

# Delaware STEM Formal Review Public Comment

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**Public Comment:** Upon arriving home from the DOE public hearing on June 7th, I learned that the NFL's official Twitter account had been hacked, tweeting that NFL commissioner Roger Goodell had passed away. The tweet was discovered and deleted, but not without reminding us of the vulnerability of our online lives. This invasion, and other far more important security breaches, may have been avoided if our society was better prepared to anticipate hackers. True understanding of behind the scenes computer technology seems to be lacking.

In hospitals all across this country, lab techs are charged with running the instruments that help diagnose injury and disease. For some of these lab professionals, their understanding of the instruments they run only extends to turning the instrument on and pressing "start". If an error or anomaly occurs, they have no idea how to address the error as they don't understand the science of why and how the instrument runs.

Historically, our education system was designed to help employers. Needed skills were incorporated into the curriculum. As a result, companies found that their business improved, largely due to these skills. Isn't it time for the curriculum, and our approach to genuine learning (not rote memorization), to reflect the world around us? True understanding rarely occurs without natural interest and passion. Having spent years in human resources, I've witnessed first-hand the vast difference between an employee who loves what they do as opposed to someone who just needed a job.

Delaware is at a point where we need to make a decision. We can continue to work in the past – to be afraid of cyber-terrorism, of disease, of the state of the world around us -- or we can DO something about it.

Delaware STEM Academy needs to keep its charter. It needs approval to open in the fall. Unlike other charter schools in the state, Delaware STEM is the only one of its kind. The design of Delaware STEM Academy, both in its curriculum and teaching approach, is needed. Their current enrollment numbers, although short of their originally projected number, has the critical mass needed to grow and make the program an important educational success.

How will Delaware attract and retain STEM employers to our state if we don't make the commitment and investment necessary to provide the human capital? Do we tell them that our state is progressive while our actions reveal antiquated beliefs and practices?

Delaware STEM Academy enrollment numbers are low today, but given the opportunity will increase quickly once parents and students SEE and FEEL the difference.

Please make the recommendation to allow the school to open. Our children are waiting.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Foust