

In The Matter Of:
Department of Education
In re: Delaware STEM Academy

Public Hearing
May 16, 2016

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THE STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
and
BOARD OF EDUCATION

In re:)
)
DELAWARE STEM ACADEMY)

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING

Carvel State Building
820 French Street
Wilmington, Delaware 19801
May 16, 2016
6:08 p.m.

HEARD BEFORE: JENNIFER M. NAGOURNEY

APPEARANCES:

CATHERINE HICKEY, ESQ., Deputy Attorney
General for the Department of Education

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1 MS. NAGOURNEY: Good evening. I
2 declare this public hearing to be open. My
3 name is Jennifer Nagourney. I'm the executive
4 director of the Charter School Office for the
5 Delaware Department of Education, and I have
6 been appointed by the Secretary of Education
7 to conduct this public hearing.

8 Delaware STEM Academy was placed
9 on formal review by the Department of
10 Education with the assent of the State Board
11 of Education. As required by law, the matter
12 was referred to the Charter School
13 Accountability Committee.

14 This joint public hearing is
15 being held by the Department of Education and
16 the State Board of Education to assist in the
17 decision of whether the criteria set forth for
18 remedial action in the Delaware Code have been
19 satisfied. This hearing provides the school
20 with an opportunity to receive public comment.

21 I will now ask the others with me
22 today to introduce themselves.

23 MS. HICKEY: Good evening. My
24 name is Catherine Hickey. I am a deputy



1 attorney general with the Delaware Department
2 of Justice, and I am serving as counsel for
3 the hearing officer this evening.

4 MS. NAGOURNEY: I would like the
5 record to reflect that the notice of the time,
6 date, and place of today's public hearing was
7 published in The News Journal and the Delaware
8 State News.

9 In addition, notice was posted at
10 the Charter School Accountability Committee's
11 official place of business, on the Department
12 of Education's official website, and on the
13 State Public Meeting Calendar on the State's
14 official website. Further, the school was
15 personally notified of the time, date, and
16 place of today's public hearing.

17 A court reporter is present so
18 that an accurate record of this hearing can be
19 made. It will be necessary for each speaker
20 to clearly identify himself or herself before
21 beginning to speak so that the court reporter
22 will be able to note who you are.

23 The record of this hearing will
24 be provided to the Secretary of Education and



1 members of the State Board of Education,
2 together with any written or electronic
3 comments received at or before this hearing.

4 We will proceed in the following
5 manner. First, we will hear from any
6 representatives of the charter who wish to
7 comment. Then we will take comments from
8 anyone else who desires to speak.

9 There are sign-up sheets in the
10 front of the room, and I have a few of those
11 here. We have quite a few speakers. If you
12 have not yet signed up, I ask you to please do
13 so. And once we go through the list of
14 speakers on this list, we will go to the
15 speakers on that list.

16 First I ask for a show of hands
17 to see how many people are interested in
18 speaking so we can determine if any time
19 limits may be needed. Thank you.

20 Because there are so many people
21 who want to speak, I'm going to ask everyone
22 to limit their comments to three minutes, no
23 more. At the time we're going to set a timer.
24 At the end of the three minutes the timer will



1 go off.

2 If you have something in writing
3 that you haven't yet had a chance to submit,
4 you can leave with us and the court reporter
5 will incorporate it into the record and your
6 statements will be in the record whole,
7 exactly as you had intended.

8 At this point we will accept
9 comments from any representatives of the
10 school.

11 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you. Good
12 evening. My name is Ted Williams. I'm the
13 president of Delaware STEM Academy, but this
14 evening I'm here not in that role but also in
15 the role as president of Landmark Science &
16 Engineering, a local consulting engineering
17 firm in the state of Delaware.

18 I wanted to comment and urge
19 everybody to be able to help support us as we
20 take the school forward. I think we're very
21 confident we will be able to meet our goals
22 both for our number of students and the
23 financial viability of the school.

24 This is extremely important to



1 Delaware, to Delaware businesses, to Delaware
2 children, to have the Delaware STEM Academy.
3 The jobs that are needed today that are
4 available today for individuals are all STEM
5 related.

