

In The Matter Of:
Department of Education
In Re: Odyssey Charter School

Hearing
December 9, 2014

Wilcox & Fetzer, Ltd.
1330 King Street
Wilmington, DE 19801
email: depos@wilfet.com, web: www.wilfet.com
phone: 302-655-0477, fax: 302-655-0497



THE STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

.. . . .

-- PUBLIC HEARING --

IN THE MATTER OF:)
Odyssey Charter School)

.. . . .

State Office Building
Auditorium
820 North French Street
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Tuesday, December 9, 2014
5:00 p.m.

.. . . .

BEFORE: Jennifer Nagourney, Executive Director
Charter Office, Department of Education

ATTORNEY: Catherine T. Hickey, DAG
Attorney for Department of Education

.. . . .

-- Transcript of Proceedings --

WILCOX & FETZER
1330 King Street
Wilmington, DE 19801
(302) 655.0477
www.wilfet.com



1 MS. NAGOURNEY: Good evening. I
2 declare this public hearing to be open.

3 My name is Jennifer Nagourney.
4 I am the Executive Director of the Charter
5 School Office at the Delaware Department of
6 Education. I have been appointed by the
7 Secretary of Education to conduct this public
8 hearing.

9 The charter of Odyssey Charter
10 School has submitted an application for
11 renewal of its charter. The Charter School
12 Accountability Committee's recommendation was
13 approval with conditions.

14 At this point, I would like to
15 introduce the other individual with me.

16 MS. HICKEY: My name is
17 Catherine Hickey. I'm the deputy attorney
18 general with the Delaware Department of
19 Justice, and I am serving this evening as
20 counsel to the hearing officer.

21 MS. NAGOURNEY: This joint
22 public hearing is being held by the Department
23 of Education and the State Board of Education
24 to assist in the decision of whether the



1 charter should be renewed. This hearing
2 provides the school and the public with an
3 opportunity to provide public comments.

4 I would like the record to
5 reflect that the notice of the time and date
6 and place of today's public hearing was
7 published in The News Journal and the Delaware
8 State News. In addition, notice was posted at
9 the Charter School Accountability Committee's
10 official place of business, on the Department
11 of Education's official Website, and on the
12 State Public Meeting Calendar on the State's
13 official Website.

14 A court reporter is present so
15 that a record of this hearing can be made. It
16 will be necessary for each speaker to clearly
17 identify himself or herself before beginning
18 to speak so that the court reporter will be
19 able to note who you are. The record of this
20 hearing will be provided to the Secretary of
21 Education and members of the State Board of
22 Education, together with any written or
23 electronic comments received at or before this
24 hearing.



1 First, we will hear from any
2 representatives of the charter who wish to
3 speak, and then we will take comments from
4 anyone else who desires to speak. I need to
5 watch the time limits, but I intend to be as
6 liberal as time and reason allow.

7 At this point, I welcome
8 comments from representatives of the school.

9 MS. KLEMAS: Good evening. My
10 name is Kate Klemas. I'm the parent at large
11 representative to the Odyssey School Board. I
12 want to start tonight by expressing how
13 grateful we are to the Charter School Office
14 for the care and guidance they provided us
15 during the renewal process. We found it to be
16 a rigorous and appropriate process.

17 In our renewal application, our
18 headmaster, Dr. Nick Manolakos, and others
19 spent much time sharing the achievement of our
20 schools. First and foremost, Odyssey is well
21 known and regarded for its academic
22 achievement. But tonight, I speak as a
23 parent. And I speak as a parent who has had
24 two children go through the Odyssey School --



1 I still have a daughter at Odyssey -- and I
2 will say that the experience that my family
3 has had at Odyssey has been amazing.

4 We were new to Delaware, we were
5 new to public choice in education, and we took
6 a leap of faith coming to Odyssey Charter
7 School. And that leap of faith has paid
8 dividends for us. I think one of the other
9 things that I think that is most important to
10 point out about Odyssey is, just recently,
11 public school advocates have chosen to file
12 suit with the Department of Education
13 regarding how charter schools admit their
14 students. And I would like to point out that
15 Odyssey is not a school that turns away
16 students with -- by means of any tests or any
17 artificial requirements.

18 Odyssey operates what we like to
19 call a true lottery. Children and families
20 come to us, they submit an application.
21 Everybody gets a number. We pick the numbers
22 and we place those students in our school. I
23 think that that reality of a true lottery
24 speaks even more volumes about our academic



1 achievement. Children who come to Odyssey,
2 come to Odyssey with a wealth of experience.
3 Some of them may have had some significant
4 academic preparation and some may not. But
5 what I'm most proud of is that Odyssey
6 embraces every one of those students and helps
7 them progress their learning.

