

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

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*Public Hearing*  
*June 7, 2016*

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DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
PUBLIC MEETING  
DELAWARE STEM ACADEMY

Public Meeting of the Department of Education, taken pursuant to notice at the Carvel State Office Building, 820 North French Street, Second Floor Auditorium, beginning at 5:06 p.m. on Tuesday, June 7, 2016, before Jennifer M. Guy, Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public.

APPEARANCES:

CATHERINE HICKEY, ESQ.

DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

820 North French Street

Wilmington, Delaware 19801

JENNIFER NAGOURNEY

CHARTER OFFICE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DONNA JOHNSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 5

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



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 with the  
5 Delaware Department of Education, and I've  
6 been appointed by the Secretary of Education  
7 to conduct this public hearing.

8 Delaware STEM was placed on  
9 formal review by the Delaware Department of  
10 Education with the consent of the State Board  
11 of Education. As required by law, the matter  
12 was referred to the Charter School  
13 Accountability Committee. This joint public  
14 hearing is being held by the Department of  
15 Education and the State Board of Education to  
16 assist in the decision of whether the criteria  
17 set forth for remedial action in the Delaware  
18 Code have been satisfied. This hearing gives  
19 the public an opportunity to provide comment.  
20 I will now ask the others with me to introduce  
21 themselves.

22 MS. HICKEY: Good evening. My  
23 name is Catherine Hickey, I'm a Deputy  
24 Attorney General with the Delaware Department



1 of Justice, and I'm here this evening serving  
2 as counsel to the hearing officer.

3 MS. NAGOURNEY: I would like the  
4 record to reflect the notice of the time,  
5 date, and place of today's hearing was  
6 published in the News Journal and the Delaware  
7 State News. In addition, notice was published  
8 at the Charter School Accountability  
9 Committee's official place of business, at the  
10 Department of Education's official website,  
11 and on the state public meeting calendar on  
12 the state's official website. Further, the  
13 school was personally notified of the time,  
14 date, and place of today's public hearing.

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



1 before this public hearing.

2 We'll proceed in the following  
3 manner. First we'll hear from any  
4 representatives of the charter who wish to  
5 comment, then we'll take comments from anyone  
6 else who desires to speak. I had a sign-up  
7 sheet in the front. I see we've had a few new  
8 people come in; we'd ask them to please come  
9 up and sign in on the other sign-in sheet so  
10 they can be accounted and an accurate record  
11 can be made. Thank you.

12 May I see a show of hands of all  
13 those who plan to speak? Since we do have a  
14 number of speakers, we will be sticking with a  
15 three-minute limit for each speaker. We ask  
16 you to please use that time as best you can.  
17 I do reserve the right to limit comment that  
18 is clearly repetitive or cumulative.

19 At this point, we will accept  
20 comments from the representatives of the  
21 school.

22 MR. DRIGGS: I guess I got  
23 elected to go first. Good afternoon. My name  
24 is Charles Driggs. I actually serve with the



1 board of directors at the Delaware STEM  
2 Academy. I take the office of the secretary  
3 of the board, and I also serve on several  
4 committees.

5 I stand before you to add my  
6 support for the continuation of the launch of  
7 the Delaware STEM Academy. I am nominally a  
8 retired person, but I was asked three years  
9 ago whether I could help to launch this high  
10 school that is designed to provide 9th through  
11 12th graders in Delaware a stronger STEM  
12 education.

13 This is an education that  
14 reflects the needs of employers which they are  
15 seeking but only finding among too few of the  
16 graduates of Delaware high schools. Too  
17 often, employers are seeing applicants who  
18 took the appropriate classes but have little  
19 understanding of or no memory of the  
20 principles that they were supposedly taught.  
21 I already talked about this during the  
22 original charter application and review  
23 hearings, so I won't go into great detail  
24 here.



1                   I think the key point is that  
2                   the weaknesses of the graduates in this region  
3                   in regards to science, math, and other skills  
4                   that employers need in prospective candidates  
5                   is a significant issue. As you should already  
6                   know from the Delaware STEM Academy's charter  
7                   application, the school is designed to address  
8                   that problem with the instructional format  
9                   that has already been successfully employed in  
10                  over 200 schools in the United States.

