 Now that I have mentioned students,
16 let me talk about them for a moment.

17 Our studies, overseen by board member
18 Jackie Beam, a statistical analyst with deep
19 knowledge of state testing and charter schools,
20 indicates that we're doing very well with making
21 progress from year to year with our student body.
22 This is particularly true with low socioeconomic
23 students. Also, keep in mind that we enrolled
24 around 420 students this year, even with all the



1 controversy surrounding the school.

2 Parents tell us they send their kids
3 here because they do well academically, are
4 treated well by the staff, like the focus of the
5 school, they're safe within the walls of the
6 school and enthusiastic about being Pencader
7 students.

8 MR. CARWELL: Excuse me,
9 Mr. McIntosh, you have ten seconds.

10 MR. McINTOSH: I'm just about
11 finished. Just a moment. Thank you. Bear with
12 me for another moment.

13 I have spoken about many alliances
14 that we have set up so far since November 11th
15 and there is more. Junior Achievement and its
16 array of excellent programs in business, finance
17 and economics will be our partner in the years
18 ahead. Iris Metts, former Secretary of Education
19 and current charter school national expert, has
20 personally offered her support to help us in the
21 year ahead. Wherever you turn, people and
22 organizations are lining up to be become a part
23 of Delaware's only high school of business and
24 finance.



1 Give us the time, and we will garner
2 more resources all aimed at making Pencader the
3 top performing charter school in Delaware. That
4 is our objective and our team is not used to
5 missing its objectives. If I had my preference,
6 I'd ask you for two years. Turnarounds take
7 time, which is focused on careful evaluation. We
8 want the time to make a difference because
9 turning the tide at Pencader will take time. We
10 are surrounding ourselves with winners and we
11 want you, Secretary Murphy, and the State Board
12 of Education to join our team. Forget the
13 past -- it is immaterial. All that matters is
14 what we can or might do in the future. Give us
15 the time to succeed. Look at all that has been
16 done since November 11th, and then imagine what
17 we can do if we have the time to enact our
18 vision. Thank you.

19 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

20 MS. HICKEY: Mr. McIntosh has
21 provided a written copy of his submission. If
22 anyone else has a written copy, if they want to
23 make it a part of the record, I ask that you do
24 so at the conclusion of your discussion.



1 Also, I just want to remind you that
2 Mr. Carwell asked if you'd please hold your
3 applause so that we can get in the time that we
4 have and so that everybody can have the chance to
5 provide their comments. Thank you.

6 MR. CARWELL: Next we have
7 Judy Kennedy. I gave up my time for
8 Mr. McIntosh. Take me off the list.

9 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.
10 David Bulindah.

11 MR. BULINDAH: Thank you very much
12 for this opportunity. I stand here today as a
13 parent and one of the newly recruited parents in
14 this team. I would like to quote one of the
15 great writers from Europe whose name is Charles
16 Dickens. In his book, he says: Time is the
17 greatest manufacturer.

18 We have a board of people willing and
19 ready to work, and we are 1,000 percent behind
20 them. We support you, our board, and we hope
21 that the decision will be given to us and
22 allotted more time. We request that this be done
23 because I have two children going to Pencader at
24 this time and so painful for me as a parent --



1 and I'm also a student -- to think about my
2 children not knowing about their future. I go to
3 school. I go back home. My kids are worried:
4 Is our school going to close? What are we going
5 to do? These are tough questions for parents.
6 And I would really request that this please be
7 put into consideration, that our board and our
8 team be given more time.

9 We request more time because time
10 will manufacture our vision. Time will take
11 Pencader. Time will give us the hope that these
12 young faces are looking for, and it is that time
13 that we're requesting, that we be given this
14 opportunity and we promise we will deliver.
15 Thank you.

16 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

17 Kevin Price.

18 MR. PRICE: I thank the board for
19 recognizing me. My comments will be brief. I
20 wrote a letter originally to the Board of
21 Education. I had some points about school
22 safety, so I wanted to point something out that I
23 don't know that you may have looked at.

24 I am drawing from a report entitled



1 "2011-2012 "Bullying Reports in Delaware Public
2 School Districts and Charters." Now, Pencader is
3 mentioned in this report, I am sad to say. I am
4 sad to say that any report needs to be made about
5 bullying in schools. However, Pencader had zero,
6 zero substantiated cases of bullying last year.
7 Now, schools -- and I won't name them because
8 we're not here to point fingers, but schools that
9 will be in the feeder districts for our students
10 should you close our school, they posted numbers
11 like this: 62; 75; the highest in the state, 123
12 with 163 individual incidents of bullying. My
13 daughter was a victim of some of them. Pencader
14 had zero.

15 Safety has value. Every flaw with
16 our school can be laid at the feet of the former
17 board and their mismanagement, the mismanagement
18 of the former leader of the school. No student
19 in this room is guilty of those flaws, and they
20 should not be punished for it. They should not
21 be made to suffer for it. They should be given
22 the opportunity to thrive under a new and capable
23 board. Thank you, Mr. McIntosh.

24 They deserve that opportunity.



1 President Obama said last night that laws on
2 safety deserve a vote. Our children deserve
3 their school, where they're safe, where it's
4 demonstrated over years that they're safe, that
5 they have a community and a family. That cannot
6 be said powerfully enough.

7 I also want to amplify on one other
8 thing. I won't pull the -- pull the record up,
9 but there is another report that's founded on the
10 DOE site that cites persistently underperforming
11 schools. Pencader is not found on that report;
12 four schools in New Castle County that will be
13 potential feeder schools for our students are.
14 Two of them are listed in the R4 four-year
15 restructuring plan category. Our students, who
16 have worked hard to be accepted into our school,
17 deserve better than that. They deserve their
18 school. They deserve a vote just like Gabby
19 Giffords, just like everyone else. They deserve
20 their school.

21 I remit the balance of my time.
22 Thank you very much for recognizing me.

23 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

24 Jacqueline Beam.



1 MS. BEAM: Good evening. Thank you
2 for permitting me to speak this evening. I have
3 a top 10, but I'll do the top 5.

4 The five that I'd like to speak to
5 are: leadership; academic achievement; business
6 and finance; academic partnerships; students,
7 parents and qualitative study of our community
8 and what Pencader means to them.

9 The first thing I would like to
10 address is leadership. Mr. McIntosh's team
11 demonstrates an array of specific talents, all of
12 which will prove to direct Pencader in the right
13 direction. I came on this board in late
14 November, and I started to read the background of
15 Pencader starting December 1st. And I have to
16 compliment DOE on giving Pencader much
17 instruction and much advice for how to make a
18 success of their school. After all, that is what
19 DOE does. I have to say, though, that if they
20 listened to DOE, they did not have the capacity
21 to implement what you told them, but now we do.
22 And I believe that the capacity that we have on
23 this current board will not only fulfill your
24 expectations, but I'm here tonight to volunteer



1 my time in the coming years to tell you that I
2 believe they will exceed them. And that's why I
3 became part of this team.

4 Number 2 is academic achievement.
5 Academic achievement is on the rise. When I
6 looked at the numbers in Pencader, they are
7 making progress each year. For two years they
8 met AYP, which is adequate yearly progress,
9 according to DOE. Specifically, demographic
10 groups, which are found on page 13 of the report,
11 show that the number of low socioeconomic status
12 students achieving proficiency in math increased
13 10.6 percent in one year, and there was a higher
14 increase of these students demonstrating
15 proficiency in ELA, an increase of 10.6 percent
16 in one year. The number of African-American
17 students achieving proficiency in state
18 examinations in math increased from 35.6 increase
19 to 48.3 percent, and in math, from 35 percent to
20 54.6 percent.

21 This happened within the school in
22 classrooms without leadership. Can you imagine
23 what's going to happen when we have a board who
24 can steer and guide these parents and students



1 and teachers in conjunction with the DOE to move
2 forward?

3 Number 3. We are the only business
4 and finance school in Delaware, which fulfills a
5 critical need in the Wilmington landscape.

6 Number 4. We have already secured
7 academic partnerships. As you know, the theory
8 of action underlying charter schools is that we
9 share and learn from each other, not just among
10 charter schools, but also traditional public
11 schools. From what I read, that hasn't happened
12 in the past, but I can assure you that it will
13 happen in the future. In fact, in the last 60
14 days, we have already secured partnerships to
15 make that happen. Mr. McIntosh alluded to that
16 in the opening statement. As you know,
17 traditional and nontraditional schools are all
18 educational experiments.

19 Number 5. The students and parents.
20 As we begin to listen to them speak tonight, I
21 think you will find a compelling argument for why
22 we need to maintain the school, to move it
23 forward under outstanding leadership, moving
24 ahead with the academic achievement that we've



1 already shown they can achieve, to continue the
2 business and finance school that Delaware needs,
3 and to experiment with the academic partnerships
4 that we've already aligned in traditional and
5 nontraditional schools in the State of Delaware.
6 Thank you.

7 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

8 Elizabeth -- I'm not reading the last
9 name clearly -- McKenney.

10 MS. MCKENNEY: I am the school nurse.
11 And I have jotted down just a few comments.

12 I'm the new school nurse at Pencader
13 this year. I am taking over for the last school
14 nurse who retired. My background in nursing
15 includes 20 years of experience at Nemours
16 Hospital. After that, I decided that I wanted to
17 venture out into school nursing. So I was a
18 substitute for Brandywine School District, Red
19 Clay and for Maxim Healthcare. I feel like I
20 have been to most schools in New Castle County.

21 I began to realize some of the key
22 factors that made a good school: engaged
23 students; enthusiastic and innovative teachers; a
24 community where staff work well together to



1 support one another; a curriculum that prepares
2 for a future career; a sense of pride and
3 dedication by staff and students.

4 I have been in state of the art
5 schools and those with very limited resources.
6 If these attributes are not part of the school,
7 it doesn't matter what physical resources are
8 supplied.

9 I am on the periphery, it is true. I
10 treat students with health issues. But at the
11 same time, I'm in the center of it all. I hear
12 them talk about their school and worry that it
13 will close. I hear them talk about their classes
14 and teachers, and for the most part, they are
15 very positive and elaborate about what they are
16 learning and what they want to do when they
17 graduate.

18 Yes, I know I'm going mainly on
19 observations, and that may just look like I'm
20 scratching the surface. I am not involved with
21 all the underlying problems. I know that some
22 have been resolved, and I am certain that all
23 will be resolved. Unfortunately, the media has
24 not been kind to Pencader. So because of some of



1 the negative press, people don't know what to
2 believe or not to believe, and that is
3 understandable.

4 I also think that people may have
5 some misconceptions about Pencader because they
6 can't see the school. It is in the back of a
7 well-manicured industrial/business park, and I
8 doubt that many people pass by it. Sometimes it
9 is easy to build misconceptions about things that
10 you can't see.

11 The first time I came to the school
12 was at a block party at the school last summer.
13 I heard teachers excitedly speak about
14 conferences and new programs that they had been
15 to over the summer. There was no negative tones
16 or tones of monotony. And I felt confident that
17 this was a school I wanted to be at.

18 In conclusion, I would like to make
19 some realistic comments.

20 I believe it's a growing school, full
21 of potential.

22 The teenage students are normal
23 teenagers. They're not saints, but are expected
24 and required to be respectful, and they are.



1 We don't have ideal circumstances,
2 but there is constant fundraising for new
3 programs and attempts to build a new library at
4 this point.

5 There are many sports and clubs and
6 always an open mind to develop more.

7 All of the students that I encounter
8 are devoted to the school, have pride in the
9 school and the school community.

10 It is the only business charter, and
11 students have much to gain towards a job in the
12 workforce and in life in general with this
13 background.

