

In The Matter Of:
*Department of Education
and Board of Education*

*In Re: Delaware Met Charter High School
May 7, 2013*

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THE STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
and
BOARD OF EDUCATION

In re:)
)
DELAWARE MET CHARTER HIGH)
SCHOOL)
)

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Townsend Building
401 Federal Street
Dover, Delaware 19901
Tuesday, May 7, 2013
5:43 p.m.

HEARD BEFORE: JOHN CARWELL, JR.

APPEARANCES:

CATHERINE HICKEY, ESQ., Deputy Attorney
General - Counsel to the Hearing Officer

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1 MR. CARWELL: Good evening. I
2 declare this public hearing open. My name is
3 John Carwell, Jr. I am the education associate
4 for the Department of Education, and I have been
5 appointed by the Secretary of Education to
6 conduct this public hearing.

7 The Delaware Met Charter High School
8 has filed an application for a new charter. As
9 is required by law, the matter was referred to
10 the Charter School Accountability Committee for
11 an investigation and report. This joint public
12 hearing is being held by the Department of
13 Education and the State Board of Education to
14 give the school an opportunity to respond to the
15 final report of the Charter School Accountability
16 Committee, which recommended that the school's
17 charter application be approved with conditions,
18 and also to receive public comments.

19 I would like the record to reflect
20 that the notice of the time, date, and place of
21 today's public hearing was published in The News
22 Journal and the Delaware State News on April 22,
23 2013. In addition, notice was posted at the
24 Charter School Accountability Committee's place



1 of business on the Department of Education's
2 official website and on the State public meeting
3 calendar on the State's official website on April
4 22, 2013. Further, the applicant was personally
5 notified of the time, date, and place of today's
6 public hearing on April 23, 2013.

7 A court reporter is present so that
8 a record of this hearing can be made. It will be
9 necessary for each speaker to clearly identify
10 his or herself before beginning to speak so that
11 the court reporter will be able to note who you
12 are.

13 The record of this hearing will be
14 provided to the Secretary of Education and
15 members of the State Board of Education, together
16 with any written or electronic comments received
17 at or before this hearing. And there have not
18 been any comments submitted.

19 We will proceed in the following
20 manner: First we will hear from any
21 representatives of the charter school who wish to
22 comment on the committee's final report. Then we
23 will take comments from anyone else who desires
24 to speak. We've already provided the sign-in



1 sheet. Are there any others who desire to speak
2 who have not designed in?

3 Okay. Given the number of
4 individuals who have signed in, I will impose a
5 time limit of two minutes a piece. I'll just
6 flag you when 30 seconds is left, okay? All
7 right.

8 And at this point I will accept
9 comments from anyone who desires to speak on
10 behalf of the application.

11 MR. CHILDS: Thank you very much,
12 John. My name is Nash Childs. I'm the chair of
13 the founding board of the Delaware Met. I first
14 of all want to apologize for my scarred
15 appearance. I'm a testament to wearing sun
16 screen. For those of you who wonder why I look
17 like this, Jeff did not roll me on the way down.

18 But in all seriousness and all
19 kidding aside, I am not a parent. I have never
20 put a child through the educational process or
21 through selecting a school, but I have a
22 tremendous passion for the educational process,
23 and I especially have a tremendous passion for
24 the Delaware Met, which is modeled after the



1 internationally successful big picture school
2 model.

3 And we'll talk more about that, it
4 was all in our application. What I am really
5 here to address, at least my piece of this, is
6 the community engagement efforts and outreach
7 that we have exercised prior to submission of our
8 application and even since then.

9 And when I say "community
10 engagement," I'm referring to community groups,
11 I'm referring to students, parents, teachers, and
12 the business community at large, which is
13 actually instrumental to the success of our
14 school model. And not only individual
15 businesses, but organizations that support
16 businesses.

17 Just for example, the Delaware Met
18 has attended and presented to various community
19 groups, including the Hedgeville Community,
20 Southbridge Community, Westside Community,
21 Hilltop, with the Latin American Community
22 Center, the Education Youth and Families
23 Committee of the City Council, Wilmington Urban
24 League, Project Ready. We've hosted community



1 leadership breakfasts, and we've also hosted a
2 student panel discussion from the Met East.