11                  Major attraction to this school  
12                  design in my view is the more hands-on  
13                  approach for immersing the students in real  
14                  life issues. The team projects that projects  
15                  that form the basis for learning key  
16                  principles and facts, draw in the elements of  
17                  history, social needs, scientific advancement,  
18                  mathematics developments, literature, and the  
19                  ethical and aesthetic considerations of our  
20                  society. It is different than traditional  
21                  instruction. These elements are the basis of  
22                  high school curriculums in Delaware and all  
23                  other states, but the emphasis on providing a  
24                  more effective learning environment for those



1 in a thriving environment that relates the  
2 subject matter to real life issues is absent  
3 in too many of our schools.

4                   Personally, I might have  
5 accomplished more in high school if I had gone  
6 to a school with Delaware STEM Academy's  
7 design. I was not considered a great high  
8 school student because I didn't do the  
9 homework. I didn't need to. I could listen  
10 to the class, I could absorb the instruction,  
11 I could perform the task very well. I didn't  
12 feel it was important to do homework.

13                   That put me in an awkward place,  
14 because when I went to seek a position in  
15 Cornell University as an engineering student,  
16 I was told there was no way in the world I was  
17 going to get in. I didn't do my homework.  
18 But the recruiter told me a different approach  
19 I could take, and I was allowed to pursue  
20 engineering and thrived there in it.

21                   I was never enamored with  
22 college studies, but I did go on and take a  
23 master's in business administration, focused  
24 on project development, and also started a



1 doctorate in finance and economics at the  
2 University of Delaware. I quit that because  
3 the school's policy was going to force me to  
4 lose my home. None of the experiences that I  
5 have gone through would have even become an  
6 opportunity for somebody that couldn't  
7 remember what they were doing in class.

8                   So while my experience is  
9 unusual, I think it goes to the point that  
10 young people need to be challenged to really  
11 learn the material. And for many of our  
12 students' applicants, we find that they are  
13 bored, or in some cases, they just seek more  
14 challenge than what we give. There's no doubt  
15 that some students already have great skills  
16 and we graduate great students, there just  
17 aren't enough of them in Delaware, and it  
18 appears that the schools aren't cutting the  
19 muster.

20                   MS. NAGOURNEY: Sir, we're at  
21 time. If you'd like to turn in your comments,  
22 we'll add them to the record.

23                   MR. DRIGGS: I'll give you a  
24 written copy. There's obviously a lot more



1 than what I've said.

2 MS. NAGOURNEY: Anyone new who  
3 has joined us, we ask you to sign in so an  
4 accurate record can be made of what is said,  
5 whether or not you'd like to speak. We'd like  
6 to have everyone captured in the sign-in  
7 sheet. And we'd invite our next speaker to  
8 come forward.

9 MS. YOUNG: Good evening, I'm  
10 Marian Young, and I'm the president of  
11 Brightfields Incorporated, which is an  
12 environmental consulting firm here in  
13 Wilmington. As an employer of 40 scientists,  
14 engineers, and technicians, I'm on the lookout  
15 for candidates to hire who have an interest in  
16 science and engineering from an early age.  
17 Everybody that I bring in to talk to me, I ask  
18 them to start from the very beginning. I want  
19 to hear in grammar school what were they  
20 interested in, what were their hobbies, did  
21 they pursue those hobbies and interests  
22 throughout their whole career.

23 And I can see the groups  
24 separate into two. The first one says, oh, I



1 was always interested in science or  
2 engineering or mechanics or whatever ever  
3 since an early age, and when I was a child, I  
4 liked to take things apart or I liked to learn  
5 about astronomy or I liked to walk in the  
6 woods, or whatever it was. Versus the kids  
7 that say, well, I went into college, I didn't  
8 know what I wanted to do, and in my sophomore  
9 year, I took an elective, it was a science,  
10 and I was interested in it, and so now I got  
11 an degree in environmental science.

12 I'm going to hire the first  
13 group without question. Why is that? Because  
14 they have a sincere curiosity about how the  
15 world works and how to fix things that are  
16 more difficult than the normal person sees.

17 So I have, like I said, 40  
18 employees that are all technical in science  
19 and engineering. And I work really hard, and  
20 I have our managers work really hard to teach  
21 them how to be really good environmental  
22 consultants. Just because they have a college  
23 degree doesn't mean they know much about it,  
24 but after ten years or so, they're really,



1 really good.