14 I would be devastated if the school
15 was closed, but not as much as students and other
16 staff that have been here for so long.

17 Please give Pencader a chance.

18 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

19 Laura House.

20 MS. HOUSE: Good evening. My name is
21 Laura House, and I'm a proud parent of two
22 Pencader students, a junior and a senior. Nick
23 and Christa have been attending Pencader since
24 their freshman year. And we have been active in



1 petitioning the DOE to allow the school to
2 continue to function. Frankly, I can't believe
3 I'm here again to express why I believe Pencader
4 should remain open.

5 I'm sure you've heard the current
6 statistics: How dedicated teachers are leading
7 the students to excel in nearly every measurable
8 category; the graduation rates; the remarkably
9 improved DCAS scores; how this charter school is
10 now on the list of outstanding schools in the
11 Delaware Today Magazine; how this charter school
12 has a new partnership with Wilmington Charter
13 through our new school board president,
14 Mr. McIntosh. But you don't know why we as a
15 family have remained with Pencader through these
16 turbulent times.

17 When I visited the campus in 2008
18 before enrolling, I saw the future, that my
19 children would grow and thrive with Pencader
20 simply because it had great potential. There
21 were portable classrooms in the parking lot and a
22 new building under construction. Sure, it was
23 small, but I thought it was strong, and it was
24 serious about becoming the only business and



1 finance charter high school in the area,
2 producing high caliber graduates ready to face
3 secondary education and the business world.

4 My kids were sharp, but I wanted to
5 see them mature at this school. We did not feel
6 the public high school was safe; we still don't.

7 Since then, we've been on a
8 roller-coaster ride with Pencader as one, then
9 both, of our children joined the student body and
10 fought bravely to keep the school open. We spoke
11 our minds and hearts to you in July of 2011.

12 Our roles have evolved as the needs
13 of the school became parent. My daughter Christa
14 has become class president for three years, and I
15 transitioned from the PTO to a member of the
16 Citizens Budget Oversight Committee. We watched
17 with sadness and dismay as other family and
18 friends severed their relationship with Pencader,
19 whether voluntary or not. We Houses are a
20 stubborn lot, and we stick to our convictions
21 because we believe in our school, which brings us
22 here to express our support.

23 Our children have thrived, evidenced
24 by their excellent grades, and Nick was accepted



1 at the University of Delaware.

2 But I ask you: Have you been on
3 Pencader's campus? Well, let me describe to you
4 what you'd see if you visited over the last few
5 years. Traveling down Lukens Drive, you'd feel
6 situated over the campus a nearly visible cloud.
7 This cloud is called stigma. This stigma drips
8 continuously, dripping uncertainty into the minds
9 and hearts of the current students, parents,
10 teachers, and everyone associated with the
11 school. That is bad enough. But worse, stigma
12 is obscuring the students' achievement being
13 produced to the public at large. Stigma
14 encourages even the slightest issue to blossom
15 into negative publicity that is disseminated by
16 the media. Stigma is an embarrassment to
17 everyone and it deflects potential students and
18 parents from considering the school as a viable
19 alternative. Recruiting students is a battle
20 with stigma because no one wants to join a school
21 that might close. So while our student body has
22 declined, it's completely understandable given
23 that stigma is hanging over Pencader.

24 The fight to keep the student spirit



1 alive is tough at times, as evidenced by my
2 daughter's daily discussions with her friends who
3 fret about it and bring their worries to her.
4 Sure, she's a junior class president, which
5 brings responsibility, but should the students be
6 continuously worried about what if we close? She
7 wants to help them, but she's weary from the
8 fight to keep Pencader alive. Is the situation
9 fair to her, the rest of the student body, the
10 teachers, the administration? Of course, the
11 answer is no, but the situation is what it is and
12 we are dealing with it as best we can.

13 So honestly, I recall asking you in
14 July 2011 for time to allow the new board, school
15 president, school leader and administration to
16 address the issues cited. You responded by
17 agreeing that we could continue to address the
18 issues by June 2013. We have in fact addressed
19 the issues head-on. Some were successfully
20 addressed, such as the finances, but others have
21 been a little rocky: our administration; our
22 leader; our board members. DOE was continually
23 kept in the loop and directed some of the changes
24 when issues became apparent. We are on our way,



1 but frankly, we still need more time to let the
2 changes to take effect.

3 In summary, I understand why DOE's
4 hand was forced to move to a probationary state,
5 although I don't agree with revoking the charter.
6 These students have earned the right to more time
7 and to let the cloud of stigma dissipate. Only
8 then will the sun appear on Lukens Drive and the
9 students' achievements shine for all to see.
10 Thank you for your time and attention.

11 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

12 MacAdoo Harrison Dixon.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He's in the
14 hallway.

15 MR. CARWELL: Is he coming?

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He's not
17 coming in.

18 MR. CARWELL: Okay. We'll move on.
19 Alicia Blevin.

20 MS. BLEVIN: My name is Alicia
21 Blevin, and I'm a special ed. coordinator here at
22 Pencader.

23 Fair is not always equal in
24 education. Some need more help than others.



1 Some need more money than others. Some need more
2 love than others. The point being is that fair
3 to you not what is fair to me and to someone
4 else. What is not fair right now is that our
5 students aren't being put first, once again.

6 Here at Pencader, we're a family. We
7 love these children like our own. I'm at school
8 more hours than should be legal, but it is
9 because I want to do my job correctly,
10 efficiently, and, of course, with a lot of love.

11 Think back to when you were teaching
12 and not just directing teachers. Could you tell
13 me the students' names, their parents' names,
14 their grandparents' names, or even their cousins?
15 Most of our staff can tell you that information.
16 We take our students to Phillies games to
17 experience the amazing game of baseball. We help
18 our students study for hours for their ASVAB to
19 prepare them and talk with recruiters to make
20 sure they're making the best choices. We make
21 sure that our children have Christmas presents
22 when their families can't provide them, even
23 though they're working two jobs. We know our
24 students' lives.



1 We keep in touch with all the alumni.
2 As you can see, they're present here today.

3 We educate our students with love and
4 with care, and I can only hope that every other
5 school is providing that; but, unfortunately, I
6 can tell from you experience they are not. Only
7 our students come first, and that means that
8 something else has to give.

9 I can say firsthand that I have
10 worked hard to make sure that Pencader is in
11 compliance with state regulations. I gave up my
12 entire winter break to make sure that grants and
13 Special Ed. was in compliance with DOE standards.
14 I have written a resource guide for every single
15 staff and have submitted it to the Exceptional
16 Children's Department. I have made sure that the
17 staff has underwent special ed. training by a
18 lawyer.

19 I know that the board and the
20 administration, the staff and students at
21 Pencader are now not afraid to ask questions. I
22 know we have been here before, but I never have.
23 You asked us to change our administration, our
24 board, our bylaws, our everything, which needed



1 to be done in some cases, but we did it and we
2 did it within three months. We did that and kept
3 our students first.

4 The people that have been ignorant
5 about the details that have put us in our
6 situation are no longer here. The same people
7 that have fought the same battle over the years
8 are the teachers, the students, and the parents.
9 The staff has continued teaching through
10 everything.

11 The staff provides high quality
12 education using research-based strategies. We
13 provide education in an inclusive setting and
14 help our students succeed. Our DCAS scores have
15 met your requirements. Our advanced placement
16 classes are plentiful. Our SAT scores are
17 acceptable and our graduation rate amazing. Our
18 staff works hard and our students work harder.
19 We offer Latin, Chinese and Spanish. We're the
20 only high school for business, not only in the
21 state but in the area. And we encourage our
22 students to be bankers, accountants and
23 marketers.

24 It comes down to this: If you elect



1 Pencader to close, you will be closing a school
2 that produces well-rounded students. You will
3 close a school that is providing a loving and
4 caring and a safe environment. I wasn't at the
5 last fight, but I've been here ever since, and I
6 have worked too hard to problem-solve too many
7 items that you have thrown at us and that we have
8 had to go -- and I just hope that you remember
9 that the students are the ones that need to come
10 first. Our students need our administration in
11 and out of classrooms and focusing on instruction
12 and business and not another formal review. We
13 have a board in place that has the skills to
14 provide us, the staff, with training to make sure
15 that our highly effective strategies that we
16 already have are going to continue.

17 Our students need to go to school
18 knowing that DOE supports them and wants to see
19 them graduate from the school that has helped
20 them to grow from quiet little freshmen to
21 strong, well-rounded seniors.

22 I want you to remember that
23 administrators can get new jobs and teachers can
24 get new jobs, but why should our students have to



1 get a new school? I could ask you to save my job
2 or to save the school, but really what I'm asking
3 you to do is to keep the students first. We want
4 to do it right. We just need a chance and the
5 time to do it in that way. Do what is best for
6 our students as if they were your children.
7 Remember back to the days when you were a teacher
8 and in the classroom.

9 I invite you to visit our little
10 school on the river at any time and you will
11 experience the love that Pencader has and the
12 family dynamic that we have, and I can truly
13 guarantee that you will not experience it at any
14 other school.

15 MR. CARWELL: Thank you. Erin
16 Leighty.

17 MS. LEIGHTY: I'm Erin Leighty. I am
18 the science chair, department chair, and the
19 co-advisor for both the Class of 2014 and for
20 Science Olympiad. But I'm known by students at
21 the school as "Ms. Coughlan."

22 I came to Pencader Charter High
23 School four years ago fresh out of college.
24 Pencader was the only school willing to take a



1 chance on a college graduate with little to no
2 teaching experience. In those four short years,
3 I've not only grown as a teacher, but I have also
4 helped the students to grow into more independent
5 thinkers. I have also taken on more
6 responsibility than most teachers who have my
7 level of experience.

8 I consider Pencader to be part of my
9 family. With our student body being smaller than
10 most traditional high schools, the teachers are
11 able to forge real connections with the students.
12 For instance, one of our seniors told me he was
13 accepted into college before he even called his
14 parents. As a teacher, this is a great feeling
15 of success.

16 Additionally, as teachers, we are
17 allowed the opportunity to teach our students in
18 more than just one particular course. I have had
19 the pleasure of teaching most of the seniors in
20 two and three different science courses. In
21 fact, two students have enrolled in my courses
22 all four years of their high school career. The
23 reason for this is because the students don't
24 just want to take my class because of the fun



1 activities that we do, but because I take the
2 time to ensure that they fully understand the
3 concepts that are being discussed in class. For
4 instance, after two weeks, my honors biology
5 students are already trying to figure out how
6 they can take both my anatomy and physiology
7 class and my AP biology course next year.

8 In the science department, our
9 contributions benefit the students, enabling them
10 to gain better understanding of the scientific
11 community. At Pencader, our science students
12 participate in more labs and hands-on experiences
13 in one course than many other students do in all
14 four years of high school.

15 We also try to get as many students
16 involved in Science Olympiad as possible. Last
17 year we had the distinct pleasure of being
18 awarded the Spirit Award, which proves that our
19 students were acknowledged not just for their
20 academic abilities but for their behavior.

21 Additionally, we just formed a
22 relationship with the Blood Bank of Delmarva.
23 Two of our seniors organized blood drive for
24 their senior project, which was held last



1 Wednesday. We had 46 potential donors come to
2 our blood drive. Most of them were students who
3 were interested in helping to save a life. When
4 the BBD left, they told me how well mannered and
5 interesting our students were. They were shocked
6 with all the negative publicity that our students
7 could still remain positive.

8 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

9 I'm sorry. I'm just trying to read
10 the handwriting. Ayslinn Price.

11 The previous speaker concluded the
12 school representatives, so we're now moving to
13 three-minute time limits.

14 MS. PRICE: My name is Ayslinn Price.
15 I'm a Pencader student. The school is very
16 important to me in many ways. When I first moved
17 to Delaware, I hated the fact that I had to come
18 here, leaving my friends leaving my family and
19 leaving my whole life.