3 MR. CARWELL: 30 seconds.

4 MR. CHILDS: We participated
5 especially with the one in Providence, Rhode
6 Island. We participated in school tours of
7 successful Met schools. I guess the anchor
8 school, but really, the very first Met
9 established was in Providence, Rhode Island,
10 which I and Kathy and Justin and a number of
11 folks attended.

12 Then there was also a visit to the
13 Met East, which is close to us in Camden, New
14 Jersey. They're very successful school models,
15 and they're big picture school models modeled
16 after our program.

17 MR. CARWELL: That's time.

18 MR. CHILDS: That's time?

19 MR. CARWELL: Yes.

20 MR. CHILDS: Oh, jeez. Well, I have
21 a big binder here full of all this information
22 that shows our community outreach, and this is to
23 be left with you, so we'll focus on all that.
24 Thanks.



1 MS. HICKEY: This is Exhibit A.

2 (Exhibit A admitted into evidence)

3 MS. HICKEY: You wouldn't happen to
4 have this in electronic format, would you?

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pieces of it.
6 Is it easier to be submitted electronically?
7 Would you like us to do that?

8 MR. CARWELL: Yes. Actually, we
9 post items on line, as well.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I can scan
11 them. I can do that, yeah.

12 MR. CARWELL: That will be great.
13 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Childs.

14 MR. CHILDS: Yes. And I'm not
15 speaking anymore, I just want to introduce the
16 next speakers, because we're continuing with
17 community outreach. So I will reach out to
18 Adriane to talk about your reach.

19 MS. ANDERSON-STRANGE: Hi, my name
20 is Adriane Anderson-Strange, and I am a founding
21 board member as well as a parent on the board for
22 the Delaware Met, and I would also like to speak
23 on passion as a parent for this school.

24 I went to visit the model back in



1 2010 with Innovative Schools, and sitting there
2 as a parent was so overwhelming for me to notice
3 that there were schools in the United States that
4 existed the way that one existed, with students
5 excelling, being able to speak, having a passion
6 to come in the door as high school students, was
7 amazing. I would just pray and hope that this
8 model is a success in Delaware, which I know it
9 would be.

10 Watching my children, one being in
11 special education and one soaring through the
12 roof, with DCAS scores of 900, this is a school
13 where I know they would both fit and do well.

14 It's just something that -- I mean I
15 can't even explain it to you. As a parent, it's
16 so emotional to see that there are schools where
17 our children can excel, and if we could just
18 bring one to Delaware, it would be such a passion
19 to be able to prove that kids of all cultures,
20 races, and colors, can exceed in today's world.

21 So I'm going to leave it on that
22 note. I don't want to hit the 30-second mark.

23 MR. CHILDS: Like I did.

24 MS. ANDERSON-STRANGE: And I'm going



1 to pass my baton on to the next person.

2 MR. CHILDS: With that, I'd like to
3 follow up on Adriane's comment. I'd like to have
4 a future board member, Justin, make some
5 comments, please.

6 JUSTIN VON DUYKE: My name's Justin
7 Von Duyke. I come from a middle school in
8 Newark, Shue-Medill. My mom asked me if I wanted
9 to go to Rhode Island to visit the Met, and I
10 said of course. And well, basically the moment I
11 walked in I knew that it was going to be a great
12 time, because somebody opened the door for me.
13 One of the students opened the door for me, so I
14 knew from that moment.

15 But at first, before that, I thought
16 some of the kids might have been hostile or like,
17 you know, ghetto, like at my school. But no.
18 Like, a lot of the kids were smart, they had
19 great grammar, were articulate, and just
20 basically a lot of the kids really knew what they
21 were doing. They were engaged, they liked to
22 talk to me, they liked to present what they were
23 doing.

24 As I went to their classes, they



1 liked to show me around everything they were
2 doing. I asked them problems about bullying and
3 everything. They said no, because all the kids
4 there were really nice to each other, they didn't
5 have any problem.

6 I asked the teacher, like, how she
7 had to discipline the kids, and she said there
8 was really nothing she needed to discipline. I
9 asked her about the volunteer programs and she
10 said a lot of the kids came to places. When I
11 went -- sorry. I went to the businesses and the
12 volunteer programs, and I talked to the leaders
13 of that. They were talking about the kids, the
14 students they were working with. They said they
15 didn't have any problem with them. They said it
16 was, like, enjoyment for them, and they said it
17 was a pleasure to have them.