2                   So what I want to do with this  
3 school is to take that teaching and bring it  
4 down into the high school level. Certainly, I  
5 know that the kids are ready for it, because I  
6 have nieces and nephews who are the same way,  
7 they're older now, they're going no college or  
8 graduating from college. But when they were  
9 in 6th grade, they had a resume and they were  
10 talking about interests, and we were coaching  
11 them in our family to explore their interests  
12 in summer programs and in clubs and research  
13 sites on the web so they can learn what they  
14 liked and didn't like, and then they could  
15 pursue their interests in high school and in  
16 college.

17                   To me, that is what these kids  
18 need. So it's not just a matter of bringing  
19 them into a school and teaching them the  
20 regular curriculum, it's asking each child  
21 what are you interested in, let us figure out  
22 how to pursue those interests and change those  
23 interests however you feel is best and grow  
24 that child as a whole child. That is what I



1 believe the Delaware STEM Academy brings, is a  
2 personalized education for each child.

3 MS. NAGOURNEY: Before you  
4 begin, we're being joined by Donna Johnson,  
5 the Executive Direct of the State Board of  
6 Education.

7 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you. Once  
8 again, I'm Ted Williams, I'm the president of  
9 the Board of Delaware STEM Academy, from  
10 Landmark Science and Engineering, and I'm here  
11 once again to show our support and my support  
12 for the Delaware STEM Academy CAD me.

13 We believe this school is going  
14 to be what is necessary for the students in  
15 New Castle County to be able to be successful  
16 in a STEM education. We're providing  
17 opportunities for students throughout the  
18 county, but also within our target enrollment  
19 area, which is the Route 9/13 corridor.  
20 Providing students of that area an opportunity  
21 for a choice that they do not currently have,  
22 to be able to go to a charter school that's  
23 going to provide them the education that they  
24 are looking for.



1                   As you remember from our last  
2 public hearing that was held here, we had one  
3 of our students, enrolled students stand up  
4 here in front of you and explain why he wanted  
5 to be at Delaware STEM Academy. This is from  
6 a student whose father said he never would be  
7 willing to speak in public, it was an 8th  
8 grade boy, ever speak in public. And his  
9 enthusiasm, not even taken a first class under  
10 the project-based learning, which is the base  
11 of our education at Delaware STEM Academy, he  
12 was already showing that enthusiasm in his  
13 ability to come up here and speak to the  
14 parents and folks at the meeting to show his  
15 support for the school.

16                   So once again, I urge to you  
17 support the opening of the Delaware STEM  
18 Academy. Let us open, provide the educational  
19 opportunities to the students in New Castle  
20 County they rightfully so deserve. And also,  
21 like I said, the students in our targeted  
22 enrollment area, the Route 9/13 corridor,  
23 where they do not have those opportunities  
24 today. Thank you.



1 MS. NAGOURNEY: The next speaker  
2 can come forward.

3 MR. GENDLER: Good afternoon, my  
4 name is Steve Gendler; I'm the real estate  
5 representative for Delaware STEM Academy. We  
6 worked for two years to make sure that we had  
7 the proper facilities to be ready for the  
8 school's opening.

9 And I just want to say that my  
10 professional career has been about 95 percent  
11 working with schools and school districts in  
12 New Jersey and Pennsylvania and in Delaware,  
13 from startups to very mature school districts.  
14 And I have to say that from the moment I met  
15 Delaware STEM Academy and their board, Ted,  
16 Charlie, and the others, and Brad Taylor, what  
17 has been just overwhelmingly evident is they  
18 are 100 percent a first-class organization.  
19 They've tried to do everything right. It's  
20 all about the students and what the student  
21 needs that have been voiced so articulately.

22 And we work with other STEM  
23 programs throughout the tri-state area.  
24 School districts are learning about them and



1 their power, but it's, you know, it is a  
2 shift, and it's not for everybody. And  
3 students should have this outlet within their  
4 choice mechanism. This is a first-class  
5 organization. They have a critical mass of  
6 students to launch the school, and I just  
7 encourage your support in allowing them to do  
8 so and to flourish for the students of  
9 Delaware. Thank you.