6 And having a project-based
7 learning system academy like the Delaware STEM
8 Academy is going to be able to train the
9 students that will be able to go directly into
10 the work force or continue on to a community
11 college or four-year school to be able to fill
12 those jobs that we have today and in the
13 future.

14 The Delaware STEM Academy has
15 been diligently working on its enrollment, as
16 I said at our meeting with the Charter
17 Accountability Committee last week, and we
18 believe that we will be able to meet those
19 numbers and are continually working hard on
20 the marketing of the school. And I thank you
21 very much.

22 MS. HICKEY: I just want to point
23 out to everybody that we have a court reporter
24 up here, and she is going to be diligently



1 working and taking down everything that you
2 say, so you have to be a little bit slow maybe
3 in your speech so that she has the opportunity
4 to do that. Thanks.

5 MS. NAGOURNEY: Next?

6 MS. WICKS: Good evening. I'm a
7 member of the Delaware STEM Academy Board of
8 Directors, and I'm here tonight to express my
9 support for the opening of this school in
10 September. I am one of 11 active board
11 members who are passionately and actively
12 involved in launching this new high school.

13 I'm also a Delaware licensed
14 civil engineer who has spent the last 33 years
15 working in the public and private sectors
16 specifically in the area of transportation.

17 I have seen the growing demand,
18 the growing need for technically educated
19 employees for all aspects of planning, design,
20 and construction-related jobs in Delaware and
21 the Mid-Atlantic region.

22 The work force today not only
23 needs to have critical technical skills but
24 also critical thinking, ability to collaborate



1 with others and work in teams as well as
2 effective communication skills.

3 The vision of the Delaware STEM
4 Academy is to create a learning environment
5 that prepares its students to meet these work
6 force needs through an exciting project-based
7 learning approach through the New Tech Network
8 platform.

9 We believe using the STEM
10 integrated projects will enable our students
11 to learn the State's core curriculum in a
12 manner that meets all developmental levels.
13 As members of the business community, we are
14 passionate about the benefits to each student
15 whether they move directly into the work force
16 from high school or on to higher education.

17 But being passionate isn't enough
18 to make a school successful. We need to have
19 adequate enrollment numbers to meet the
20 expectations of our charter.

21 We are aggressively marketing our
22 school through a digital marketing campaign,
23 outreaching to local community groups,
24 networking with student organizations such as



1 the Boy and Girl Scouts and Boys & Girls Club
2 and the Police Athletic Leagues, and engaging
3 our parents and students.

4 We also value the opportunity
5 that this public process provides to show the
6 level of commitment from our parents and
7 business community through their testimonials
8 and letters of support.

9 As business leaders, our board
10 appreciates the importance of the formal
11 review process. Educating students should not
12 be taken lightly as it is a huge
13 responsibility.

14 We also understand the importance
15 of providing a high-quality learning
16 environment to an underserved population with
17 regards to STEM-related career pathways. We
18 will keep our focus on this mission while we
19 work with the CSAC committee to address any
20 outstanding concerns or issues over the next
21 few weeks.

22 We are confident in our ability
23 to increase our enrollment as we continue our
24 efforts to prepare for the successful opening



1 of the Delaware STEM Academy in September.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. HICKEY: Thank you. If you
4 can just identify yourself for the record,
5 that would be great.

6 MS. WICKS: Carolann Wicks.

7 MS. HICKEY: Thank you.

8 DR. RAGONE: On behalf of myself,
9 Dr. Anthony S. Ragone, I'm an engineering lead
10 investigator at DuPont Engineering
11 Technologies and a member of the Delaware STEM
12 board, so I am writing this in support of this
13 school.

14 The need for STEM high schooling
15 is critical in our rapidly changing natural,
16 educational, and business environments.
17 Businesses and communities are increasingly
18 aware of and active around biosciences and
19 environmental engineering to combat global
20 climate change and provide food and shelter to
21 our world why sustaining natural resources.
22 An education that fosters the capability to
23 meet these demands is needed now.

24 Delaware has been my home for the



1 majority of my life now and treated me well,
2 so I want to give back to its citizens and
3 environment in meaningful ways. I think the
4 STEM Academy will deliver this.

5 And over the past 30 years and
6 during my 34-year DuPont career, objective
7 educational performance measures clearly
8 indicate that U.S. educational competitiveness
9 has declined markedly in all categories,
10 especially in math and science, compared with
11 other key First World nations.