20 I first attended Christiana High
21 School. It was unpleasant since the start. It
22 only made me regret agreeing to move here. When
23 I first attended Christiana, my transcripts were
24 messed up. My grades were just the same. With



1 my transcripts being messed up, I was given wrong
2 classes and I was not given proper help in those
3 classes. This lack of help caused my grades to
4 drop. They ended up putting me in summer school
5 for four classes.

6 I was under constant threat of
7 bullies. My first day getting off the bus,
8 racial slang was used against me. All throughout
9 that year I was under constant threats. My life
10 was threatened on multiple occasions. This is
11 what made me hate Delaware most of all.

12 In the coming months came a pamphlet,
13 a pamphlet for charter school. My family and I
14 jumped on this opportunity. We came to this
15 school for an interview, and I was quickly
16 accepted. At the beginning of this year, I was
17 nervous, nervous I wouldn't have any friends,
18 nervous about my well-being. But my qualms
19 quickly vanished.

20 Since day one at this school, both
21 teachers and students and have welcomed me with
22 open arms. This is not just a school, not to me
23 at least; I feel as though it is a family. We
24 are a small school, and we know each other like



1 brothers and sisters, and the teachers are like
2 our parents. As students we give efforts for one
3 another and we care for one another. The
4 teachers help us and care about us in many ways.

5 Teachers here do all they can in
6 order to educate us and start our lives. After
7 school, you can find just about any teacher in
8 their room ready and willing to help a student
9 and guide them. When we have problems. Whether
10 it's home or school life, we can go to these
11 teachers knowing we have someone to confide in.

12 So if this school closes, you are not
13 only breaking friends apart, you are breaking a
14 family apart. Thank you.

15 MR. CARWELL: Savannah Weldin.

16 MS. WELDIN: Hi. My name is Savannah
17 Weldin. Thank you for allowing me to speak. I'm
18 a senior here at Pencader Charter.

19 I have attended Pencader all four
20 years of high school and can honestly say it's
21 been four of the best years of my life.

22 The teachers are outstanding and go
23 above and beyond to make sure their students
24 understand what they are learning. Every teacher



1 that I have had over my four years here at
2 Pencader has by far exceeded any expectation that
3 I had for a teacher in high school. No matter
4 what class I was in, I could always stay after
5 for help and they would go over everything that
6 we learned in class to make sure that I
7 understood. As a freshman I didn't really take
8 school seriously, and my teachers helped me to
9 get out of that phase.

10 Now for my senior project, as
11 Ms. Leighty had mentioned, I partnered with the
12 Blood Bank of Delmarva and held a blood drive at
13 the school. I am very proud to say that it was a
14 success. We had 62 students eagerly sign up, and
15 in the time that was given, we had 46 potential
16 students, faculty and parents who wanted to
17 donate.

18 I am but one of the success stories
19 of Pencader Charter High School. I was accepted
20 to my dream college with a scholarship and a 4.0
21 GPA.

22 My little brother is also a student
23 here at Pencader, and I would love to be able to
24 see graduate from the school that I graduate



1 from. Thank you.

2 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

3 Ronald Prettyman.

4 MR. PRETTYMAN: Hi, how you doing?

5 My son is a graduating senior, so -- I mean this
6 year. Hopefully he's graduating.

7 And so I'd just like to express that
8 Pencader has been very good for Jamie. He's
9 here. He's very shy, came from a very small
10 school and came to Pencader, and he's been
11 supported by the teachers and the other students
12 his whole career. He's done very well, you know.
13 The academics here have been very challenging.
14 He has taken multiple AP courses, done, you know,
15 passed them all. You know, great grades. He's
16 been offered multiple scholarships, merit
17 scholarships. And I think a lot of that has to
18 do with the core of the school, which is the
19 students, the teachers and the families.

20 The leadership issues, you know,
21 we've all been -- most of the people here have
22 been through leadership issues over the past few
23 years. It's a different set of circumstances
24 every time. We were here two years ago. You



1 know, we were here over the -- we weren't here,
2 but over the summer we saw what was going on.
3 That is not the fault of students, teachers or
4 families.

5 The thing that I really wish -- you
6 know, besides the core student-teacher
7 relationship is the fact of the safety aspect. I
8 come into that school at any time, and I see
9 students being respectful, walking around, you
10 know, talking to teachers, kidding around, but
11 they're always respectful. I mean, I never see
12 any kind of issue, you know. They're
13 disciplined. And it's a safety environment. I
14 mean, I personally would never have sent any of
15 my children to the local school options that we
16 have, you know, in Christina. That's not to
17 knock them. I know plenty of kids that go there
18 and I hear the stories there, and I have never
19 seen anything like that at Pencader.

20 I feel bad, you know, that certain of
21 the things got us here. Certainly, I don't knock
22 the Department of Education for, you know,
23 looking at the circumstances on the outside. But
24 I agree with the people earlier who said you



1 really need to come to the school and see what
2 the environment is like. So thank you.

3 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

4 Veronica Mikhail.

5 MS. MIKHAIL: My name is Veronica
6 Mikhail.

7 "Our deepest fear is not that we are
8 inadequate, Our deepest fear is that we are
9 powerful beyond measure." Marianne Williamson.

10 Fear -- in itself, this word is
11 ineffable.

12 To a child, fear lies of darkness.

13 To our school, fear lies within the light.

14 Overall, we continually experienced and overtaken
15 countless obstacles throughout our common journey
16 towards success. I tell you, rather than
17 perceiving these hindrances negatively, we
18 recognize it as a challenge, an encounter to walk
19 through hatred with nothing less than a smile
20 expressed through our character. We shall not
21 allow our downfall to be reflected within our
22 actions and abilities, for at the times that we
23 allow these happenings to affect us will be when
24 fear overcomes our effort to remain one unit.



1 The critical remarks that we face
2 regarding our attitudes, our actions, and the
3 overall character that shapes Pencader is enough
4 to permanently scar a soul.

5 You question our decisions and you
6 question our abilities. I stand here now to
7 question you. Are we not constantly being judged
8 through the media without regard towards the
9 personal identity of each member of the student
10 body that provides Pencader with a unique
11 charisma? Has our self-esteem not been
12 continually tested? I ask you again. Have our
13 attitudes resembled inadequate responses? To be
14 inadequate is to be incapable.

15 Proudly I proclaim we are capable of
16 achieving success. We fear not that we are
17 unable to achieve, for we understand our
18 strengths and we know little weakness.

19 To be at this school is a privilege,
20 for at most other educational facilities, a
21 bonded relationship between the students and the
22 educators is nonexistent.

23 The 400 students here are a family.
24 Education is valued.



1 Educators provide us with the
2 motivation to learn as opposed to teaching for
3 their personal reasons.

4 Our character shapes Pencader Charter
5 High School as our strength molds its persona.

6 We are not afraid of lacking
7 intelligence; we only fear that our intelligence
8 will go unnoticed and unrecognized.

9 "Our deepest fear is not that we are
10 inadequate, our deepest fear is that we are
11 powerful beyond measure."

12 Thank you.

13 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

14 Having trouble with the spelling, but
15 Stacy Rahaka.

16 MS. RAHAKA: Good evening, everyone.
17 My name is Stacy, and I'm a junior at Pencader
18 Charter High School.

19 E. W. Howe once said, "It's hard to
20 convince a high school student that he or she
21 will encounter a lot of problems more difficult
22 than those of algebra, geometry or calculus."
23 But unfortunately for us students at Pencader,
24 we've been through pretty much way more than just



1 basic algebra and calculus.

2 It's a family at Pencader. I know we
3 constantly keep on saying this, but it really is.
4 I have actually lived in America for three years
5 now. I'm from Kenya, which is in Africa. And
6 when I first came here, I went to Gunning-Bedford
7 Middle School, and I hated it. It was the worst
8 experience of my life. I felt bullied. I felt
9 tortured. And it was just not the best place to
10 be. But when I first started high school, I was
11 scared that I would have the same experience. I
12 felt as if people would look at me like, oh, look
13 at this girl from, you know, Africa and look at
14 me different from what I am. So I became shy. I
15 pretty much wasn't myself.

16 But when I came to Pencader, I met
17 people who honestly changed who I was and made me
18 feel comfortable enough to open up to feel as if
19 I was home. I can only honestly say that every
20 time I go to school, I might have bad days and I
21 might feel as if, oh, I don't want to be here,
22 but I honestly do love Pencader, and I know a lot
23 of students in this room now do as well.

24 Sports. We have pretty good sports.



1 I'm not going to say we're the best, but... I'll
2 be lying if I said we're the best. I'm not going
3 to say that, but we're, we're getting there. And
4 honestly, whenever -- you might hear people say,
5 oh, Pencader is the worst school; oh, I would
6 never go to Pencader. At the end of the day,
7 they're not there; they don't know how it feels
8 to be at Pencader. They're not Titans. That's
9 all I can say to them.

10 So ladies and gentlemen, all in this
11 room and the board, as you make your decision
12 tonight or whenever you make it, think about all
13 the kids that are going to be affected in this
14 room. Think about where are we going to go? Are
15 we going to like the place where we're going to
16 go? Or are we just being forced to go somewhere
17 where we don't want to go? And think of the
18 families, think of our family. Good night.

19 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

20 Bakita Mukundi.

21 MS. MUKUNDI: Hello. My name is
22 Bakita Mukundi. I'm currently a junior at
23 Pencader High School. And I have been at
24 Pencader all my high school experience.



1 Pencader has helped every student in
2 different ways. For me, Pencader has given me
3 the opportunity to realize that I love business
4 and I want to pursue it as a career. As a future
5 fashion designer, Pencader prepared me to run my
6 own business. The school has personally grown me
7 from the shy freshman I was to the leader I will
8 become. I'm currently running for president of
9 BPA statewide.

10 At Pencader, teachers give us
11 personal attention and they go out of their way
12 when they don't have to. This builds our
13 relationship and builds us closer as a family.
14 Everybody, falls and that's easy, but getting
15 back up takes more effort, and we are willing to
16 do that. So please give us the chance. Despite
17 everything we've gone through, our families grow
18 and will prevail.

19 If you shut down Pencader, you're not
20 just shutting down -- you're not saving money by
21 shutting down a building, you're shutting down a
22 home, a place where students are free and united
23 as one community. It will not only be for our
24 favor as juniors for the school to stay open one



1 more year, it would be also for future
2 generations who are our little sisters and
3 brothers to enjoy future education and success of
4 Pencader. Thank you.

5 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

6 The next set of speakers only put
7 their first names. So when I call your name,
8 will you please print your last name as well on
9 the sheet. The first person is Adela.

10 MS. NASAR: Adela.

11 MR. CARWELL: Adela.

12 MS. NASAR: Good evening, board
13 members, teachers and students. My name is Adela
14 Nasar, and I am currently a junior at Pencader
15 High School.

16 First off, I would like to start off
17 by saying that no school is perfect, but that's
18 just part of the high school experience.

19 MS. SARGAM PATEL: Hello. My name is
20 Sargam Patel.

21 I want to start off by saying that
22 although education is very important in high
23 school, that experience make it something to
24 remember. Because Pencader is a small school,



1 all teachers are able to give students individual
2 attention they need at any given time and are
3 also willing to adjust their schedules to help
4 them with their academic struggles. All students
5 have many friends since they see each other
6 several times every day. Most of my classmates
7 even compare the school to a family.