8 Every student comes to Odyssey
9 and they are in a position to be supported and
10 embraced for the student they are and for the
11 student they can become. When I think about
12 Odyssey, as a public school advocate, I
13 believe that it is the true ideal school, and
14 I couldn't be prouder of the work that we've
15 done over the last seven years. And as a
16 Board member, I believe that we are doing the
17 right thing for Delaware families.

18 I appreciate your time tonight,
19 and we also appreciate the endorsement of the
20 Committee, and we look forward to the
21 Secretary and the State Board of Education
22 renewing our application. Thank you very
23 much. Have a lovely evening.

24 MS. NAGOURNEY: Thank you.



1 Is there anyone else who desires
2 to speak? If not, the hearing is now closed.

3 I want to thank you all for
4 participating today. The Secretary and State
5 Board of Education will consider your
6 comments, along with any written or spoken
7 statements submitted. Thank you so much.

8 (Concluded at 5:59 p.m.).
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
CERTIFICATE

I, Heather M. Chiaro, a Notary Public, Certified Shorthand Reporter and Registered Professional Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing is an accurate and complete transcription of the proceeding held at the time and place stated herein, and that the said proceeding was recorded by me and then reduced to typewriting under my direction, and constitutes a true record of the testimony given by said witness.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee, or attorney of any of the parties or a relative or employee of either counsel, and that I am in no way interested directly or indirectly in this action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal of office on the 12th day of December 2014

Heather M Chiaro

Heather M. Chiaro
Registered Professional Reporter



A	business (1) 3:10	3:10 5:12 deputy (1) 2:17 desires (2) 4:4 7:1 Director (1) 2:4 dividends (1) 5:8 done (1) 6:15 Dr (1) 4:18 during (1) 4:15	G	known (1) 4:21
<p>able (1) 3:19 academic (3) 4:21 5:24 6:4 Accountability (2) 2:12 3:9 achievement (3) 4:19,22 6:1 addition (1) 3:8 admit (1) 5:13 advocate (1) 6:12 advocates (1) 5:11 all (1) 7:3 allow (1) 4:6 along (1) 7:6 also (1) 6:19 amazing (1) 5:3 anyone (2) 4:4 7:1 application (4) 2:10 4:17 5:20 6:22 appointed (1) 2:6 appreciate (2) 6:18,19 appropriate (1) 4:16 approval (1) 2:13 artificial (1) 5:17 assist (1) 2:24 attorney (1) 2:17 away (1) 5:15</p>	C	E	<p>general (1) 2:18 gets (1) 5:21 go (1) 4:24 Good (2) 2:1 4:9 grateful (1) 4:13 guidance (1) 4:14</p>	L
B	<p>Calendar (1) 3:12 call (1) 5:19 care (1) 4:14 Catherine (1) 2:17 Charter (11) 2:4, 9,9,11,11 3:1, 9 4:2,13 5:6, 13 children (3) 4:24 5:19 6:1 choice (1) 5:5 chosen (1) 5:11 clearly (1) 3:16 closed (1) 7:2 come (3) 5:20 6:1,2 comes (1) 6:8 coming (1) 5:6 comments (5) 3:3, 23 4:3,8 7:6 Committee (1) 6:20 Committee's (2) 2:12 3:9 Concluded (1) 7:8 conditions (1) 2:13 conduct (1) 2:7 consider (1) 7:5 couldn't (1) 6:14 counsel (1) 2:20 court (2) 3:14,18</p>	<p>each (1) 3:16 Education (10) 2:6,7,23,23 3:21,22 5:5, 12 6:21 7:5 Education's (1) 3:11 electronic (1) 3:23 else (2) 4:4 7:1 embraced (1) 6:10 embraces (1) 6:6 endorsement (1) 6:19 even (1) 5:24 evening (4) 2:1, 19 4:9 6:23 every (2) 6:6,8 Everybody (1) 5:21 Executive (1) 2:4 experience (2) 5:2 6:2 expressing (1) 4:12</p>	H	<p>large (1) 4:10 last (1) 6:15 leap (2) 5:6,7 learning (1) 6:7 liberal (1) 4:6 like (4) 2:14 3:4 5:14,18 limits (1) 4:5 look (1) 6:20 lottery (2) 5:19, 23 lovely (1) 6:23</p>
<p>become (1) 6:11 before (2) 3:17, 23 beginning (1) 3:17 being (1) 2:22 believe (2) 6:13, 16 Board (6) 2:23 3:21 4:11 6:16,21 7:5</p>	D	F	<p>headmaster (1) 4:18 hear (1) 4:1 hearing (10) 2:2, 8,20,22 3:1,6, 15,20,24 7:2 held (1) 2:22 helps (1) 6:6 herself (1) 3:17 HICKEY (2) 2:16, 17 himself (1) 3:17 how (2) 4:12 5:13</p>	M
B	D	<p>faith (2) 5:6,7 families (2) 5:19 6:17 family (1) 5:2 file (1) 5:11 First (2) 4:1,20 foremost (1) 4:20 forward (1) 6:20 found (1) 4:15</p>	I	<p>made (1) 3:15 Manolakos (1) 4:18 may (2) 6:3,4 means (1) 5:16 Meeting (1) 3:12 member (1) 6:16 members (1) 3:21 more (1) 5:24 most (2) 5:9 6:5 much (3) 4:19 6:23 7:7 My (4) 2:3,16 4:9 5:2</p>
B	D	F	<p>ideal (1) 6:13 identify (1) 3:17 important (1) 5:9 individual (1) 2:15 intend (1) 4:5 introduce (1) 2:15</p>	N
B	D	F	<p>Jennifer (1) 2:3 joint (1) 2:21 Journal (1) 3:7 Justice (1) 2:19</p>	<p>NAGOURNEY (4) 2:1,3,21 6:24 name (3) 2:3,16 4:10 necessary (1) 3:16 need (1) 4:4 new (2) 5:4,5 News (2) 3:7,8 Nick (1) 4:18 note (1) 3:19 notice (2) 3:5,8</p>
B	D	F	<p>K Kate (1) 4:10 KLEMAS (2) 4:9, 10</p>	