18 And overall, the community was
19 great. Like, all the students there, the way
20 they acted was really just spot on, nice, and I
21 think that really reflects and -- the whole
22 entire community just -- all right.

23 MR. CARWELL: 30 seconds.

24 JUSTIN VON DUYKE: All right. The



1 whole community was fine and well after that as I
2 walked around, and so, it was good.

3 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

4 MR. CHILDS: Next up I think I have
5 Jeff make some comments, and then I'll let Paul
6 make a statement.

7 MR. BROSS: My name is Jeffrey
8 Bross. I'm a founding board member, and I'm a
9 businessman who owns a large engineering and
10 science consulting firm here in Delaware. I,
11 too, am on the Met board, not only as a parent of
12 children who have been through the public school
13 system, as well as myself here in Delaware, but
14 also as a business person who employs our
15 graduates.

16 The big picture learning model,
17 frankly, is an incredible model. I've been to
18 the big picture school, I've talked to big
19 picture students. They are engaged. And what's
20 key about this model, I think, is its relevance
21 in the learning continuum. The students -- and
22 these are students with all different
23 capabilities, backgrounds, do well in this model.
24 And this school, we propose to locate within the



1 city of Wilmington, and in fact, to try and draw
2 principally from the city of Wilmington, and I
3 think that's an important aspect of this school.

4 Clearly, I know the Department of
5 Education is aware of the very low graduation
6 rate, and frankly, the low engagement rate in the
7 City's youth. My goal personally and our goal
8 collectively as a board is to try and change
9 that, and we think this model has a good chance
10 to do that.

11 We're not the only people who
12 believe that. You probably have heard and read
13 that -- the new mayer of Wilmington, Mayor
14 Williams, and the new County Executive, Tom
15 Gordon, have both expressed their concern about
16 the current educational model and how it's
17 failing our youth.

18 What I would like to do is very
19 briefly read a press release that came out from
20 the mayor's office. This came out on March 13th,
21 and it says, "As the City of Wilmington seeks to
22 nurture the growth and development of its young
23 people, Mayor Williams supports the Delaware Met,
24 a high school looking to open in downtown



1 Wilmington. The Delaware Met will adopt the big
2 picture learning school design, which is a
3 dynamic approach to learning, doing, and
4 thinking. It is defined by a commitment to
5 educate one student at a time. The school's
6 anticipated to open in the fall of 2014 for
7 grades 9 through 12, with enrollment of 350
8 students.

9 "The Delaware Met school of design
10 is built on three basic principles: Learning
11 must be based on the interests and goals of each
12 student, curriculum must be relevant to people
13 and places in the real world, students' abilities
14 must be measured by the quality of their work.
15 The big-picture learning model" -- and this is
16 very important -- "has found success across the
17 country. High schools practicing this model have
18 a 90 percent on-time graduation rate, with 95
19 percent accepted to college. Bringing more
20 educational institutions to the downtown
21 Wilmington area can only enhance our community,
22 said Mayor Williams. The Delaware Met has the
23 potential to create new academic opportunities
24 for our children."



1 Thank you.

2 MR. CHILDS: Now I'd like to have
3 Paul Morrill, who is the head of the Committee of
4 100.

5 MR. MORRILL: Thank you, Nash. It's
6 a pleasure to be here to support the Delaware
7 Met. My name is Paul Morrill. I'm the executive
8 director of the Committee of 100. The Committee
9 of 100 is a nonprofit association of business
10 leaders located in Wilmington, and our principal
11 objective is to promote economic development in
12 Delaware. Our interest in education is -- stems
13 from our interest in having a skilled workforce,
14 which is the key component of economic
15 development.

16 We're actually involved in several
17 education initiatives with both traditional
18 schools and charter schools like Delaware Met.
19 In one case we have business scientists and
20 engineers going into a school district and
21 working with classes there and engineering design
22 labs.

23 In this case, the Delaware Met will
24 be sending their students on a regular basis into



1 businesses. What they have in common is that
2 they're both bringing real-world problems into
3 the classroom and sparking interest in education
4 on the part of our young people.