8 Secondly, students and teachers
9 constantly find ways to help our school
10 financially by having school dances, jean days,
11 bake sales, et cetera. They love to be involved
12 in fundraisers with the hope of raising money for
13 our school. The seniors have also succeeded in
14 raising money, enough money to finally build a
15 school library. It amazes me how dedicated they
16 are to help the school in any way possible.

17 If Pencader were to close, I would be
18 devastated. I love my teachers and peers very
19 much, and I can't even imagine what it would be
20 like graduating separately from any of them.

21 MS. SHIVANI PATEL: My name is
22 Shivani Patel. I'm currently a junior at
23 Pencader Charter High School.

24 I believe that our school should stay



1 open. I have so much good to say about Pencader
2 because the school has really improved since my
3 freshman year. For example, dress code. One of
4 the main issues at our school in the past year
5 has been resolved because teacher and
6 administrators constantly enforce the rules and
7 regulations. Pencader takes dress code and other
8 matters very seriously. And this shows how
9 Pencader tries to provide students a better
10 learning environment. Pencader is like a big
11 family where students and teachers are constantly
12 working together to help improve our school.

13 If Pencader shuts down, this will
14 affect the Class of 2014 the most, which are all
15 the juniors, including myself. We will have to
16 end up transferring to another school our senior
17 year. This is not an easy task because we are
18 not learning what other schools learn at their
19 time. We have a different semester-based
20 program. With this said, this will surely
21 increase the chances of us having to double up
22 our senior year.

23 I hope you will understand my reasons
24 on why the school should stay open. Pencader is



1 a very good school and has improved a lot,
2 especially academically. And I hope that you
3 will consider giving us a second chance so we can
4 show you what more we can accomplish and improve
5 on.

6 Thank you for taking your time out to
7 understand my complaint. And have a good
8 evening.

9 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

10 MS. NASAR: In my experience, the
11 students at Pencader have improved academically
12 and are a determined group of students to
13 succeed. The majority of students are opposed to
14 the closing of Pencader do not want to attend
15 other public schools because of the timing of
16 this decision. Many of us will have to attend a
17 feeder school as the deadline has already passed
18 to choice into another school. As a student at
19 such a close and special place such as Pencader,
20 I would not want to attend anywhere else. Thank
21 you.

22 MS. SARGAM PATEL: In behalf of all
23 the teachers and Titans, I ask you to please
24 consider keeping the school open. Thank you very



1 much for your time.

2 MR. CARWELL: Thank you. I'm going
3 to spell the letters. First name is P-u-t and
4 the last name is Besh, B-e-s-h.

5 MS. BUSH: Try it again. Pat, P-a-t.
6 And Bush, B-u-s-h. Sorry about the handwriting.

7 Hi. I am not a teacher nor a parent.
8 I've been asked to come before you by a client
9 and their family. I am a mental health therapist
10 and a licensed mental health therapist. And I
11 have worked with many children. I have worked
12 with intensive outpatient for many years. Now
13 I'm in private practice.

14 I have worked with this child for
15 awhile, prior to going to Pencader, and they were
16 struggling in the school that they were at, both
17 scholastically and behaviorally. The school used
18 negative reinforcement, which I am sure many of
19 us know doesn't really work well. Since she has
20 transferred to Pencader, the anger, because of
21 anger management, has decreased. Her grades are
22 in the superior level as opposed to just
23 managing, getting through. And they want to
24 attend school. Which is a difference from



1 before.

2 They have told me that they have had
3 their teachers and other interventionists help
4 them when they have started to get angry instead
5 of suspending them. They redirected them in a
6 positive way. And it excites me to hear a school
7 doing this type of interventions because with
8 this, our next generation can be positive
9 leaders. That's what a school is supposed to do.
10 What your school and your staff is doing, I wish
11 all schools did.

12 That's all. Thank you.

13 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

14 Madat Mikhail. Madat Mikhail. The
15 last name is spelled M-i-k-h-a-i-l.

16 We'll move on.

17 Don Osicky.

18 MR. OSICKY: Don Osicky. I'm a
19 parent of a student at Pencader Charter.

20 Good evening, and thank you for
21 taking this time to discuss this with us. I
22 apologize for our raising the need for you to
23 address this issue. You are our coach through
24 this process, and not only have we let ourselves



1 down, but I feel we have let you down as well.

2 I would like to share a story with
3 you, one that relates to our situation today.

4 I had the privilege of helping out
5 with the cross-country team earlier this year.
6 There was one particular day that stands out in
7 my mind. It was a meet day. And the runners
8 were all in line, except for one young man. The
9 race started and the minutes passed. Coming down
10 the hill was the missing runner. Through poor
11 planning of another and circumstances beyond his
12 control, he had let the team down. He was
13 plainly distraught, but he discussed the matter
14 with the coach, providing his reasons, but
15 ultimately the team was going to have to take an
16 absentee runner for the final score.

17 This didn't set well with the young
18 man at all. He asked the coach: Can I still
19 run, to which the coach replied: Get in there,
20 give it your best. So the young man ran up to
21 the starting line and took off. People pointed
22 and laughed and jeered the late runner well
23 behind everyone else, but the young man wasn't
24 deterred nor his spirit dampened -- if anything,



1 he was spurred on, finding reserves of
2 determination to draw upon. Then something
3 happened. The young man caught some of the other
4 runners and he began passing them. Finding
5 others behind him, he pushed even harder,
6 finishing the race with many of the other runners
7 and turning in a time far better than an absentee
8 runner for the team.

9 The will, determination and
10 perseverance of this young man are indicative of
11 the people who are before you. So we ask you,
12 coach, shall we get back into the race or shall
13 we pack up our things and go home school?

14 Thank you very much.

15 MR. CARWELL: Thank you, sir.

16 I think what I see here is a first
17 name initial, R, and Hayles. R. Hayles.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He declined.

19 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

20 And R. Hutchinson. R. Hutchinson.

21 Please write your first name as well,
22 please.

23 MR. HUTCHINSON: Okay. Good evening.
24 Thanks for hearing me tonight.



1 MR. CARWELL: State your name for the
2 court reporter.

3 MR. HUTCHINSON: Ravel Hutchinson.
4 All right. Well, I'm a parent. Two daughters
5 here at Pencader.

6 I'm just want to tell you a brief
7 story of how I grew up. My school, far different
8 than Pencader. I grew up in a neighborhood in
9 North Philadelphia, so bad it's nicknamed Beirut.
10 Seriously. When in school, I had to fight my way
11 into the school, fight my way out the school.
12 Gangs on the corners. Drug dealers on every
13 corner. Crack vials on the street. Inside the
14 school, weapons, guns, knives. Whatever somebody
15 wanted to bring in, they got in. The teachers,
16 if you didn't know the subject, you still was
17 pushed ahead to the next class. I graduated.
18 Went to college. Not with the help of the
19 school. Luckily I was able to get in. Once I
20 got to college, I realized what I didn't know due
21 to all the subjects that wasn't given to me.

22 I have two daughters here. The
23 reason I'm able to sleep tonight and all nights
24 is because I know my daughters, my daughters



1 don't have to go through what I went through
2 growing up. I know they're in a safe
3 environment. I know they're getting their
4 classes. I know they're going to get accepted to
5 college by what they know, not by being pushed
6 through.

7 I know no parents here want to have
8 their children go through the situation I went
9 through. I know all the parents here want to be
10 able to sleep at night knowing their child is in
11 a safe environment, don't have to pass drug
12 dealers, knowing they're in a safe school without
13 weapons, knowing that their teachers care. I
14 want her to have the chance. I know these
15 parents and these students want to have a chance.
16 Don't let them go through what I had to go
17 through. Closing the school, I'm pretty sure
18 they're going to have to experience some of the
19 things I experienced. It's going to be a
20 tragedy. Thank you.

21 MR. CARWELL: Jessica Gibson.

22 MS. GIBSON: Good evening. I am a
23 parent of a special education student at
24 Pencader.



1 I'm writing to express my sincere
2 need to keep the school open. I will try to be
3 brief, but I ask that you listen closely to my
4 entire message.

5 We moved here in 2001 from New York
6 City. I enrolled my daughter into one elementary
7 in Red Clay School District. Within a week, I
8 knew I had to find an environment that was
9 structured, organized, safe, and where lifelong
10 learners were being molded. Instead, we
11 experienced chaos, unprofessionalism and a staff
12 of teachers that were not enthused by the
13 twenty-some kids in their classroom. After two
14 worthless meetings with administration, I
15 notified the school in writing that my daughter
16 Faralynn would not be returning.

17 I then enrolled her into Thomas
18 Edison Charter Scholl, where she spent the next
19 seven years. It was four months later when a
20 social worker knocked on my door asking why
21 Faralynn had not been to school in the last
22 month. The irony is it had been many months.

23 In Faralynn's sixth year, she was
24 invited to attend the AVID program as her new



1 middle school within the Brandywine School
2 District. Our expectations there were great;
3 however, what we experienced, poorly implemented
4 programming and enough fights and bullying to
5 keep someone's head spinning for months.

6 The next year, the feeder changed and
7 she lost her seat at Springer and was stuck with
8 an assignment at P.S. duPont. Clearly, the
9 teachers were beyond frustrated, and it was more
10 than obvious they had no willingness to deal with
11 the challenges accompanied by the changes.

12 Our first encounter with bullying:
13 The situation was not dealt with by the
14 administration. My daughter was assaulted and
15 threatened on school grounds, but called the
16 police from her cell phone. The police responded
17 to the scene, demanded the school officials deal
18 with the issue. Unfortunately, the issue was not
19 resolved. It was a year from hell.

20 Now it was time to go to high school.
21 My preference was in the Brandywine School
22 District, Mt. Pleasant, due to the existing AVID
23 program. Well, the cutbacks directly affected
24 the program. Now, the kids were being



1 shortchanged in the program. So in sort, we were
2 invited to a program that had no impact on her
3 academic potential, but was invited to what
4 seemed like complete mayhem.

5 Naturally, the bullies were assigned
6 to Mt. Pleasant. We began our school year with a
7 warning of previous incidents and a plea to keep
8 my daughter safe. The request obviously was
9 unreasonable since the situation escalated so
10 badly. But this time she was locked in a band
11 supply closet. She once again called the police
12 from her cell phone. I immediately called the
13 school and advised of the situation. In short,
14 20 minutes later, a few ran red lights, and
15 running through the building to the band room, I
16 made it to my daughter's safety before the
17 administrator.

18 And implementing a 504 Plan, which is
19 a legal document was a full-time job. Fighting
20 bullies, fighting to institute a 504 Plan and
21 working a full-time job was what my commitment
22 was during my time at the Brandywine School
23 District.

24 Let's see. Where was I. The change



1 from the charter to traditional was traumatic --

2 MR. CARWELL: Ten more seconds.

3 MS. GIBSON: -- and was the worst
4 decision I ever made regarding her academic
5 career. I regretted it until I considered
6 Pencader.

7 After my student-led tour at
8 Pencader, I knew that this was a place where she
9 had to be. Quick class transitions, quiet
10 transition, students interacting with students,
11 and students learning in the classroom. It was a
12 dream come true.

13 I'm going to take 30 minutes from my
14 daughter's time.

15 MR. CARWELL: Thirty seconds.

16 MS. GIBSON: Thirty seconds. She
17 only has about two minutes. So we're in good
18 shape.

19 Change is extremely tough for
20 Faralynn as it is for special needs students, but
21 this change was nurtured by teachers, guidance
22 counselors, and fellow students. Her days were
23 bright again after school. Her mornings were
24 filled with a fun momentum and missing school was



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1 a travesty. Just when things couldn't get
2 better, a teacher recommended getting Faralynn
3 reevaluated. Guess what? That was a seamless
4 process.