10 MS. NAGOURNEY: Thank you.

11 MR. GUSCHL: Hello, I'm Randy  
12 Guschl, I'm the executive director for the  
13 Delaware Foundation for Science and Math  
14 Education. And I know a few of the folks  
15 here, because a lot of us are advocating more  
16 STEM in the life of every child going to  
17 school, whether they become a four-year STEM  
18 graduate, a two-year STEM degree, or a  
19 certificate from high school which gets  
20 employment in a STEM field. STEM is 60  
21 percent of all the jobs in this country.

22 So the organization I'm part of  
23 started 20 years ago with an almost-forgotten  
24 project now called the Smithsonian project



1 which brought hands-on, inquiry-based sciences  
2 into the 12-8 classrooms which required  
3 systemic change. You can't simply say use a  
4 kit instead of a book, you have to have  
5 professional development, you have to have  
6 standards. You have to train the teachers on  
7 the kits, because you're teaching  
8 Socratically. But boy is it powerful. It's  
9 hands on. It's the way us chemists learned a  
10 long, long time ago. And Delaware did a great  
11 job. We brought, with a nice \$6 million grant  
12 from the NSF grant included, we brought  
13 Delaware up from below average in science to  
14 slightly above average, but it's talked out  
15 about throughout the nation as the Delaware  
16 model of knowing how to do all the things it  
17 takes to effectively improve science  
18 education, which brings along so much else.

19           So when I retired from DuPont  
20 three years ago, happily, after 40 years as an  
21 R & D director and many other things,  
22 including funding science education nationally  
23 for DuPont, I was on a lot of groups and was  
24 always on this foundation's board from the



1 beginning, and somebody tricked me into being  
2 the executive director. No, here I am,  
3 because I have a passion to have people  
4 highlight the good things going on in the  
5 state and have better cooperation with things  
6 that are going on, and to offer the kids in  
7 Delaware a variety of ways to learn STEM.

8           And we think this academy  
9 represents yet another unique way to bring the  
10 excitement to kids way back, grade school,  
11 middle school, wherever it is, and carry it in  
12 through the system so that they can use those  
13 skills.

14           I get one more minute. I just  
15 want to close on the fact that yesterday I  
16 visited the Serviam school, because we're  
17 really interested in different parts of the  
18 states where we want to see the pieces come  
19 together, as well. We think there's, like,  
20 six or eight schools there that are really  
21 going to help the greater 9 corridor, once the  
22 library is open, too. We think this school  
23 will be a very important part of the bigger  
24 picture. And it takes a while to get



1 something like this. Give it a little extra  
2 time. Let it go, let it go small; it's going  
3 to grow.

4 MR. RAGONE: Evening. I'm Andy  
5 Ragone, I'm with DuPont as a senior research  
6 scientist and also a board member of the STEM  
7 Academy. I'm here to lend my support to the  
8 STEM Academy, and also, to kind of bolster  
9 what Randy just said, if you can read this.

10 Indeed, this is being query.  
11 This is about experiments. This is about  
12 learning. This is about problem-solving,  
13 meeting the challenges of today's natural  
14 world in our business environment and our  
15 technical needs. We need STEM for oh-so-many  
16 reasons, but primarily with climate change,  
17 with a huge expanding population, so on, STEM  
18 is needed now more than ever.

19 The natural, educational, and  
20 business challenges that require STEM skills  
21 and also the social sciences to meet these  
22 demands cannot come soon enough. Our school  
23 will rely on skilled businesspeople, all who  
24 I've gotten to know and really enjoyed working



1 with the last two years, as well as science  
2 and education professionals to pitch in and to  
3 volunteer time.

4 I wanted to make note that I am  
5 the technical advisory group leader, and we  
6 will rely heavily on volunteer efforts to  
7 really get this program going. That is an  
8 open invitation to those of you who are  
9 interested in working with Delaware STEM  
10 Academy. Thank you very much.

11 MS. NAGOURNEY: Next person,  
12 please come forward. No order; it's first  
13 come, first serve.

14 MS. LACHTER: Hi, my name is Joy  
15 Lachter. I am a mom. I have nothing to do  
16 with the business, but when I heard about STEM  
17 Academy, oh, my God, my heart pumped. It's a  
18 school. I went there at the first meeting,  
19 and it was like a Montessori school for  
20 grownups. It was so exciting. I was like,  
21 this is the school for my son. I am not used  
22 to this thing; I'm shaking.