5 When we talked to our members, our
6 employers want their future employees to be
7 taught how to collaborate, learn in a team
8 setting, and to have problem-solving skills, and
9 that is a perfect description of the big picture,
10 a model of education. So, we're pleased to
11 support this application. We hope the Board of
12 Education will support the application by the
13 Delaware Met.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. CHILDS: Thank you, Paul.

16 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

17 MR. CHILDS: Okay. Next I have
18 Kathy, and then we'll just go around.

19 DR. VON DUYKE: I'm Dr. Katherine
20 Von Duyke. I just finished my dissertation in
21 sociocultural approaches to education, and in
22 that approach we know that context, context,
23 context, matters; that students have a school
24 that's a friendly context for their learning;



1 that they're part of the context where cognition
2 matters; and that they feel part of the context
3 of the culture; that they're changing the
4 culture, that they have agency in the culture.

5 I am also the mother of 12 children,
6 that being one of them (indicates), and we've had
7 all sorts of schooling models. But I am here to
8 represent a parent from Wilmington, Keisha Slade,
9 who could not be here tonight. She has two
10 potential Met students. She has children with
11 special needs. All of her kids have attended
12 charter schools. She believes in choice options
13 for Wilmington students, and she has attended the
14 student family discussion.

15 She says, "Dear Secretary Murphy and
16 DOE, it is with great hope and pleasure that I
17 recommend the Delaware Met school become an
18 approved charter. I've been fortunate to learn
19 of the extensive process that the Innovative
20 Schools agency undertook to identify a model
21 school program for Delaware's children. The
22 vision of the Delaware Met to provide an
23 individual and personalized plan for each student
24 is a key component that gained my support.



1 "With the growing number of violent
2 school incidents and numbers of school dropouts,
3 there's a need for improvement. A school that
4 recognizes students for the unique strengths and
5 challenges can assist in identifying gaps that
6 may lead to negative outcomes, provide an ongoing
7 review of individual student plans, afford our
8 children with the opportunity to be successful.

9 "In addition to the projected
10 educational improvements, the Delaware Met
11 program plans to support students' personal and
12 career goals through their workstudy internships.
13 From my understanding, students will be provided
14 with guided firsthand experience that promotes
15 work ethics and self-sustainability. School
16 involvement and student employment offers an
17 ability to evaluate and provide support for
18 intervention where needed.

19 "The Delaware Met's plan to
20 incorporate the family and community support is
21 another reason I am in agreement with opening
22 this school. Community and family involvement
23 are known protective factors for children,
24 providing family support and community engagement



1 fosters not only a social factor, but it promotes
2 the opportunity to foster experience, confidence
3 and financial gain."

4 That's it.

5 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

6 MR. CHILDS: Very good.

7 MS. HICKEY: Dr. Von Duyke, would
8 you like to admit that as an exhibit?

9 DR. VON DUYKE: Sure. Thank you.

10 MS. HICKEY: Thank you. Exhibit B
11 is the letter from Ms. Slade that was being read,
12 and I don't know that you made it all the way
13 through, so we'll just have it as part of the
14 record as a written exhibit.

15 DR. VON DUYKE: Thank you.

16 (Exhibit B admitted into evidence)

17 MS. BROOKS: My name is Candice
18 Brooks and I am a board member for the Delaware
19 Met. I am here, I will be representing, reading
20 a letter of support from Timothy Jenkins, who is
21 the Met East principal for another big picture
22 learning school in Camden, New Jersey.

23 "To whom it may concern. I write as
24 the founding principal of Met East High School,



1 New Jersey's first big picture learning school.
2 I have had the privilege of seeing the Camden
3 City Public School District introduce a new
4 educational design and watching Met East High
5 School.

6 "I take pride in saying Met East is
7 an exemplary big picture learning school, a
8 contributing member of the deeper learning
9 network, and continues to influence schools'
10 practices throughout our region.

11 "Having worked closely with
12 Innovative Schools over the past year, I am
13 confident the city of Wilmington is poised to
14 experience similar results. Like the Camden City
15 Public School District, Innovative Schools
16 recognizes the need to offer a variety of
17 educational options to today's 21st century
18 learners. This is manifested in their
19 collaboration with big picture learning.