5 MR. CARWELL: Time.

6 MS. GIBSON: With the results of a
7 full round table, with teachers providing my
8 daughter what all students should get in school,
9 nonjudgmental support for academic growth and
10 lifelong success. No bullies, but a relaxed
11 feeling of peace in the school.

12 She volunteers proudly and is a
13 Pencader ambassador, as you will hear shortly.

14 MR. CARWELL: I'm sorry, Ms. Gibson.
15 I want to be able to provide time for others
16 speakers.

17 MS. GIBSON: That's fine.
18 Faralynn.

19 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.
20 Faralynn Sanchez.

21 MS. SANCHEZ: My name is Faralynn
22 Sanchez, and I'm a junior at Pencader Charter
23 Business and Finance High School.

24 When I was enrolled into Pencader



1 during my sophomore year, I didn't know anybody.
2 Over time, I began making friends. This school
3 is my other family. The teachers here stay most
4 days. We get the help we need, and they take us
5 step by step to help us understand clearly.

6 In my opinion, this school is one of
7 the best I've been to, particularly Mt. Pleasant.
8 Academically, we were the third best charter
9 school in Delaware. I feel so safe at Pencader,
10 and we do not have a resource officer. The two
11 reasons why that officer isn't here is because
12 the environment is safe, and our school has had
13 minimal physical fights compared to a traditional
14 public school.

15 When I left Mt. Pleasant High School
16 the end of my freshman year, I was bullied, and
17 as a result, I was in trouble all the time. My
18 grades were C, Ds and Fs, and my GPA was a 1.7.
19 When I finished my freshman year, I received no
20 support. I wasn't safe, and my parents had to
21 obtain a lawyer to assure I was safe.

22 After attending Pencader my sophomore
23 year, my GPA at the end of the year was a 2.5.
24 Now I have a good GPA, which is now a 2.9. I



1 strongly believe that this school needs to remain
2 open. It truly gave me the attention and support
3 I needed. Pencader doesn't just bring new
4 friends, but we are a family. Please do not shut
5 us down because DOE wants to have extra funds to
6 provide for other public schools. Give us a
7 chance. What high school will I be able to
8 benefit from in this area. The short answer is,
9 none. I'm a special education student and
10 Pencader has supported me more than any other
11 school I could think of. I cannot afford private
12 school and a change of environment is a detriment
13 to a special ed. student. I do not do well with
14 change, and closing our school will not only
15 disturb my high school experience, but will also
16 be a major hurdle for me to get over. And I want
17 to fully enjoy much my senior year. I would like
18 to focus on college applications and not my
19 school closing.

20 And at this time can I have everybody
21 who signed this petition in January stand up,
22 please.

23 So to Whom It May Concern: We are
24 the student body at Pencader Charter High School



1 and demand our school remains open. Attached is
2 a petition with over 90 percent of the student
3 body support to please keep our school and
4 community intact. We can't all be the public
5 hearing, but we want you to know how serious we
6 are. Here is our organized effort. Keep
7 Pencader open. Out of 412 students, 364
8 signatures were signed.

9 We have a safe building. Where
10 teachers enjoy to teach. We have no issues with
11 bullying, drugs or crime.

12 MR. CARWELL: Ten seconds.

13 MS. SANCHEZ: We are performing
14 academically and on our way to be financially
15 sound, as you have noted. We are America's
16 future. We have rights. And we want to finish
17 our high school experience at Pencader Charter.

18 Do not close the school. We do not
19 want to go to a feeder school and honestly are
20 afraid of being placed in that position. We
21 learn here, we grow here and we are loved here.
22 Thank you.

23 MR. CARWELL: Anika Smith for Joan
24 Leu.



1 MS. SMITH: Anika Smith. I'm a
2 science teacher at Pencader. Joan, I believe
3 graduated as our valedictorian last year. And
4 here is her letter.

5 "My name is Joan Leu. I graduated
6 from Pencader Charter High School in 2012. I'm
7 currently a freshman at University of Delaware.
8 I attended Pencader Charter for all four years.

9 "And I certainly think that Pencader
10 should not close its doors. I came to the United
11 States five years ago. As someone who spoke
12 broken English, teachers, students and faculty
13 members received me with a warm heart. In a safe
14 and accepting environment, I grew tremendously.
15 I became more outgoing. I was not afraid to step
16 outside my comfort zone. I started doing sports,
17 joining clubs. Gradually, I eventually took
18 leadership roles in clubs like Business
19 Professionals of America, BPA, and Blue Gold.

20 "Even though Pencader is
21 comparatively new, I am so proud of my high
22 school for its own growth from a few temporary
23 cabinets to two permanent buildings, from empty
24 ground to parking lots and soccer fields. I



1 witnessed a school that started from scratch.

2 "I am proud of it when my BPA team
3 took the most number of students to state
4 competition and won the Professional Cup, which
5 is the highest honor given to one high school in
6 the State of Delaware every year. I am proud of
7 it when our Science Olympiad Team took the
8 eleventh place at the state competition among 60
9 teams, faring well against well-respected private
10 and public schools.

11 I am proud of it when an
12 administrator willingly took the responsibility
13 of a guidance counselor in addition to her own
14 job when we did not have enough to fund an entire
15 guidance counselor. I am proud of it when my BPA
16 advisor chose to drive students to Chicago for
17 the national competition to save money for the
18 school.

19 "There are so many dedicated teachers
20 and administrators and there are so many
21 hardworking students that made the growth at
22 Pencader possible. It is not fair for them to
23 close the school.

24 "Academically, I felt challenged by



1 the AP classes that are offered at Pencader. I
2 took six AP classes in total and passed all of
3 them. As a result, I gained 23 credits coming
4 into college, and I have a sophomore status now
5 by credit hours. I worked hard, but without the
6 high level of instruction from my AP teachers, I
7 would not have done so well.

8 "There are certainly places for
9 improvements, but I believe that Pencader has the
10 potential to become a model in charter school
11 education, if given the right adult leadership.
12 Please do not shut down a school that has
13 achieved so many amazing things -- instead,
14 transform it."

15 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

16 Mike Nicholls.

17 MR. NICHOLLS: Michael Nicholls. I'm
18 a senior at Pencader Charter. Please bear with
19 me.

20 I'm a senior at Pencader Charter. It
21 seems like just yesterday I started my freshman
22 year. And I can honestly say that I didn't like
23 Pencader at all. I felt the rules were too
24 strict: Mr. Nicholls, please tuck your shirt in;



1 Mr. Nicholls, put your phone away; Mr. Nicholls,
2 no earphones. And it was like why are you guys
3 on me 24/7 like you do not know who I am, and...

4 But as I got older and I got a little
5 more mature, I realized the reason why I didn't
6 like Pencader was because it gave me a taste of
7 reality. And I realized that it taught me --
8 Pencader has taught me life lessons that I'm
9 going to need when I graduate.

10 But fast-forward to my senior year,
11 I've done about 13, 14 extracurricular
12 activities. I'm a senior class vice-president,
13 BPA vice-president, and I'm Blue Gold ambassador.

14 And it seems as though DOE, they
15 claim that they're so worried about my education
16 and they're worried about the school's academics,
17 but they don't know anything about me, they don't
18 know anything about my friends, anything about
19 the people who have already graduated. And it
20 seems to me that they're kind of contradicting
21 themselves because as soon as something comes up,
22 that's when it's, oh, yeah, we need to fix
23 Pencader by shutting it down and sending them to
24 their feeder schools. There is a reason why we



1 aren't at our feeder school, because some of us
2 needed to get away from that so we could be who
3 we are not. And I know for fact I wouldn't be
4 Mike Nicholls if I didn't go to Pencader.

5 The support system at the school is
6 phenomenal. For example, Ms. Blevin, I've never
7 had her as a teacher. In my past four years,
8 I've never had her at all. But yet she still
9 hits me up on a day-to-day basis making sure I do
10 what I have to do and make sure that I take care
11 of my business before I leave.

12 Ms. Coughlan or Ms. Leighty. She
13 just got married. Me and her, we didn't have the
14 best relationship because I had her when I was a
15 freshman in high school. And I've actually grown
16 to love her because she helped me out a lot. She
17 wrote my recommendation letter. And when I read
18 it, I cried almost. And I'm a man, and you just
19 don't do that. But it's just so many staff
20 members that I could name who have helped me get
21 to the point where I am right now.

22 And I just feel encouraged every
23 single day when I go to Pencader. I wake up and
24 look forward to going to school. And I know that



1 when -- if you do shut the school down, that's
2 not going to be the case. And if you realize,
3 I'm a senior, I have 13 weeks left until I
4 graduate. And I'm going to college. I don't
5 have to be here because, regardless if the school
6 shuts down or not, I'm still getting my diploma.
7 But the fact that I'm still here trying to fight
8 for the kids who are underneath me and are a
9 grade below me, that should speak volumes. So I
10 hope you take what I say into consideration. No
11 matter what, I'm going to keep my Titan pride.

12 MR. CARWELL: Rochelle Woodson.

13 MS. WOODSON: First I would like to
14 start off by saying, good evening. My name is
15 Rochelle Woodson. I'm a junior at Pencader.

16 And a lot has changed over the last
17 three years that I've been at Pencader. So to
18 start me off. I would just like to say that
19 Pencader is more than just a school. As you
20 heard previous speakers say, Pencader is a
21 family. It's not being said just because
22 Pencader is a family. Pencader literally is a
23 family. I personally walk around calling
24 everybody my mom, everybody my dad. I have



1 55 million cousins. Everybody knows me because
2 I'm loud. Okay. That's only me being me. I
3 would not be me -- as Mike said -- I wouldn't be
4 Rochelle Woodson if I didn't come to Pencader.

5 Coming in freshman year, I'm pretty
6 sure everybody thought it was going to be a
7 breeze. It was challenging because they came in
8 and they told us that you're at a school of
9 business and it's how you conduct yourself. You
10 can take anybody out of this room and go to
11 Christiana or Glasgow or to Mt. Pleasant and you
12 can tell that they do not go to a school like
13 Pencader. Pencader has set solid ground letting
14 every student know that they will make it.

15 I am a strong believer that Pencader
16 is more than just a school, and they do more than
17 just change lives. So many graduates and alumni
18 and past teachers come back to Pencader and let
19 Pencader students and current teachers know that
20 there is a reason we are still here. I am a
21 strong believer that Pencader should not shut
22 down for any reason.

23 First off, I want to graduate next
24 year, and I would love to graduate from Pencader.



1 I will forever be a Titan. No matter where you
2 put me, if I'm in a box, in a shoe, the bottom of
3 the sea, somebody's foot, I am a Pencader Titan.
4 I will always be a Pencader Titan, and that's
5 something you cannot take away. You taking away
6 a school is not only hurting me, it's hurting
7 everybody.

8 Pencader is more than just Pencader.
9 Pencader is family. Pencader is pride. Pencader
10 is something people carry with them. You go to
11 church, Pencader. You go to college, Pencader.
12 You go to the supermarket, Pencader.

13 I walk around with Pencader colors
14 all day every day. I'm on the softball team. I
15 am in BPA. I'm in Blue Gold. And I'm proud of
16 that. This is something that I say proudly
17 because I am a Pencader student, and I would love
18 to continue to be a Pencader student.

19 I'm not going to beg you to keep it
20 open because it is your decision. But just note
21 you are turning me into something I don't want to
22 be because Pencader is all I know, and that's all
23 I will ever be. Thank you for your time.

24 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.



1 Joylynn Mbua.

2 MS. MBUA: Hello, everybody. I was
3 asked to speak when I got here, actually, so I
4 just wanted to say what I have to say about
5 Pencader.