12 Even though Delaware has been
13 relatively competitive within the U.S., we
14 will need to deliver a higher quality
15 education to meet the coming enormous
16 environmental needs and business demands for
17 an increasingly skilled and adaptive and
18 competitive work force.

19 We need to up our game and very
20 soon so our work force can help meet the
21 challenges faced by our citizens, governments,
22 and businesses.

23 Let me just kind of shorten this
24 up a little bit.



1 Our school will foster the STEM
2 skills needed to meet these shared challenges.
3 One key is improved teamwork. Our STEM
4 Academy will prepare students for this
5 changing world and its challenges through the
6 New Tech Network project-based learning
7 system.

8 It will deliver the skills to
9 advance the reality of and need for effective
10 workplace teamwork. This will help the
11 students focus together on deliverables, not
12 just grades, but deliverables that have
13 measurable impact and also to deliver results
14 quicker.

15 For instance, we plan a
16 greenhouse project to learn how to grow edible
17 plants as well as a solar panel project to
18 help drive sustainable energy solutions and
19 possibly even lower the energy bill of our
20 school, all the while meeting educational
21 standards.

22 The teams will use basics of math
23 and engineering to, for instance, build a
24 functional greenhouse with supplies from



1 DuPont, for instance, as well as employ
2 biophysical and chemical principles to grow
3 the plants successful in a sustainable
4 regulation of nutrient and water content.

5 You might say this is a direct
6 application of Avogadro's number to increase
7 greenhouse avocados numbers.

8 In summary, my travels in DuPont
9 have been worldwide, and these same lessons
10 apply everywhere, teamwork, project-based
11 learning, and so on, and in varying degrees.
12 We need to equip the next generation with an
13 education to derive the solutions to and thus
14 mitigate the problems we have created through
15 a new level of problem solving.

16 A STEM education and
17 project-based learning skills will be
18 critical, but the basics in terms of generous,
19 skilled teachers, scientists, and engineers
20 are available now. As Isaac Newton once said,
21 we stand on the shoulders of giants to see the
22 future. We also rely on those we live with
23 now to help achieve that vision.

24 Thank you very much.



1 MR. ELLIMAN: I'm Wills Elliman,
2 and I'm in real estate. And I would just like
3 to encourage those that are making the
4 decisions to watch a documentary called Most
5 Likely to Succeed. It's about project-based
6 learning in a school in California.
7 Phenomenal documentary well worth watching.
8 And please watch it before you make your
9 decision. Most Likely to Succeed. Thank you.

10 MR. PIANE: My name is Bob Piane
11 Jr. Can I make a robot? That's what one of
12 the young prospective students said at the
13 library in Bear when I went to go see the
14 STEM's presentation. And he asked it a couple
15 times. And the principal looked down and
16 said, "Yeah, you can make a robot."

17 And he said, "But can I really,
18 really make a robot, like, in school?"

19 And she said, "Yeah. Yeah, you
20 can really do projects like that. We do
21 things like that in the school. It's
22 different."

23 And he's, like, "Wow." So I'm
24 going to start off with that.



1 I wrote down some things so I
2 don't forget. This is really important to me,
3 this school.

4 It's no secret that the
5 highest-paying jobs coming out of college are
6 in the science and technology and engineering
7 and mathematics fields. I did a little
8 research, popped right up, there they are.
9 Top from 50 grand right up, nothing else even
10 compared, and they all went down below 50,000.
11 And they do move up pretty quickly, from what
12 I gather.

13 Now, why? They're hard to get
14 and in bigger demand, obviously. Companies
15 that require these skills look to states that
16 not only show they support such skills but
17 invest in the development of a trained labor
18 pool. That's no secret there.

19 Now, I think you'll agree the
20 types of education, this type, can begin in
21 the ninth and tenth grade. I think it needs
22 to be driven down as low as possible. So this
23 type of an investment would be a great one in
24 the future of our kids and in the state of



1 Delaware, in my opinion.

2 Now, kids today are also of the
3 visual generation. We all see it in our kids.
4 You know, they can multitask unlike anything
5 we've ever done. I mean, you see them all the
6 time. They're on the iPhone, they're on this,
7 they're on the pad, they're looking at stuff,
8 they're touching things, they're doing stuff,
9 they're talking to friends, they're having a
10 conversation with people in the room around
11 them all at the same time. And that's
12 amazing.