20 "Big picture learning schools offer
21 students personalized family-oriented learning
22 environments tailored to meet the needs and
23 interests of students, while ensuring students
24 are prepared for college or life beyond high



1 school.

2 "I had hoped to be there to speak in
3 person, but a scheduling conflict prohibits my
4 attendance. However, I hope it is as clear to
5 you as it is to me that introducing big picture
6 learning's educational design to the city of
7 Wilmington is an excellent idea. Big picture
8 learning has been an integral part of the
9 educational renaissance in Camden. Our daily
10 attendance and parent participation rates are the
11 highest in our district. Our college acceptance
12 rate is above 90 percent. Met East is widely
13 regarded as having the best school culture in our
14 school district.

15 "With support from Innovative
16 Schools, the city of Wilmington and its families
17 will come to understand what families in Camden,
18 New Jersey, already know: Big picture learning
19 schools are great places to learn.

20 "I pledge my support moving forward,
21 and will do what I can to assist in
22 implementation. Timothy L. Jenkins, Met East
23 High School principal."

24 Thank you.



1 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

2 MS. FISHER: My name is Abigail
3 Fisher. I am a board member and a Delaware
4 public schoolteacher. I am going to be reading a
5 letter on behalf of Mr. Kevin Cramer. He is a
6 student, a junior in high school. He is also a
7 Wilmington resident. He is part of Delaware's
8 Urban League Project Ready student group. He
9 attended a presentation to Project Ready
10 students, he attended the student panel
11 discussion with the Met East students, and he
12 would like to stay engaged and updated in our
13 school.

14 His letter says, "Dear Delaware
15 Department of Education, my name is Kevin Cramer,
16 and I am a rising senior and recently-elected
17 student body president of Newark High School.
18 Three months ago I had the opportunity to meet
19 five students and their principal from Met East
20 High School in New Jersey at the Wilmington
21 community service building. There, they
22 expressed that the Met program promotes
23 self-regulation and self-motivation.

24 "Since I am a student that lives in



1 the city of Wilmington, I understand the
2 realistic perspective on how the city views
3 education. Constructing the Met program in
4 Wilmington would reawaken the urban community,
5 allowing the youth to take back their education
6 and put it in their own hands so they can become
7 a better student.

8 "the Met program gives high school a
9 whole new name. This school provides a support
10 team that cares about their students' overall
11 well-being. The administration creates a stable,
12 caring environment for those who do not have that
13 opportunity otherwise. Opening this high school
14 in Wilmington, Delaware, will provide an
15 opportunity to change the way students feel in a
16 modern public school setting. I believe that
17 Wilmington will embrace the concept of the
18 school.

19 "I ask you to please approve the
20 school and its vision of inspiring the meaning
21 'if you learn more, you earn more.' And the
22 students of Wilmington. You're not just building
23 a school or creating jobs; you're investing in
24 our education so that one day we can achieve the



1 American dream. Signed Kevin Cramer."

2 MR. CARWELL: Thank you. We'll take
3 that as an exhibit.

4 MS. HICKEY: Yes. This is Exhibit
5 C.

6 (Exhibit C admitted into evidence)

7 MS. HICKEY: And it's a letter from
8 Kevin Cramer, C-r-a-m-e-r.

9 MS. DOORDAN: Good evening. My name
10 is Debbie Doordan, and I'm the executive director
11 of Innovative Schools, a nonprofit school support
12 and charter management organization in
13 Wilmington, Delaware. I am speaking tonight in
14 support of the Delaware Met and to clarify the
15 level of support Innovative Schools will provide
16 as the charter management organization.

17 In order to support the efforts of
18 the operating board of Delaware Met, Innovative
19 Schools will dedicate the development of one
20 full-time staff member solely to planning year
21 activities. We are also actively recruiting a
22 school leader who will be brought on board in
23 July of 2013 and will be in place for the entire
24 planning year. We've already started the process



1 of cross-training our current solution staff and
2 plan to bring on additional staff members to the
3 team in March of 2014 in anticipation of the fall
4 openings.

5 The principal and CMO will report
6 directly to the governing board at monthly board
7 meetings on the school's financial health,
8 academic standing, parent and community
9 involvement, and any other topics relative to the
10 school's success measures outlined in the
11 school's charter and performance agreement.