6 I'm a senior, and I've been here
7 three years. And Pencader closing brings a lot
8 of uncertainty to me. And I'm no stranger to
9 uncertainty. I was born in Kenya. I lived in
10 Europe for three years, where I stayed without my
11 family, and then I was raised to come move here.
12 I'm no stranger to uncertainty and discomfort.
13 And I just have to say this situation for me
14 brings a lot of worries and discomfort for me
15 because Pencader is such an amazing place.

16 What's different from Pencader than
17 all traditional schools is this: At Pencader,
18 it's okay to be smart. It's okay to have
19 conversations about what you learned in your AP,
20 World Class, or whatever class it is. It's okay
21 to call your friends and say, hey, I have trouble
22 with this and this and this, and they are willing
23 to sit there and help you out. It's okay to tell
24 your teachers, hey, I didn't get what you taught



1 me today. Can you stay after for me impromptu,
2 not even ahead of time, and they'll say, fine,
3 I'll stay after with you. At Pencader there is
4 such a greater difference than all the other
5 schools. And I've been to so many schools. Like
6 I said, uncertainty is no new concept to me.

7 I'd also like to say, I'm a proud
8 Titan. I'm involved in volleyball. I'm involved
9 in soccer. I'm involved in track. I'm a NHS
10 member. And everywhere I go, I'm a Titan.

11 I just want to say if this school
12 closes down, it's going to cause a lot of
13 students a lot of discomfort. It's going to
14 throw a lot of students out there where they may
15 not be able to handle situations. You have to
16 look at the kids that are going here and you have
17 to see that Pencader has made a greater
18 difference in them. As some of the students have
19 said, it's a family. Some of the students have
20 said, hey, it's boosted my GPA. Pencader is
21 doing great things. Pencader needs to stay
22 alive. Thank you.

23 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

24 Debbie DelleDonne on behalf of.



1 Breana Hamilton.

2 MS. DELLEDONNE: "I'm a proud junior
3 currently attending Pencader Charter High School.
4 I have some very deep concerns about the
5 decisions that were debated during the meeting
6 Monday night. The situation has taken an
7 interesting turn. I kept telling myself and many
8 others that this wasn't a big deal. I kept
9 telling them there was no need to worry, that
10 Pencader would still be there, would always be
11 there, and there was no threat to it being closed
12 down.

13 "I just recently realized I was
14 wrong. The threat is very much real and it has
15 slapped all of us across the face with its
16 looming presence. I'm not trying to waste
17 anyone's time, so I'll just run down my
18 arguments.

19 "I might not always agree with them,
20 but there are some truly wonderful students and
21 staff members that walk the halls of this school.
22 I myself have been a relatively shy person for
23 the majority of my life. I only came out of my
24 shell when I began to attend Pencader during my



1 freshman year. There are many like myself that
2 find peace in this school that we could never
3 have found in a regular public school. We feel
4 safe here. We feel content and don't want to try
5 to start over when it is so difficult to get
6 where we are today. Friendships built will be
7 lost if we are separated.

8 "Though we may not have just danced
9 on the Wii for recreation exercise in gym and
10 Kindles in school to use for school work, but
11 there is a sincere dedication to education that's
12 sadly lacking in other high schools that we
13 possess. And to be perfectly honest, the reason
14 we don't have these luxuries is due to the fact
15 that our school doesn't get the same funding as
16 other public schools. This is unfair, as we do
17 just as well as them academically. We actually
18 are doing better. I think our hard work is
19 enough proof that we deserve just as much
20 attention as our neighboring schools.

21 "Many say our school is struggling.
22 Well, the only reason we are struggling is
23 because we aren't being given any assistance we
24 deserve. We are just blown off and forced to



1 fend for ourselves, fighting to stay open while
2 other schools are cradled and pampered with
3 excellent funding and still aren't up to par
4 academically. If anyone, those who look to close
5 schools should start with the ones which the
6 students aren't learning anything at all.

7 "Pencader is still fairly new. It
8 hasn't been around for more than a decade. Why
9 has the hammer been brought down so hard on us?
10 Our school is still trying to claw its way up
11 from beginning status. Give them another five
12 years and then you can complain if we haven't
13 progressed any further than where we currently
14 are.

15 "My younger sister is finishing up
16 her eighth grade year at McCullough Middle School
17 and will be attending school with me next year."

18 I'm going to stop there, because I do
19 know that she has submitted this, to keep the
20 time.

21 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

22 MS. DELLEDONNE: Thank you.

23 MR. CARWELL: Page Reed. It says,
24 "Seth Cottom wants to speak with."



1 MS. REED: That's me. Hi. I'm an
2 alumni. My name is Page Reed. I graduated last
3 year, 2012, and all these people graduated with
4 me. We're here to support Pencader, the school
5 that we love and we're proud to support tonight.

6 I remember my freshman year, the
7 first day, I remember telling my Mom: "Mom, I'm
8 so scared. I'm not ready for high school. I'm
9 never going to make it in a charter school." I
10 didn't know anyone going into it but one person.
11 And she said, "We can get through it." The
12 teachers helped me through it. My friends helped
13 me through it. I had so much support all four
14 years.

15 And going to college -- I am now a
16 freshman at the University of Delaware -- I did
17 not feel nervous whatsoever. I felt completely
18 prepared. And I'm currently at school with a few
19 of these students. We all reminisce about
20 Pencader. We all talk about our memories.

21 And we were in the same situation our
22 senior year, we didn't know if we were going to
23 graduate. I would tell my Mom: "Where am I
24 going to go?" She'd say, "Pencader." "What are



1 you talking about?" "You are going to Pencader."

2 I have a younger sister. She's a
3 junior at Pencader. My family strongly supports
4 Pencader. And I want to see my sister experience
5 everything I have. I want her to leave Pencader
6 with the amount of friends I have and just a
7 great education and looking back at my wonderful
8 teachers. And that's all I have to say.

9 MR. COTTOM: I'm Seth Cottom. I just
10 want to say that the support for our school is
11 obviously here with all of our alumni here and
12 all of our teachers that showed up. And we know
13 that we were, in going to college, we were all
14 very prepared for school. And the majority of
15 the people in our class are all furthering their
16 education because that is an extension of us as
17 Pencader students.

18 We have taken time out of our days
19 and out of our studies to come out and show that
20 we do support our school, and if you keep it
21 open, then we'll be out there try to fundraise
22 for it, doing whatever we have to do to make sure
23 that everything will go smoothly because we all
24 believe in the school. And we know that if we



1 keep it open, we can make memories like we had
2 for the future students. And that's all I have
3 to say.

4 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

5 Sue Gow.

6 MS. GOW: I'm Sue Gow. Thank you for
7 the opportunity to speak. I'm a nervous speaker.
8 And after hearing everything I did from so many
9 of the students, I am even more proud to be able
10 to be up here at this podium. I also get
11 emotional.

12 Our son is a sophomore at Pencader.
13 He is the last of our six children to attend high
14 school. As with our other five children, my
15 husband and I searched for a superior school for
16 him. Our standards are always set high. We
17 narrowed our search to either a parochial or a
18 charter school. And I won't badmouth the public
19 schools. I'll leave it at that.

20 I will be honest. Our first choice
21 for a charter school was Charter of Wilmington
22 since two other sons attended and graduated from
23 there, but for several reasons it did not
24 materialize.



1 We continued our search and
2 discovered Pencader Charter. We knew we were
3 making -- we were taking a chance with a newly
4 formed school, but we liked the mission,
5 standards of academics, and focus on business.
6 We are very pleased with the education he is
7 receiving. And since I try to volunteer weekly,
8 I'm in school and see the academic demands and
9 discipline of the students, and this continues to
10 impress me.

11 I am also fully aware of Pencader's
12 shortcomings and how they affected several
13 elements in the school: enrollment; leadership;
14 financial objectives -- to name a few. Never
15 have I witnessed a compromise of the education
16 provided, though. After each crisis the school
17 has rebounded and has made progress in meeting
18 the demands of the Board, of the Department of
19 Education. Yes, another year and other demands
20 from the Department of Education have been asked
21 of the school. Again, Pencader Charter is rising
22 to the challenge and responding to the new
23 requests.

24 I believe it will be a disservice to



1 the community to shut the doors of a school that
2 has a positive testimony, always rising above the
3 challenges set before it. Pencader Charter High
4 School has a better percentage of students
5 graduating and attending higher education than
6 the mainstream public high school population.
7 Give the school the chance to continue the
8 successful education of so many youth.

9 Thank you for your time.

10 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

11 Sam Gusalob.

12 MR. GUSALOB: Thank you for your
13 time. Being one of the last speakers, of course,
14 gives me the disadvantage of not being able to
15 cover fine points other speakers covered already,
16 but I'll try my best.

17 I'm asking for forgiveness for my
18 handwriting. You should see my shopping list.
19 It's written in Russian and English. I
20 apologize.

21 The point I want to make is: My
22 first impression when I saw Pencader was the size
23 of it. Of course, it's small, and that actually
24 gives opportunity of making things more efficient



1 and being able to compare to other schools. I
2 don't want to name their names today. I noticed
3 that they work very well because they're small
4 and they can cover stuff without too much
5 overhead. That's my personal impression.

6 And also I went through the document
7 that was on on-line about the points that
8 Pencader Charter did not meet, and I found that
9 some of the points were secondary to the
10 curriculum. And I'm not connected with education
11 in any way. I'm a programmer. But I thought
12 about it would probably make more sense to judge
13 it from the point of education than from just
14 plain compliance. I do know the DCAS scores are
15 important. However, they don't measure
16 everything; only measure the way it's being
17 presented. It doesn't measure how well kids
18 actually graduate or learn how to live in this
19 world. That was my impression, that probably
20 something should be revised, maybe reexamined.
21 By all means, I'm not trying to teach.

22 I want to bring one interesting fact
23 that you probably may not know. That Pencader
24 Charter has a math league, and I am proud that my



1 child goes to the math league. And just recently
2 scored second in Delaware. And they're just
3 really barely behind Delaware Military Academy,
4 which is first. That probably speaks for itself.
5 Job well done, and I'm proud to have my child go
6 to school there.

7 Those are all the points I wanted to
8 make. Thank you for your time. And I hope you
9 consider all the pros and cons and come to the
10 fair decision that you can support. Thank you.

11 MR. CARWELL: Larry Isakoff.

12 MR. ISAKOFF: Larry Isakoff. Thank
13 you all for giving me a chance to speak tonight.

14 I am currently employed as a special
15 education teacher at Pencader Charter, though
16 just a couple months ago I could not have said
17 that, even though this is my fourth year here.
18 In the middle of the school year, I was let go
19 due to financial cutbacks, but then rehired. And
20 some from the outside might say me wanting to go
21 back to a school that let me go like that was a
22 poor decision on my part, definitely with this
23 big stigma over it. But yet, I came back proudly
24 onto the staff and was very happy to be back



1 simply because I believe in the mission of this
2 school. I believe in the vision that the board
3 and the leadership puts forth. And I would not
4 have accepted my position if I truly did not
5 believe that our board and our leadership did not
6 have a good vision and mission for this high
7 school. Thank you for your time.

8 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

9 Corey Corbin.

10 MR. CORBIN: I'm going to talk about
11 Pencader Charter Business and Finance High
12 School; BPA, Business Professionals of America;
13 and Pencader Charter High School High School of
14 Business. I represent the flagship department of
15 our school, headed by Ann Terranova, teachers
16 Fritz Ward, Richard Gesner, and myself.

17 Pencader was elated to have two state
18 BPA officers this year, Carissa Anderson, who is
19 state president, and Nathan Rouwhorst, who is
20 Historian/Parliamentarian for the state BPA.

21 Pencader has produced five state
22 officers in the seven-year existence. We have
23 Bakita Mukundi running for state office this year
24 along with Syda Isaacs, who is an 11th grade



1 student.