13 Now, the old school I all went
14 to, we sat, we droned back and forth, we went
15 back. We had no idea what it applied to until
16 we found out in college or at a job somewhere
17 when we're 25. Well, that was all great back
18 then. But today, personally, I have
19 experience where there's a much better way.

20 MS. HICKEY: One minute left.

21 MR. PIANE: Excuse me?

22 MS. HICKEY: One minute left.

23 MR. PIANE: Oh, God. All right.

24 The STEM education is not for



1 that -- it's for today's generation. How do I
2 know? Well, you can read about it, and I have
3 firsthand knowledge. When Tom Carper wanted
4 welfare to reform, Welfare to Work reform, he
5 asked businesses to come up with
6 welfare-to-work training concepts.

7 Piane Caterers, you might know
8 our family. I was also in product development
9 as well after that. But we developed a
10 program that won national awards as well as
11 the Sheraton. We were with them. Our little
12 company developed the concept of hands-on
13 training, real world while you learn bookwork.

14 So the same day we did real-world
15 work in the kitchen on filet mignons and
16 things they could never touch until the second
17 and third year in culinary school, and we did
18 that right there day one.

19 Well, within 12 weeks we
20 developed more well-rounded, better
21 career-type chefs and people in the industry
22 that also had gone on field trips and saw the
23 expanse of the culinary world, not just their
24 first job in a kitchen slinging hash. It



1 opened them up.

2 Today, I meet those people today
3 in the state and they still work in the career
4 with great-paying jobs. So hands on works.

5 Now, I also have 12 patents -- 14
6 patents, actually -- I just got two more -- in
7 equipment design manufacturing. I had to
8 outsource this to Nebraska because I couldn't
9 find the labor pool in Delaware. Creating
10 hundreds of jobs, sold to 14 countries around
11 the world for a 12-year period from 2000
12 to 2012 when the recession took us out, which
13 was a shame.

14 But for that 12 years we created
15 hundreds of jobs for another state. Why?
16 What's wrong with that picture? Personally,
17 we need the labor pool, we need it here, and
18 we need it as soon as possible. Please
19 support the STEM Academy. I think this is the
20 answer to that question. Thank you very much.

21 MS. NAGOURNEY: The next speaker,
22 please come forward. If anyone has not yet
23 signed in, please come forward and do so.
24 Even if you're not planning to speak, we want



1 an accurate record of everyone who is here.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. KITA: My name is Natalie
4 Kita, K-i-t-a, and I am a parent of a student
5 who is enrolled to start the ninth grade at
6 the STEM Academy. And I wasn't planning on
7 speaking tonight, but this is important to me,
8 so I did want to say something.

9 One of my favorite quotes is if
10 you judge a fish by its ability to climb a
11 tree, it will spend its entire life believing
12 that it's stupid.

13 My son is a fish, and the
14 traditional education system, while he gets by
15 and he does okay, all of his teachers tell me
16 he thinks differently from the other students.
17 They tell me he actually thinks on a higher
18 level, but he's not served by the way we have
19 to teach him here.

20 My son is a fish, and they're
21 trying to teach him to get by in life by
22 climbing a tree. And it's just not -- it's
23 not doing as well as it could for him, and I
24 know that he's not the only student out there



1 like that.

2 I know that when he participates
3 in projects in his existing classes he gets
4 great grades because he's engaged, he's not
5 being forced to sit still and be in a box and
6 listen without interacting. And I know that a
7 constant environment like that would help him
8 to excel. And I know that there are a lot of
9 other students, especially boys.

10 I did really well in traditional
11 learning. I'm a girl. I sat still. I raised
12 my hand. I got straight A's. Wasn't hard for
13 me. It's hard for him, and I think it's hard
14 for a lot of students, especially boys, at
15 least that's my experience.

16 And this is really important to
17 us. Having this school is very important to
18 me. It's very important to him. He's excited
19 about school for the first time in a very long
20 time, the idea of going to the STEM Academy.
21 So that's really all I wanted to say more on a
22 personal note than anything.