23 But I just want to let you know  
24 that I had my two kids, my first one is 23, my



1 son just graduated from Talley Middle School,  
2 and they both went to Montessori school, and  
3 that was the best start I could give to them.  
4 And I really, really, really would like to see  
5 STEM growing and give them an opportunity to  
6 just -- I forget who told, this gentleman that  
7 was saying people can just practice what they  
8 are learning, and I think that's one of the  
9 most important lessons that any kids can  
10 learn. Thank you.

11 MR. JOHNSON: Hello, my name is  
12 Dan Johnson, and I'm currently retired. I  
13 spent a good part of my career with W.L. Gore  
14 Company in a leadership position, and in that  
15 position, I was fortunate enough to meet a lot  
16 of young people and be able to, some cases,  
17 hire them and have them be part of the vision  
18 of Gore.

19 And one of the things that was  
20 so important to us -- and I agree with you and  
21 your discussion -- was passion. There are  
22 people with different levels of skill you  
23 could see, but the passion that was within the  
24 young people that I talked to was usually what



1 made the difference. Because they really  
2 cared about science, problem-solving, other  
3 people, things like that.

4                   And what I've seen, because I've  
5 known Brett Taylor for a number of years, I  
6 knew him when he first started to conceive of  
7 STEM and what it could be and what it might  
8 be, and it almost -- this man is fantastic.  
9 He is sincere, he is passionate, he is  
10 dedicated. He's put his heart, soul, life  
11 into this thing happening. And not for Brett  
12 Taylor. He is such a humble person, he wants  
13 it for the kids.

14                   I am now primarily a  
15 grandfather, and I have young kids, and we're  
16 enjoying seeing them learn with their mother  
17 and my son-in-law, learn science and the  
18 excitement of it, and it's beautiful. And  
19 Brett can make that happen, the STEM Academy  
20 can make it happen, their group can make it  
21 happen. We just know it in our hearts. So  
22 please support them. If there's any way you  
23 can, support them.

24                   MS. NAGOURNEY: Thank you.



1 MS. FAUST: Hi. Thanks for  
2 having us and giving us a chance to say  
3 something. I am a Delaware transplant, but  
4 I'm a parent --

5 MS. JOHNSON: Would you just say  
6 your name?

7 MS. FAUST: I'm so sorry. I am  
8 Maria Faust, and I'm a parent. And one of  
9 the things to me that's really very important  
10 about this academy is I come from the  
11 private -- most recently from the private  
12 sector that uses STEM, we use it. There's two  
13 types of people. There are those -- exactly  
14 what you said. There's those, I found my way  
15 here somehow, I didn't know what I wanted to  
16 do, and that's why I'm here. Then there's  
17 those kids that played in the dirt, even  
18 during video games, they played in the dirt,  
19 because, oh, my God, is that a worm? There's  
20 different -- there's two different types of  
21 people, and STEM academy is looking to foster  
22 that.

23 What I'm hoping happens today is  
24 that we're the first state that we don't



1 forget that. Somebody has to go first. My  
2 niece is willing to go first. She's willing  
3 to be the guinea pig to say, no, we can change  
4 how we teach people, how we embrace science,  
5 technology, and engineering and math. She may  
6 be the person that discovers a cure for  
7 cancer. But unless we take a chance, unless  
8 we take a chance, we'll never know.

9           There's no -- to me as a parent  
10 and as a citizen of Delaware, I don't see what  
11 harm there would be to letting the school open  
12 this first year, because I'm telling you now,  
13 if you let it open, even with the small  
14 enrollment numbers that they have, I can  
15 guarantee you, this time next year those  
16 numbers are going to be different because  
17 she's going to go back and tell her friends  
18 and her sisters are going to tell their  
19 friends and everybody is going to want to get  
20 in because the learning is different. It's  
21 hands on. It's not just somebody talking at  
22 you. Do adults want to be talked at all day?  
23 I know I don't.

24           I'm just hoping that what



1 happens out of this hearing is you guys at  
2 least give it a chance. At least for one  
3 year, give it a chance. I'm going to go now.

4 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm Andrew  
5 Williams, I'm a parent. My son, Shawn  
6 Williams, came to me about a month ago and  
7 mentioned about how he saw a presentation in  
8 school, and was very excited about it. So of  
9 course I had to go check it out. And, you  
10 know, rather nervous about a brand new school  
11 that hasn't even been proven or anything yet,  
12 but it's definitely a different way of  
13 teaching, and I think it's something that's  
14 definitely needed.