2 2010 graduates. Bryan Calher became
3 national BPA president, and he went to the
4 University of Delaware on full scholarship.
5 Shanon Shin was also the state vice-president.

6 Moving on to Pencader High School
7 High School of Business. High School of Business
8 is designed much like a college business
9 administration program. Students take
10 approximately one course per semester, beginning
11 with an introduction to business. The program
12 continues with courses in various business
13 functions, concluding with the capstone course,
14 Business Strategies, that requires implementation
15 of the principles addressed throughout the High
16 School of Business program.

17 High School of Business is designed
18 to be phased over a four-year period.

19 Some of the expectations of High
20 School of Business that we're currently
21 addressing.

22 High School of Business positions
23 students for success in areas of business
24 administration.



1 High School of Business builds
2 relationships with local businesses and
3 universities throughout the school's active
4 local steering team and the board and the
5 parents. Thank you.

6 Provides an avenue for teaching
7 honors level students who plan to major in
8 business or marketing in college.

9 It also provides an opportunity to
10 bridge the gap between a career track and
11 academic areas of the school.

12 And encourage constructive peer
13 networking through conference calls and the
14 program Listserv during professional development.

15 The project and problem-based
16 pedagogy used in High School of Business does not
17 neglect academic standards. Course content
18 aligns with the following sources:

19 National Standards for Business
20 Administration; MBA Research and Curriculum
21 Center; Mathematics: Principles and Standards
22 for School Mathematics; English Language Arts:
23 Standards for the English Language Arts, National
24 Council of Teachers of English; and International



1 Reading Association; Economics: Voluntary
2 National Content Standards in Economics, and
3 National Council on Economic Education.

4 Okay. Just like to say, in closing,
5 thank you for granting us the opportunity to
6 voice our opinions on this meeting. Okay. And
7 no weapon pointed against Pencader shall prosper.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Amen.

9 MR. CARWELL: Raymond Gnfi.

10 MR. GNFI: Raymond Gnfi. The
11 decision to make this speech here was actually
12 kind of abrupt, but I want to support my school
13 anyway. I don't have any quotes or proverbs, I
14 just have a quick viewpoint. And I'm saying this
15 on behalf of myself and all Pencader students
16 attending.

17 The school is truly where the student
18 achieves success. Academics are actually very
19 adequate, despite all of the outside perceptions.
20 And what needs to be understood is that as
21 students we need the entire school environment to
22 focus on academics, instead of closing. Juniors
23 like myself especially need the school open
24 because it is an incredibly hard transition to



1 another school just for the senior year. And to
2 some, it really doesn't make any sense. Why
3 wouldn't you want to graduate as a Titan?

4 Pencader is a success story. My
5 brother, Joey Gnfi, he went to the ivy league
6 school of Brown on a full-ride scholarship. So
7 that's at least 1.3.

8 Keeping the school open will also
9 protect our teachers. They deliver us quality
10 info. Why should they have to pay the price for
11 helping us grow. They deserve as much of a
12 chance as we do. We all deserve a chance. Once
13 a Titan, always a Titan. Thank you.

14 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

15 Debbie Johnson. Debbie Johnson.

16 Christa House.

17 MS. HOUSE: Christa House. Thank you
18 for the opportunity to address you yet again. I
19 say "again" because I stood before you in July
20 2011, the last time Pencader's charter was in
21 jeopardy. Since it's been a short while, let me
22 catch you up on what's happened in the past two
23 years.

24 I was going to tell you statistics



1 about how much we have improved, but I am sure we
2 have given you all that information, so to save
3 time, I'll skip.

4 For me personally as a student, the
5 last time I spoke to you I was freshman class
6 president. My classmates have honored me so
7 much. And I love you all so much.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Love you, too.

9 MS. HOUSE: They've honored me by
10 electing me twice. I speak to you tonight as
11 junior class president of 2014. At my teacher's
12 encouragement, I've completed one advanced
13 placement course and will receive college credit.
14 I am now in my second advanced placement course.
15 With their teaching and belief in me as a
16 student, I was inducted into National Honors
17 Society in 2012 with a 4.0 GPA. I have also
18 represented Pencader on the Youth Philanthropy
19 Board for funding of community charities in New
20 Castle County for two years now. This has given
21 me the opportunity to meet and talk with Governor
22 Markell at the annual awards ceremony last year.

23 These accomplishments were not my
24 own. I can't accredit them all to me. I can,



1 however, accredit them also to the administrators
2 and teachers and my family who have supported me
3 so much.

4 As a person with dyslexia, it's been
5 hard. They were able to push me through. That's
6 something I can't say about many other schools.
7 And that's something I'm afraid to have to give
8 up if I have to go to a feeder school.

9 So I think it's reasonable to ask you
10 a few questions. Do you really understand how it
11 feels to be the subject of your quote in the News
12 Journal?

13 Do you feel the uncertainty our
14 teachers feel about their very livelihood as they
15 maintain focus on academic well-being of the
16 students and not on media distractions?

17 And do you have any idea how awkward
18 it is when talking to people, they ask me, so
19 which high school are you going to next year; I
20 hear Pencader is closing?

21 I am a Pencader Titan. I eat --
22 well, if I could, I would eat. I sleep, I
23 breathe, I dream Pencader. It is in my blood.

24 Hearing that is the most terrible



1 thing in the world. Sure, there were legitimate
2 concerns to be addressed in 2011.

3 I have two more seconds. Promise.

4 And Pencader has improved -- it's not
5 perfect, but perfection is a journey.

6 Here's the final question. Instead
7 of passing a continual cloud of uncertainty over
8 Pencader's existence with charter revocation, why
9 not admit what's working and work on what's
10 improving?

11 Let my class graduate in 2014 and
12 let's make sure it's not the last graduating
13 class. You can quote me in the News Journal.

14 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

15 Vitalis Yangme.

16 MR. YANGME: Good evening, ladies and
17 gentlemen. It is a great pleasure to be given
18 the opportunity to express my views at this time.
19 Vitalis Yangme is my name. I'm currently a
20 senior at Pencader Charter Business and Finance
21 School. I was admitted into the school as an
22 exchange student from Ghana last year, and I
23 would say that I have really enjoyed every second
24 I have spent in the school so far as to the



1 classes I was given and the activities I got
2 myself involved in.

3 Pencader School, as everyone knows,
4 is the only business and finance school in the
5 whole state of Delaware and a very good one in
6 terms of education, sports and other
7 extracurricular activities. It saddens me
8 whenever I think of the fact the school is on the
9 verge of closing down due to some reasons
10 allegedly the school is under poor governance and
11 is not in the right position to handle its
12 finances effectively. I strongly believe in
13 Pencader, and I know that in time, with a new
14 school board in place, Pencader will move in the
15 right direction.

16 The school has a lot of good teachers
17 that are ever-willing to teach and impact
18 knowledge into the students. Also, it has good
19 rules and regulations that are always enforced to
20 enhance a good atmosphere among the students.
21 Pencader really has a lot of serious residents
22 whose main priorities are to get good education
23 so as to enter college. Every year, more than
24 half of the seniors that graduate from the school



1 get into college taking along the valuable
2 education they have received from Pencader. The
3 school has over years put in much effort by
4 participating in sports and some club activities,
5 like Science Olympiad and Business Professionals
6 of America. If this school is to close down, it
7 will be very difficult for we the students to
8 look for a school like Pencader.

9 I therefore request that the school
10 be left open so that the new school board in
11 place will do all that is required to lift the
12 name of the school high.

13 Thank you very much for your
14 attention.

15 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

16 Ezekiel Shockley.

17 MR. SHOCKLEY: All right. My name is
18 Ezekiel Shockley. I am the captain of the
19 basketball team and senior at Pencader. I've
20 been at the school for about three years now. I
21 went to Concord my freshman year, and I
22 transferred here my sophomore year. And I have
23 like a IAP. Like for instance, I have ADHD, or
24 whatever, for like focusing, so you take me out



1 for tests and stuff like that.

2 In the beginning of the school year,
3 I remember my mom telling me like -- usually when
4 you get put out of class, you think you're going
5 to be labeled stupid, or slow, or whatever,
6 retarded. I got to this school. Mr. Kass,
7 Ms. Blevin, and Mr. Isakoff, and everybody, they
8 make you feel like you're not; so do the
9 students. The students make you feel as though
10 you're still like a family, as one. And if this
11 school were to shut down -- and like I know, I'm
12 friends with freshmen, sophomores, and juniors
13 that go here, I know they will feel the same way
14 and know they wouldn't want to go anywhere else
15 to graduate high school.

16 And December 24th, on Christmas Eve,
17 I lost my mom to cancer, and Mr. Kass,
18 Ms. Blevin, Mr. Isakoff, Mr. Quimby, students
19 from all over school were there. And that's when
20 I realized that like Pencader is more of a
21 school -- it's like more of a family unit than a
22 school.

23 And as a senior in the senior class,
24 I think most of us love going to Pencader every



1 day. And I want the juniors, sophomores and
2 freshmen to experience the same experience and
3 memories that we had at Pencader. Thank you.

4 MR CARWELL: Those were all the
5 names. Are there any others who desire to speak
6 this evening?

7 Come forward, please. Sign in.

8 MR. GOW: My name is Rodger Gow.
9 Hello. I'm a student at Pencader Charter
10 School. I'm a sophomore, in the 10th grade. I
11 play soccer. This year, we didn't do too well,
12 but, you know, we're looking forward to next
13 year. That's not the reason we're here.

14 The reason we're here is to ask for
15 more time, more time to show that a board can
16 actually do something. This year we have talent.
17 This year we can do something, but we need
18 something -- we need some time.

19 When you look at every single one of
20 these students here, they did nothing to bring
21 this upon themselves. None of them. Why are we
22 getting punished for this? We don't need a
23 handout, we need a hand up. We can't be pushed
24 down every single year because someone affected



1 us. Let our actions show you what we can do.
2 Our grades are high. Our classes are great. Our
3 teachers are there, striving to bring us better
4 grades.

5 I don't know how many schools you can
6 say that the teachers stay almost every single
7 day of the week after school to help out the
8 students that need the help. I don't know how
9 many schools you can see that the teachers
10 actually know you by your middle name. They know
11 your middle name. They know what you do on the
12 weekends. It's almost a little bit weird how
13 much they know you. A first base relationship
14 with teachers is vital for a successful school.

15 We have a family here. I know we
16 brought that up at least 50 times today. But how
17 many people do you see here? How many alumni do
18 you see here? If this was a different school,
19 you wouldn't see that. There's pride at
20 Pencader. I'm wearing my shirt right now. I
21 bought some red shoes. I'm ready to rock.

22 My name is Rodger Gow. I thank you
23 for this opportunity.

24 MR. CARWELL: If there is anyone else



1 who desires to speak, please come forward and
2 sign in.

3 Excuse me. The court reporter needs
4 a break. We're going to take a three-minute
5 break and come back in three minutes. Just as a
6 reminder, the hearing ends at 9:00.

7 (Recess taken at 8:42 p.m. and
8 reconvened at 8:46 p.m.)

9 MR. CARWELL: Next on the list we
10 have Andrew Griffith. Andrew Griffith.

11 I'll go to the next name. Leonard
12 Williams.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He's coming in
14 right now.

15 MR. GRIFFITH: Good evening,
16 everyone. My name is Andrew Griffith. I'm the
17 parent here of a senior.

18 Four years ago, me and my wife we
19 decided to choose a school for Aaron. And we
20 actually did have him lined up for another
21 school. You see he's a little athletic and so
22 forth, so from my point of view, I was looking at
23 athletics. But in terms of education, he has two
24 older sisters 14 and 16 years apart, so I know



1 about education and so forth. And my wife here
2 is a nurse, and she works with physically
3 challenged kids and so forth.