23 MS. NAGOURNEY: Next?

24 MR. OSBORNE: Hi. My name is



1 Will Osborne. I'm also a prospective parent
2 of a child going into ninth grade. I have
3 three kids.

4 My oldest went through the
5 standard school system, wasn't working out.
6 We opted to go to a vo-tech school as an
7 option for her to have some sort of
8 possibilities for a career. She's a licensed
9 CNA, and she barely has the skills necessary
10 to really achieve in life through the
11 traditional school system.

12 My other two, one is ready to go
13 to Delaware STEM Academy. The other one will
14 be following in two years. This is what they
15 need.

16 I had the luxury of having been
17 involved with the FAME program as a kid. It
18 was part-time. It was a good experience. I
19 didn't really know what I was doing. I didn't
20 know why I was there until I grew up.

21 When I became an adult I realized
22 everything I learned at FAME taught me
23 everything I need to know to be a project
24 manager today as opposed to all the stuff that



1 I learned when I went to Shue and when I went
2 to Newark High School.

3 If I had a program like this as a
4 kid, I'd probably be running my own company
5 right now. I'd probably be doing so many more
6 amazing things than I'm doing now, even though
7 I love my job.

8 But our kids need something. My
9 kids need something. They need something more
10 than just going to school, wondering if
11 there's going to be a fight the next day,
12 getting on a bus and wondering which kid is
13 going to be throwing markers and the bus
14 driver has to pull over and wait for the
15 police to pull off unruly kids.

16 Smart kids, kids that want to be
17 bright, kids that are bright, kids that have
18 that ability, they're not worried about all
19 that stupid stuff. They're going to be there
20 to do a great job. They're going to learn,
21 and they're going to excel. They are our
22 future.

23 They're the ones who are going to
24 be creating the next social media platform out



1 there. They're the ones who are going to be
2 working in all different levels of
3 engineering, are great coders. You want an
4 app for something? They're going to make it.
5 It's not us.

6 So, just like everyone else,
7 please say yes. Whatever you need to do, make
8 this happen. I'm on board. I've told them
9 that at every single event I've been to, and I
10 will keep telling them that until the day my
11 kid walks into their school. Thank you.

12 JAMES WALSH: Hello. My name is
13 James Walsh. I currently go to H.B. duPont
14 Middle School. I'm 14. I'm enrolled to go to
15 Delaware STEM Academy.

16 And the reason I believe the
17 school should be opened is I'm one of the
18 students who likes to try their own things,
19 but the teacher tells them to follow the
20 rules, and they don't really want to listen.

21 What this school would be doing
22 for us is they would allow us to build upon
23 our own ideas and to try new things and do it
24 differently without having to follow the book



1 rules. They would allow us to create our own
2 rules in which we would be able to try more,
3 do more, and experience more than just the
4 classroom basic set.

5 I know a few kids in my school
6 who also do this. And for me in seventh grade
7 when we had to follow the teacher's rules on
8 when we were building, lots of kids wanted to
9 do different things.

10 I myself wanted to see if I can
11 make a different type of tower than what we
12 were building. I wanted to see if I can make
13 like a hybrid bridge. Rather than just making
14 an arc, probably, like, mix an arc and a truss
15 to make a more stable, stronger bridge.

16 I know that kids like me are also
17 having a tough time doing that, and they're
18 also being shut out by teachers. And this
19 school will help us to be able to do that and
20 put our ideas in motion.

21 MR. WALSH: My name is James
22 Anthony Walsh. You just heard my son speak.
23 And I just made the decision every single
24 thing that I had planned on saying I'm



1 throwing out the window because, looking at my
2 son up here, all I have to say is Delaware
3 STEM Academy has already made a difference and
4 it hasn't even opened the doors. And it is
5 beyond -- I'm sorry. It is not a nice idea.
6 It's not something that would be swell to
7 have. It's something that's needed.

8 And to see my son excited about
9 school, to see how heartbroken when he heard
10 that this review even needed to happen, and
11 this is a kid who does the snow dance every
12 winter night.

13 And as a father, it is something
14 that I look at and I see my son will be
15 successful in this and so many other sons and
16 daughters out there also. I strongly,
17 strongly feel that, again, this isn't
18 something that would be nice to have. It's
19 something we need. Thank you.