12 The board will be responsible for
13 evaluating the performance of the principal and
14 the CMO, and will hold these individuals
15 accountable for the school's success. The board
16 will have the power to fire the principal and the
17 CMO if the school is not meeting its obligations.

18 Innovative Schools currently plans
19 to offer 85 hours of back office support services
20 per month to each of the four new schools that we
21 will be supporting. This number far exceeds the
22 average rate of 55 hours per month that are used
23 with current back office clients.

24 Given the size of the solutions



1 team, Innovative Schools will be able to flex in
2 additional hours of support as necessary to
3 ensure the school's back office operations are
4 being run in accordance with State guidelines.

5 Innovative Schools has organized our
6 work to ensure that no detail is overlooked. We,
7 along with our national school design partner Big
8 Picture Learning stand ready to continue the
9 support of the Delaware Met through the planning
10 year and into successful school years of
11 operation.

12 MR. CARWELL: Thank you. And the
13 last person we have listed is Edward Emmett.

14 MR. EMMETT: I decided not to look
15 at you, then I don't have to worry about your
16 timing. My name is Edward Emmett. I am the
17 director of Positive Outcomes Charter School in
18 Camden, and Positive Outcomes was the first big
19 picture school in Delaware. Started -- we
20 transformed from what we were before into a big
21 picture school about two years ago.

22 And not to duplicate what a lot of
23 other people said, I'll try and highlight just
24 some of the basics of why I believe another big



1 picture school would absolutely benefit the
2 students in Delaware.

3 Back in early 2011, late 2010, our
4 school was identified as a partnership zone
5 school, and thank to Innovative Schools and their
6 portfolio of model schools, they introduced us to
7 big picture.

8 And going to visit a big picture
9 school is an experience that all of these people
10 have had the opportunity to, because it almost
11 doesn't look like it's real. The students -- the
12 way they communicate, the way they talk, it
13 doesn't look like it's a high school. But in
14 many that we've visited, that's what we see.

15 It basically functions off of a
16 principle which big picture operates by, which is
17 they try to personalize education one student at
18 a time. And the biggest thing is that they try
19 to identify each student's passions and use that
20 to connect kids to their learning. And
21 engagement is the biggest thing that we really
22 struggle with in schools today, is that most of
23 the students that drop out indicated they felt
24 disconnected from school.



1 Big picture really seeks to change
2 that, and they do that by connecting each student
3 with an advisor that will basically be with them
4 for multiple years, and it really creates a
5 family-type relationship that really isn't
6 replicated in a lot of schools.

7 Through implementing big picture in
8 our school, we have seen dramatic improvement.
9 Parental engagement is the highest ever. Our
10 school climate is better than we ever expected.
11 We're seeing about 40 percent less referrals, 68
12 percent less suspensions, proficiency rates are
13 higher than we've seen in our entire existence.

14 Our students have completed over 100
15 internships in the community. They've
16 interviewed 250 business owners and employees,
17 committed over 6000 hours to community service,
18 and by joining the big picture network, they get
19 connected to all of the schools throughout the
20 country. You're never by yourself as a big
21 picture school. You can always get help.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. CARWELL: Thank you, Mr. Emmett.
24 Is there anyone else who desires to speak on this



1 application? Okay. If not, I want to thank
2 everyone for participating today. The Secretary
3 will consider your comment in deciding what
4 recommendation to propose for the consent of the
5 State Board. This hearing is now closed.

6 Thank you.

7 (Hearing concluded at 6:11 p.m.)
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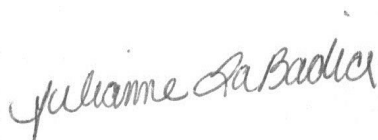
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1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE
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3 I, JULIANNE LaBADIA, Registered Diplomate
4 Reporter and Notary Public, do hereby certify that
5 the foregoing record, pages 2 through 28 inclusive,
6 is a true and accurate transcript of my
7 stenographic notes taken on May 7th, 2013, in the
8 above-captioned matter.

9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
10 hand and seal this 9th day of May, 2013, at
11 Wilmington.
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16 Julianne LaBadia, RDR, CRR
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