4 So when she went into a couple of
5 high schools here in Delaware, she make it
6 abundantly clear to me that, you know, I don't
7 want him to go to any other of those schools
8 because of the things that she seen in there.
9 And so when it came -- when the time came for him
10 to go to Pencader or the other school that he was
11 lined up to go in, she made it plain that she
12 wanted him to go there.

13 I think I can honestly say that over
14 the four years, the education, the athletics, the
15 two things intertwined beautifully. His
16 education, he always do his work. He's played
17 sports and so forth.

18 And the last point I wanted to make,
19 the other speaker covered this when she said the
20 school was going to close a couple years. But I
21 can't envision that someone would graduate from a
22 school and then it will disappear in a couple of
23 months. Myself, I came from the Caribbean. And
24 my high school we have an organization of the



1 alumni. We do a lot of fundraising, send money
2 back home to our school back home there for them
3 to buy computers and sports. Every year we have
4 a reunion party in the third week in October. So
5 I was saying to him, I said, I can't understand,
6 how can you live beyond your school closing down?
7 Where would you go? You wouldn't be able to
8 socialize with your friends and so forth.

9 So I am here asking the board to
10 really take a hard look and to look at the
11 children that is involved here. The seniors know
12 who graduated before and those who are coming
13 behind them. Take a good look and just keep the
14 children in mind so they can have their legacy as
15 they carry on in life. Thank you.

16 MR. CARWELL: Thank you, sir.

17 Leonard Williams.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: Hi. I'm Leonard
19 Williams. And my freshman year at Pencader, all
20 I cared about was football, just football.
21 That's it. Football was life. But my senior
22 year, everything changed for me. I had a great
23 coach, named Coach MacAdoo. He helped me realize
24 that football is not life -- like it's a great



1 sport and all. I'm almost 18 years. I have a
2 long life beyond that. And I realized I have --
3 I love something else.

4 And when I took criminal justice,
5 Mr. Caskey, he inspired me that, hey, maybe I can
6 major in something else. Because there is
7 something about me, I like to help people. What
8 I want to do is become an FBI special agent. And
9 I'm glad Mr. Caskey helped me. He basically
10 guided me to that. He probably didn't know he
11 had an influence on me. He also had a good
12 influence on me when it came to believing in God.
13 Like I study the Bible all the time. Because he
14 had a Bible study group, and me, Seth and other
15 kids from last year came, and that really had
16 impact on me, too. I study the Bible all the
17 time.

18 Also, Mrs. Dickens, she had a great
19 impact on me, too. I realize that I like
20 photography. So at Wilmington University -- I
21 attend Wilmington University right now -- I'm
22 going to be in Photography Club just because of
23 Ms. Dickens. I realized, hey, I could be an FBI
24 special agent. I could also take pictures on the



1 side because it's something I love doing.

2 I love kids, too. If you love kids,
3 you should put them in an environment where great
4 people are, like Mr. Caskey, Mr. McAdoo,
5 Ms. Dickens, because they're going to guide these
6 kids into the right place.

7 At Wilmington University, I have a
8 3.4. I was a point away from the Dean's List.
9 That's how far Pencader took me.

10 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

11 Raven Collins.

12 MS. COLLINS: My name is Raven
13 Collins. I'm a junior at Pencader. I
14 transferred here my sophomore year from William
15 Penn. And it's not a bad school, it just wasn't
16 the right school for me. Like my GPA, it wasn't
17 high.

18 And when I came to Pencader, like I
19 thought it's going to be so boring. I didn't
20 like it. It was like new. But all my teachers,
21 like they really care about my education. At
22 William Penn, I would just get called home saying
23 I need to work on this and I need to work on
24 that. At Pencader I got told I need to work at



1 that, and when I worked on that, they called
2 home. They work with you. Like Ms. Moyer, her
3 class, it wasn't easy, but she called my Mom and
4 she sat me down and told me what I needed to do
5 and what I need to work on, and she made sure I
6 passed. I passed with a B in that class.

7 I do BPA and I'm in Blue Gold. Like
8 I wasn't really involved at William Penn, but now
9 I am, and it's just -- you heard other people say
10 it is really like a family. I don't get very
11 close to people, but here I did. And I met a lot
12 of good people. And I could see myself going to
13 my dream college. If I would have stayed at
14 William Penn, my grades wouldn't be where they
15 are right now. I have a 3.0. Now I should have
16 a chance to go to the college I want to go to and
17 succeed and do what I want to do.

18 And just like imagine how you would
19 feel if you had to send your child to somewhere.
20 I'm a junior, and I have to worry about where am
21 I going to go my senior year? Like am I going to
22 graduate on time? Am I going to get the same
23 attention? And just like imagine telling your
24 child that. Thank you.



1 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

2 Tanai Scott.

3 MS. SCOTT: I would like to start by
4 saying I am not the perfect student. But
5 Pencader, it was a shock to me coming in because
6 I was -- I thought I was coming to a public
7 school where I was going to be able to do
8 whatever I wanted, get away with whatever. And
9 last year, I had a lot of downs, more than I
10 should have. This year coming in, I am realizing
11 people have told me I have matured a lot. And I
12 would like to thank all of them because if it
13 wasn't for them, I would have still been doing
14 whatever I want.

15 I have, like I said, my ups and downs
16 with my teachers. When it comes down to it, none
17 of them have turned their back on me. I might
18 have gotten to -- I had an attitude with one of
19 my teachers and came in the next day, he didn't
20 hold it against me. At other schools, you don't
21 find teachers who really care.

22 I'm a cheerleader at Pencader. And I
23 think that helps me a lot and motivates me to do
24 what I'm supposed to do. I would like to say



1 that Pencader has received a lot of negative
2 attention. Unless you go there, you wouldn't
3 understand. I am motivated to come to school. I
4 want to come to school.

5 We're not perfect. I'm not perfect.
6 I don't think anyone at our school is perfect. I
7 don't think anybody is perfect, I think. My
8 brother went to Pencader. He was in the first
9 graduating class. From there, Pencader has come
10 a long way. I don't think enough light has, I
11 guess, been reflected on that. And I would just
12 like you guys to think about the fact that I
13 don't want to go to my feeder school because I'm
14 a social butterfly, and I know I'm not going to
15 be on track. At Pencader, I'm on track. I'm
16 motivated. And I can see myself getting in
17 arrears at a feeder school. So thank you.

18 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

19 Victoria Gambrah.

20 MS. GAMBRAH: I wrote something, but
21 my son has it. I don't know where he is. But he
22 said what he has to say.

23 I'm standing here saying that I have
24 a success story because of Pencader. Pencader



1 has been a big part of their lives. I have a son
2 who was born here. At two years, he went to
3 elementary school in Ghana for 12 years of his
4 life. He came here as a 9th grader and just took
5 off at Pencader, you know. He has been an
6 example for a lot of the kids in the family. If
7 you come to Pencader, and you are related to Joey
8 Gnfi, you better come in and perform. Because
9 they ask you: Hey, what's going on? You don't
10 belong to that family if you acting like that.
11 And it straightened the kids out a whole lot. If
12 he was here today, he would talk probably ten
13 minutes, not two, because it wouldn't be enough
14 for him, he has such a big mouth. But he's doing
15 well in Brown University. He's snowed in right
16 now. And he was supposed to text me his views
17 and everything. He said, "Ma, go and tell them
18 how you feel."

19 I'm just grateful. I'm not a single
20 mother by choice. It happened and I've moved on
21 with it. The school has helped me a lot. They
22 both play sports. I have a soccer player and I
23 have football player. I'm like, Who is going to
24 take them to doctors when I'm at work? Someone



1 calls me: Oh, Raymond got knocked down. And
2 turns out, he's doing okay. I'm like okay. If
3 he has to go to the hospital, I'm going to kill
4 him, because I don't have time.

5 When they have to go to practice, I
6 don't have time. But guess what, I have these
7 kids, and there are parents who have pitched in
8 and taken my kids to and fro. It's the family
9 that I never thought I would find, and I found it
10 right here. So please keep the school open, not
11 for just Raymond, who is the 11th grader, but
12 just for the fact that Joey came in here from
13 Ghana with a different accent and he just did it.
14 I'm so proud of my son. And the thing is that
15 his friend, his best friend was voted
16 Valedictorian 2011. The Parliamentarian was his
17 best friend, too. It's like a whole group of
18 kids who pitched in, and they just did it. You
19 know, all the kids graduated the year except for
20 probably one or two. And so just keep the school
21 open. It will get them where they need to go.
22 Please keep it open just for our sakes. Thank
23 you.

24 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.



1 Our last speaker, who will be Sofia
2 Hernandez.

3 MS. HERNANDEZ: I have two points to
4 make. First is I graduated in 2011. I have seen
5 how the school has progressed, how it has gotten
6 better. All the difficulties, everything the
7 school has gone through, and still, you saw all
8 the people that were here, you saw all the alumni
9 that was here. I don't see why the school is
10 being closed if so many people are trying -- or
11 going to be closed, you're looking into closing
12 it. I don't understand how that's possible if
13 there's so much support from all the people here.

14 And the second thing is, the family
15 thing. I think just about everyone who has come
16 up here has said something about family. I still
17 talk to people from high school, from the year I
18 graduated before me, and I know they talk to
19 other people. Kids think now that the friends
20 you make in high school you keep forever. That's
21 not true. Everybody drifts off, they go to
22 different colleges, they separate and everything.
23 With Pencader, it's not true. I go to Pencader
24 and I help out at Pencader. And I help teachers.



1 I do things at Pencader. This is two years after
2 I graduated. There's kids, other kids that I see
3 back at Pencader, and it's just -- I'm having
4 difficulty wrapping my mind around how you guys,
5 not -- I don't know if you guys have gone to
6 Pencader. And you heard parents and teachers say
7 you guys should go and see what it's like, see
8 the environment, see how everything works at
9 Pencader.

10 It's just I can -- can any of you
11 tell me, like have you gone, have you been at
12 Pencader?

13 MR. CARWELL: Yes.

14 MS. HERNANDEZ: Yes. Have you seen
15 the family, have you seen the environment?

16 MR. CARWELL: Yes.

17 MS. HERNANDEZ: So can you tell me --

18 MR. CARWELL: That's it, that's it.

19 MS. JOHNSON: Not a dialogue. Sorry.

20 MR. CARWELL: Your time is --

21 MS. HERNANDEZ: Sorry.

22 MR. CARWELL: You have time.

23 MS. JOHNSON: You still have one
24 minute.



1 MS. HERNANDEZ: Well, I want you guys
2 to think about that. Think about the family.
3 Think about everybody that's there.

4 All right. That's all I have to say.
5 Thank you.

6 MR. CARWELL: Thank you. That was
7 our last speaker.

8 I want to thank you all for
9 participating this evening. The Secretary will
10 consider your comments in deciding what
11 recommendation to impose for the consent of the
12 State Board. The comments are part of the record
13 to be provided, and on which the secretary and
14 State Board will base their decisions. This
15 hearing is now closed. Thank you.

16 (Hearing concluded at 9:03 p.m.)

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1 State of Delaware)
2 New Castle County)

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4 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

5 I, Lucinda M. Reeder, Registered
6 Diplomate Reporter, Certified Real-time Reporter
7 and Notary Public, do hereby certify that the
8 foregoing record is a true and accurate
9 transcript of my stenographic notes taken on
10 February 13, 2013 in the above-captioned matter.

11 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
12 hand and seal this 18th day of February 2013 at
13 Wilmington, Delaware.

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Lucinda M. Reeder, RDR, CRR



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