20 MS. BRITTINGHAM: Hi. I'm Gail
21 Brittingham, and I am the guardian of a child
22 who is enrolled, my nephew, and we think an
23 alternative education that STEM will give will
24 be wonderful.



1 Kids will get to think out of the
2 box so that they will know what can be done in
3 the future, not just what we have to do, but
4 the deliverables will be done and received in
5 a different way. They can create everything
6 that's needed for the future generations.
7 This is what we need. Please approve us.

8 MR. HEISLER: Good evening. My
9 name is Jerome Heisler. I'm a member of board
10 of Delaware STEM.

11 Thank you, James, for speaking
12 tonight. I appreciated your words.

13 And all of the other parents,
14 thank you.

15 Once you stretch a mind beyond
16 its original size, it never goes back. And
17 STEM is going to try to stretch the minds of
18 children, students, young students, in many
19 different ways.

20 But the reason we're here tonight
21 is because we didn't meet a certain threshold
22 level required in our charter. But we
23 shouldn't be scared of that, and there's a lot
24 of reasons we shouldn't be scared of that.



1 But the most important reason is,
2 whether we're 105 or 150 students or 200 or
3 250, we will make the school operate. We can
4 prove that financially. We can prove that
5 through the student and faculty leadership
6 that we're going to have and through the
7 administrative efforts of Ted, Carolann, and
8 several other people who are involved.

9 We have a program. We have a
10 plan. And the great thing is we can make it
11 work at any student enrollment level, and we
12 will make it work in any student enrollment
13 level. So in hearing the comments tonight, we
14 shouldn't be scared of what the student
15 enrollment level ends up at. We may not know
16 that until September 30th, and it can
17 fluctuate up and down.

18 But we're prepared, and we know
19 in our heart, our spirit, and our mind that we
20 will be able to address the issues that come
21 forward to us. And we have a plan, and we've
22 done that plan at different enrollment levels,
23 as the board saw the other day. So we're
24 confident, highly confident that it will work.



1 And if we have to adjust, we'll make the
2 proper adjustments.

3 I was reading a book, a textbook
4 this weekend on special education. And the
5 one thing that I learned from it -- I've
6 learned it before, but it came out really well
7 in this book, that the purpose of special
8 education, which this is not a special
9 education school, but even will have special
10 education students there, is that it's closing
11 the gap of potential, and that potential is
12 where the person's operating at versus what
13 they could operate at.

14 In this case, there are a lot of
15 students who want to come to Delaware STEM who
16 would like to be operating at a different
17 level, being involved and stimulated by
18 different aspects of science, technology,
19 engineering, and math.

20 And we have that capability to do
21 that there, to really stimulate students to
22 make sure they can operate at the best and
23 really explore different avenues of education
24 through project-based learning as well as



1 explore themselves and learn more.

2 Thank you very much.

3 MS. NAGOURNEY: Would anyone else
4 like to speak?

5 MR. TAYLOR: Good evening. My
6 name is Brett Taylor, and I am Executive
7 Director for the Delaware STEM Academy.

8 First of all, I want to thank the
9 members of the Charter School Accountability
10 Committee for the opportunity to speak with
11 you tonight.

12 I would also like to thank the
13 CSAC for the opportunity for the academy to
14 outline its vision, provide details on the
15 implementation of the school, and demonstrate
16 the public support for the school.

17 I would also like to thank the
18 board of directors for the academy and
19 Ms. Laura Jennice, our principal, for the hard
20 work in reaching this point in the process.

21 When we began this journey four
22 years ago, it was based on two very simple
23 premises, first, to create a school where
24 science, technology, engineering, and math



1 could be taught in an innovative project-based
2 way and make it accessible to students, many
3 of which previously did not have access to
4 this type of education.

5 Number two was to provide
6 Delaware industries with a skilled and
7 talented work force to fill much-needed STEM
8 jobs. And after four years, the academy is so
9 close to fulfilling this dream, so close.

10 We recognize that there is
11 uncertainty in the development of a charter
12 school. It's hard work. Market conditions,
13 previous closures, parent uncertainty, and
14 financial commitments all have impacts.
15 However, we hope that when this process is
16 concluded, your questions will be answered and
17 you will provide us with approval to move
18 forward.

