

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

*In Re: Academy of Dover Charter School
May 7, 2013*

*Wilcox & Fetzer, Ltd.
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THE STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
and
BOARD OF EDUCATION

In re:)
)
ACADEMY OF DOVER CHARTER)
SCHOOL)
)

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Townsend Building
401 Federal Street
Dover, Delaware 19901
Tuesday, May 7, 2013
5:00 p.m.

HEARD BEFORE: JOHN CARWELL, JR.

APPEARANCES:

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

WILCOX & FETZER
1330 King Street, Wilmington, Delaware 19801
(302) 655-0477
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1 MR. CARWELL: Good afternoon,
2 everyone.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good
4 afternoon.

5 MR. CARWELL: Thank you very much.
6 I declare this public hearing to be open. My
7 name is John Carwell, Jr. I am the education
8 associate for the charter school office, and I
9 have been appointed by the Secretary of Education
10 to conduct this public hearing.

11 Academy of Dover Charter School has
12 filed an application to modify its charter. As
13 is required by law, the matter was referred to
14 the Charter School Accountability Committee for
15 investigation and report. This joint public
16 hearing is being held by the Department of
17 Education and the State Board of Education to
18 give the school an opportunity to respond to the
19 final report of the Accountability Committee,
20 which recommended that the school's modification
21 application be approved, and also to receive
22 public comments.

23 I would like the record to reflect
24 that the notice of the time, date, and place of



1 today's public hearing was published in The News
2 Journal and the Delaware State News on April 22,
3 2013. In addition, notice was posted at the
4 Charter School Accountability Committee's
5 official place of business on the Department of
6 Education's official website and on the State
7 public meeting calendar on the State's official
8 website on April 22, 2013. Further, the Academy
9 of Dover was personally notified of the time,
10 date, and place of today's public hearing on
11 April 14th, 2013.

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

18 The record of this hearing will be
19 provided to the Secretary of Education and
20 THE State Board of Education, together with any
21 written or electronic comments received at or
22 before this hearing, which in this case includes
23 a response from the school. Let's mark this as
24 Exhibit A.



1 MS. HICKEY: This is a response
2 to --

3 MR. CARWELL: A response to THE
4 final report of the Charter School Accountability
5 Committee. Also submitted was a school schedule
6 and calendar.

7 MS. HICKEY: The schedule will be B.

8 MR. CARWELL: Actually the school
9 representatives said they can be all one package.

10 MS. HICKEY: Okay. So it will all
11 be Exhibit A.

12 (Exhibit A admitted into evidence)

13 MR. CARWELL: And just a
14 clarification, the Charter School Accountability
15 Committee recommended that this application not
16 be approved, pending information submitted at
17 today's public hearing. So I just wanted to
18 clarify that information, and that's why we
19 received the exhibit.

20 So, we will proceed in the following
21 manner: First we will hear from any
22 representatives of the charter school who wish to
23 comment on the committee's final report. Then we
24 will take comments from anyone else who desires



1 to speak. There are sign-up sheets at the front
2 of the room. Whoever desires to speak who has
3 not signed up, please do so now.

4 Okay. Just by a show of hands, just
5 to see who would like to speak on behalf of the
6 school.

7 (Show of hands).

8 MR. CARWELL: Okay. So I don't
9 think I'll have to impose any time limits.

10 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, I don't know.

11 MR. CARWELL: Okay. So we'll take
12 the first speaker. Please announce who you are.

13 MR. RODRIGUEZ: My name is Noel
14 Rodriguez. I'm the head of school of the Academy
15 of Dover Charter School. I'll be brief. First I
16 would like to thank the committee for accepting
17 the response that we just turned in. There's
18 some folks in the audience that need some
19 acknowledgment. Debbie Doordan of Innovative
20 Schools, for consistent and full support. Board
21 members that are here, staff, and families of the
22 Academy of Dover.

23 I wanted to briefly talk about
24 growth. Since I have been with the Academy of



1 Dover, the school has experienced phenomenal
2 growth, academically and in every other possible
3 way, but I wanted to today represent the families
4 who could not be here which is the bulk of the
5 families that I represent at the Academy of
6 Dover. These are families who are working two
7 jobs to put food on the table. They can't make
8 it to meetings like this.

9 They see growth a little bit
10 different; beyond the academics, beyond the
11 passing grades, beyond the DCAS scores. They see
12 success as a place where their children can go to
13 school and prosper and be safe. They see schools
14 as a haven for their children, a chance to be
15 part of the community that embraces their
16 differences and treats them with equality.

17 The request for the fifth grade has
18 come as a large push from the parents, because
19 they don't feel very comfortable with the options
20 they have in the whole school district. Fear of
21 bullying and other things that go on in several
22 schools, whether perceived or real is not
23 relevant, but the fear is real from the parents
24 for their children.



1 The opportunities of choice are very
2 limited, and hence, they have asked the board of
3 directors and myself to ask the Department of
4 Education and the State Board to allow us to have
5 the fifth grade.

6 So I hope this will seriously be
7 taken into consideration, looking beyond the
8 numbers, which are good, but more importantly, to
9 truly reach out to the taxpayers and the
10 families, and hear their voices. Not only for
11 them, but because they speak for their children.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. CARWELL: Thank you,
14 Mr. Rodriguez. At this point I will accept
15 comments from anyone else who desires to speak.
16 Okay. If not, I want to thank you all for
17 participating today. The Secretary will consider
18 your comments in deciding what recommendation to
19 propose for the consent of the State Board, and
20 this hearing for Academy of Dover is now closed.

21 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

22 (Hearing concluded at 5:07 p.m.)
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I N D E X

PAGE

SPEAKER: Noel Rodriguez

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

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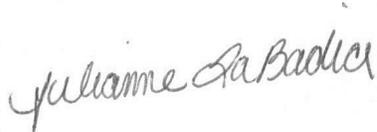


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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, JULIANNE LaBADIA, Registered Diplomate Reporter and Notary Public, do hereby certify that the foregoing record, pages 2 through 7 inclusive, is a true and accurate transcript of my stenographic notes taken on May 7, 2013, in the above-captioned matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 9th day of May, 2013, at Wilmington.



Julianne LaBadia, RDR, CRR



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