15 My son is bored in school.  
16 There's just, you know, you sit up there, you  
17 learn stuff, and you just sit there and don't  
18 really get to apply it or learn what you're  
19 going to do with it. I was bored in school.  
20 I slept through most of my classes. Luckily I  
21 still passed all my classes, but it was  
22 boredom. You sit there and listen to somebody  
23 up there writing things down, and that's about  
24 it.



1           So I definitely believe there's  
2 something that needs to be done to change the  
3 way we teach our students, and this looks to  
4 be a great way to do it. Still, like I said,  
5 very nervous about a brand new school, the  
6 whole new tech approach. From what I read on  
7 the online, there's some pros, there's some  
8 cons. It seems it all depends on how it's  
9 implemented.

10           And unfortunately, we can't see  
11 the future, so we can't see how it's going to  
12 turn out, but I think it's definitely worth  
13 giving a chance to and see how it does turn  
14 out here. Because I think it's definitely a  
15 better way of teaching than what's going on  
16 currently.

17           MR. TAYLOR: Good evening, my  
18 name is Brett Taylor, and I'm the executive  
19 director of Delaware STEM Academy. I want to  
20 first thank everyone who has come out tonight  
21 and supported the academy.

22           We've done this a couple of  
23 times, and I hope it's not too redundant. But  
24 we have been on the journey, and it's taken a



1 lot of hard work and it's taken a lot of  
2 people to get us to this point. And we are  
3 very, very close. We are so close. We're  
4 getting calls every day from parents wanting  
5 to enroll students. And you'll find this is a  
6 slow accumulation. It takes a lot of faith,  
7 it takes a lot of vision for parents to  
8 engage. But once they engage, they are  
9 passionate.

10 We had an ice cream social last  
11 week, and we're going to put the video out on  
12 YouTube tonight. It really made it real. We  
13 had over 60 students there, they were all  
14 dressed in their Delaware STEM T-shirts --  
15 there you go, thank you for wearing your  
16 T-shirts tonight -- and they had a tremendous  
17 time. But you know that the thing about it is  
18 that the students were really engaged. They  
19 had a lot to talk about, they were excited,  
20 the parents were excited, and for me it made  
21 it very, very real.

22 We realize that the enrollment  
23 numbers are low, and we understand that we  
24 have to prove an economic viability for the



1 school, and one that will have academic  
2 fidelity, one that is consistent with the  
3 charter application. Our intent is to be able  
4 to do that for you. But we're also asking you  
5 that if we are allowed to go forward, you will  
6 not only get the commitment from the board,  
7 you'll get a commitment from myself, our  
8 parents are going to be enrolled in the  
9 process, and if there's a problem, we will  
10 solve it. Because that's what we do in order  
11 for the students to be able to have an  
12 opportunity to learn, in order for them to  
13 have an opportunity to learn, it's up to us to  
14 be able to solve those problems and make sure  
15 we give them the best quality educational  
16 environment we can.

17 Keep in mind that if we do our  
18 jobs, we put out a good product, people will  
19 beat a path to the door. And that's where  
20 we're going to be this time next year. In  
21 fact, we're going to be there in September.  
22 Over the summer, we're going to continue to  
23 recruit, we're going to continue to engage the  
24 community, and when we come to rhythm, to open



1 that school, it will be full, we will have  
2 enough students for it to be economically  
3 viable. We'll have a robust academic plan,  
4 and we will demonstrate to you that we will be  
5 successful. Our board is committed, I am  
6 committed, parents and the students that we've  
7 seen so far are committed, and we just would  
8 like to ask you to give us a chance. Thanks  
9 very much.

10 MS. NAGOURNEY: Is there anyone  
11 else who wishes to speak? Going once, going  
12 twice? Ah, the handsome gentleman in the  
13 back.

14 MS. JOHNSON: With the very cool  
15 T-shirt.

16 MR. LACHTER: My name is  
17 Jonathan Lachter, hopefully to be a student of  
18 STEM Academy. The reason that brought me to  
19 it was that I, from the very start, I liked  
20 tinkering with things, I liked engineering, I  
21 liked things like that. And recently, I  
22 heard -- well, recently I heard about this  
23 school, and I was like this is the perfect  
24 thing for me. My mom said this is cool, we



1 got the note thing from the mail, and it was  
2 perfect. I mean, it has everything you need  
3 and more.