19 We feel confident that the two
20 main issues of concern, enrollment and
21 financial viability, can be remedied through
22 our marketing efforts and financial oversight
23 by our dedicated board, our leadership, and
24 our partners.



1 And together with the Department
2 of Education -- and we mean this truly, we
3 want to be partners with you guys. With the
4 Department of Education we can succeed in
5 opening the school by September 2016.

6 We've remained true to our
7 original charter intent, to provide an
8 educational opportunity for students wanting
9 to learn STEM, using a project-based learning
10 environment, keeping an open-enrollment
11 school, and seeking diversity in the student
12 population and in a geographic area that was
13 educationally underserved.

14 In the final analysis, though,
15 when all the budgets are prepared and the
16 facilities are in place and the students are
17 enrolled, all these challenges are solvable
18 with our talented team. The decision comes
19 down to what is good for the students.

20 The school will provide
21 opportunities for students that otherwise mean
22 they may not have, and we'll be growing a
23 skilled work force and college-ready students
24 for Delaware's tomorrow.



1 If we provide a good product
2 where students feel safe and engaged, parents
3 feel that their students are getting a quality
4 education, and the school is properly
5 operated, the future will be bright.

6 I urge the CSAC to allow us to
7 continue to move forward with the opening of
8 the academy in September. We are committed.
9 I am definitely personally committed to
10 ensuring the success of the academy, and we
11 will work with the Department of Education to
12 fully realize this vision. We hope that you
13 will be a partner in this endeavor.

14 Thank you very much.

15 MS. NAGOURNEY: Is there anyone
16 else who wishes to speak?

17 If there is no one else who
18 wishes to speak, we will close the hearing.
19 Thank you so much for -- I'm sorry. We have
20 one more.

21 MR. MILLMAN: David Millman,
22 M-i-l-l-m-a-n.

23 I wasn't going to speak. I don't
24 have a child that's enrolled in Delaware STEM,



1 but I work for Staples, and Delaware Charter
2 School Network is one of my customers.

3 They invited me to an event --
4 and I just want to share this story. They
5 invited me to an event that they had with all
6 the schools there. I brought my son. He's 13
7 years old. Drug him out of bed at 7:30 in the
8 morning. You know that on a Saturday that's
9 not really good for a 13-year-old. So he was
10 miserable.

11 And we went through, talked to --
12 he lives in Jersey, so he won't be going to
13 school in Delaware, but we went through all
14 the schools and met with my customers to help
15 support them. The one school that just
16 sparked him was the Delaware STEM. The
17 principal was there, and they just engaged in
18 everything.

19 It was just incredible how he
20 just walked out of there and he said, "I had
21 fun." And I'm just, like, wow. Of all the
22 schools we went through -- we went through
23 every single one talking to people and stuff
24 like that.



1 So if they can bring passion to
2 him on a Saturday, I can't imagine what the
3 school can do for other children.

4 And the one thing too is when I
5 talked to my client the next -- on Monday to
6 see how it went, she goes, "What did you
7 think?"

8 I was, like, Delaware STEM blew
9 me away. They were just so engaged with my
10 son, asking questions. Even when I said my
11 son lives in Jersey, he won't be going to
12 school here, they still engaged and had
13 passion.

14 So I just wanted to share that
15 story. Thank you.

16 MS. NAGOURNEY: Is there anyone
17 else who wants to speak? Going once. Going
18 twice. If not, this hearing is now closed.
19 Thank you all for participating today. The
20 Secretary will consider your comments as part
21 of the decision-making process, and your
22 comments will also be available for the State
23 Board to consider. Have a good evening.

24 (Hearing concluded at 6:44 p.m.)



1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2
3 I, SUSAN ARNOLD YODER, Registered
4 Professional Reporter and Notary Public, do
5 hereby certify that the foregoing record,
6 pages 1 through 34 inclusive, is a true and
7 accurate transcript of my stenographic notes
8 taken on May 16, 2016, in the above-captioned
9 matter.

10 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
11 my hand and seal this 19th day of May, 2016,
12 at Wilmington.

13
14
15
16 *Susan A. Yoder*
17

SUSAN ARNOLD YODER, RPR

19
20
21
22
23
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