

Support for Delaware STEM Academy

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Inbox

To: infocso <infocso@doe.k12.de.us>;

Cc: Marian Young <MYoung@brightfieldsinc.com>;

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>>> Dear Charter School Advisory Board and Delaware Department of Education:

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>>> I am writing to express my support for the 2016 launch of the Delaware STEM Academy. As a member of the Board of Directors for the past three years, I have worked closely with the board, with our Founder/Executive Director, Brett Taylor, and our Principal Laura Jennice, to develop the school concept, apply for our charter, develop curriculum and policies, solicit funds, recruit students and secure and prepare our school building.

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>>> When I first became involved with the Delaware STEM Academy, I did not know the myriad of challenges that lay ahead. I was, and continue to be, driven by the desire to encourage young people to explore the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and math, and by my passion for uplifting the Wilmington, Delaware community.

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>>> As owners of BrightFields, Inc. my partner and I have grown our business to 45 employees through service to private and public clients primarily in Delaware and the City of Wilmington. Our motto, turning Brownfields into BrightFields, epitomizes the work that we do to investigate and clean up the past 250 years of industrial dumping and spills that affect our soil, groundwater, streams, lakes and shorelines. Cleanup opens the way for redevelopment, the construction of new roads, buildings, parks and wildlife habitats. These, in turn, invite new and creative communities to revitalize our neighborhoods, cities and state.

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>>> Environmental revitalization work is very rewarding. But it is not easy; it is technically and physically challenging and demanding. Many times during the redevelopment of Wilmington's Christina Riverfront, it was unclear how to proceed and where the funding would come from. There were huge obstacles and challenges. Working with a talented team, we got the job done. The riverfront continues to grow and to provide inspiration to many other areas of the city and state.

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>>> The Delaware STEM Academy has a talented and experienced Board of Directors and School Leaders. As a startup school, it is not well known yet, and it has been tough to find the best marketing channels to alert parents and students about our program. This recruitment challenge, more than anything else, has slowed us, but our team evaluated and developed many alternate plans to accomplish our goals -- and we continue to persevere.

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>>> We understand and appreciate that the state may be hesitant to take the risk with a new charter school in the current political climate. But we ask that you support our school and allow it to go forward. We are all business people, and we understand when it is time to cut our losses. Now is not the time.

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>> We look forward to a year from now, when we are in our new building and the Delaware STEM Academy is becoming a community hub and science center on the south side of Wilmington along the Route 9 corridor along with the brand-new New Castle County Library. As our students learn and grow, they will be mentored by owners and employees of some 60 different companies in Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey to help them explore their interests in the STEM fields. We will all be able to look back on the school with pride. Thank you for your interest, concern, diligence, and your consideration.

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>> Sincerely,

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>>> Marian Young

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6/11/2016

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