4 And if I was to go to this  
5 school, I believe I would learn a lot more  
6 than I would be able to with an ordinary  
7 school. And I believe I would have a lot more  
8 fun doing it. And also, STEM is important, so  
9 please let this school be a thing. Thank you.

10 MS. NAGOURNEY: Two more  
11 individuals who have joined us, please come  
12 forward and sign in.

13 Is there anyone else who wishes  
14 to speak?

15 MS. ARMSTRONG: Hi, my name is  
16 Sherinne Armstrong, and I'm -- sorry for being  
17 late, the traffic and everything, coming from  
18 my daughter's doctor's appointment also.

19 However, I work with the school,  
20 Christina District, and I just feel like, you  
21 know, I have two other kids that's in the  
22 school district and stuff, and this is my last  
23 one, the baby, and she's 15, Amani Carteho.  
24 And I chose this school, I just think it's a



1 really great opportunity, you know, something  
2 different within the district. The way  
3 schools have been running, you know, certain,  
4 like -- I don't know, it's kind of hard to  
5 explain when you work for the district and you  
6 have your children in there, and when you have  
7 concerns and stuff, you know, it's really hard  
8 to address certain things and stuff like that.

9                   But not in too much details, I  
10 just feel like this is a really great  
11 opportunity, especially that it is a new  
12 school and, you know, my daughter, she's  
13 excited, she'll be the first, you know,  
14 graduate for this school. And it just seems  
15 like, you know, like I said, some people give  
16 big question, oh, it's a new school and, you  
17 know, you're not sure you should enroll your  
18 child into a school that's not already up and  
19 running for a couple of years, this and that.  
20 But I come from a strong family background and  
21 faith and hope, and I just believe this is  
22 something great. I just really feel like this  
23 is a great and a blessed opportunity for our  
24 family.



1 MS. JOHNSON: Ma'am, could you  
2 sign in on this sheet here, please?

3 MS. NAGOURNEY: Is there anyone  
4 else who wishes to speak?

5 MS. GOODMAN: Hello, my name is  
6 Eraina Goodman. This wasn't my plan A. I  
7 didn't have a -- my plan A didn't pan out, so  
8 I was looking for a plan B. And lo and  
9 behold, my plan B is now my plan A, because  
10 when I first got the thing in the mail, I read  
11 it and I was interested in it, and I put it to  
12 the side, and then I lost it. And then I  
13 checked the mailbox, and there was another one  
14 in the mail. So I was like, it was meant to  
15 be, so I went.

16 And when I went, I was so  
17 excited, I was intrigued, I was sold. I was  
18 impressed by everything. And ironically,  
19 science and math happen to be my son's two  
20 strong points in school. That's the only two  
21 subjects he really, really likes. But when  
22 he's engaged, he gets it and he loves it and  
23 he flourishes with it. So when it came in the  
24 mail, I just knew that this was to for him.



1                   And he came with me, he was  
2 excited, as well. And I'm happy for them,  
3 because it's an opportunity for them to  
4 flourish, and I think my son and this school  
5 will be a good mesh together, and I'm excited.  
6 Thank you.

7                   MS. NAGOURNEY: Is there anyone  
8 else who wishes to speak? Last call. If not,  
9 this hearing is now closed. Thank you so much  
10 for coming.

11                   The public comment period closes  
12 on Friday, June 10th. So if you want to  
13 submit additional public comments for any  
14 other pieces of evidence for the  
15 decision-makers, the Secretary of Education  
16 and the State Board of Education to consider,  
17 please send it by that time. If you need  
18 information how to submit it, I'm happy to  
19  
20 provide it or you could ask Dr. Taylor. Thank  
21  
22 you.

23  
24                   (Hearing adjourned at 5:44 p.m.)



1 State of Delaware)  
2 )  
3 New Castle County)  
4

5 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER  
6

7 I, Jennifer M. Guy, Professional Reporter  
8 and Notary Public, do hereby certify that the  
9 foregoing record, pages 1 to 33 inclusive, is  
10  
11 a true and accurate transcript of my  
12  
13 stenographic notes taken on June 7, 2016, in  
14  
15 the above-captioned matter.  
16  
17  
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19  
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21

22   
23

24 Jennifer M. Guy, RPR



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