now (1) 7:2 number (1) 5:21 numbers (1) 5:21	proud (1) 6:5 prouder (1) 6:14 provide (1) 3:3 provided (2) 3:20 4:14	Secretary (4) 2:7 3:20 6:21 7:4 serving (1) 2:19 seven (1) 6:15 sharing (1) 4:19 should (1) 3:1 significant (1) 6:3 some (3) 6:3,3,4 speak (6) 3:18 4:3,4,22,23 7:2	6,19 6:18 today (1) 7:4 today's (1) 3:6 together (1) 3:22 tonight (3) 4:12, 22 6:18 took (1) 5:5 true (3) 5:19,23 6:13 turns (1) 5:15 two (1) 4:24
O			
Odyssey (15) 2:9 4:11,20,24 5:1,3,6,10,15, 18 6:1,2,5,8, 12	provides (1) 3:2 public (10) 2:2,7, 22 3:2,3,6,12 5:5,11 6:12 published (1) 3:7	speaker (1) 3:16 speaks (1) 5:24 spent (1) 4:19 spoken (1) 7:6 start (1) 4:12 State (6) 2:23 3:8,12,21 6:21 7:4 statements (1) 7:7 State's (1) 3:12 still (1) 5:1 student (3) 6:8, 10,11 students (4) 5:14, 16,22 6:6 submit (1) 5:20 submitted (2) 2:10 7:7 suit (1) 5:12 supported (1) 6:9	U
Office (2) 2:5 4:13 officer (1) 2:20 official (3) 3:10, 11,13 one (2) 5:8 6:6 open (1) 2:2 operates (1) 5:18 opportunity (1) 3:3 other (2) 2:15 5:8 others (1) 4:18 our (6) 4:17,17, 19 5:22,24 6:22 out (2) 5:10,14 over (1) 6:15	R		us (3) 4:14 5:8, 20
P	reality (1) 5:23 reason (1) 4:6 received (1) 3:23 recently (1) 5:10 recommendation (1) 2:12 record (3) 3:4,15, 19 reflect (1) 3:5 regarded (1) 4:21 regarding (1) 5:13 renewal (3) 2:11 4:15,17 renewed (1) 3:1 renewing (1) 6:22 reporter (2) 3:14, 18 representative (1) 4:11 representatives (2) 4:2,8 requirements (1) 5:17 right (1) 6:17 rigorous (1) 4:16	T	V
paid (1) 5:7 parent (3) 4:10, 23,23 participating (1) 7:4 pick (1) 5:21 place (3) 3:6,10 5:22 point (4) 2:14 4:7 5:10,14 position (1) 6:9 posted (1) 3:8 preparation (1) 6:4 present (1) 3:14 process (2) 4:15, 16 progress (1) 6:7	S	take (1) 4:3 tests (1) 5:16 Thank (4) 6:22, 24 7:3,7 their (2) 5:13 6:7 them (2) 6:3,7 there (1) 7:1 they (5) 4:14 5:20 6:9,10,11 thing (1) 6:17 things (1) 5:9 think (4) 5:8,9, 23 6:11 time (5) 3:5 4:5,	volumes (1) 5:24
	School (15) 2:5, 10,11 3:2,9 4:8,11,13,24 5:7,11,15,22 6:12,13 schools (2) 4:20 5:13		W
			want (2) 4:12 7:3 watch (1) 4:5 we (13) 4:1,3, 13,15 5:4,4,5, 18,21,22 6:16, 19,20 wealth (1) 6:2 Website (2) 3:11, 13 welcome (1) 4:7 wish (1) 4:2 work (1) 6:14 written (2) 3:22 7:6
			Y
			years (1) 6:15
			5
			5:59 pm (1) 7:8