

In The Matter Of:
Department of Education
First State Military Academy Charter School

Hearing
October 9, 2018

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STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

IN RE: PUBLIC HEARING :
FOR RENEWAL :
: :
FIRST STATE MILITARY :
ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL :

Hearing taken pursuant to
notice at the Townsend Building, 401 Federal
Street, 2nd Floor Cabinet Room, Dover,
Delaware, beginning at 5:07 p.m., on Tuesday,
October 9, 2018, before Gloria M. D'Amore,
Registered Professional Reporter and Notary
Public.

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APPEARANCES:

On behalf of the State of Delaware
Department of Education:
JOHN CARWELL, EDUCATION ASSOCIATE

On behalf of the State of Delaware
Board of Education:
VINCENT LOFINK, MEMBER

On behalf of the State of Delaware
Delaware Department of Justice:
CATHERINE T. HICKEY, ESQUIRE
Attorney for Department of Education

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1 MR. JOHN CARWELL: Good evening.
2 I declare this public hearing to be open.

3 My name is John Carwell. I'm
4 an Education Associate in the Charter School
5 Office for the Department of Education. And
6 I've been appointed by the Secretary of
7 Education to conduct this public hearing.

8 The First State Military
9 Academy Charter School has filed an
10 application to renew its Charter for a term
11 of five years.

12 As is required by law, the
13 matter was referred to Charter School
14 Accountability Committee for investigation
15 and report.

16 This joint public hearing is
17 being held by the Department of Education and
18 the State Board of Education.

19 I would like the record to
20 reflect that the notice of the time, date and
21 place of today's public hearing was published
22 in The News Journal and Delaware State News
23 on September 20, 2018.

24 In addition, notice was posted



1 on the Charter School Accountability
2 Committee's official place of business, on
3 the Delaware Department of Education official
4 website and on the State's Public Meeting
5 calendar on the State's official website.

6 Further, First State Military
7 Academy Charter School was personally
8 notified of the time, date and place of
9 today's public hearing on September 10, 2018.

10 A court reporter is present so
11 that a record of this hearing can be made.
12 It will be necessary for each speaker to
13 clearly identify his or herself before
14 beginning to speak so that the court reporter
15 will be able to note who you are.

16 The record of this hearing will
17 be provided to the Secretary of Education and
18 each Member of the State Board of Education,
19 together with any written or electronic
20 comments received during the course of the
21 renewal decision process.

22 To date, we have not received
23 any written comments regarding this renewal
24 application.



1 We will proceed in the
2 following matter.

3 First we will hear from any
4 representatives of the school who wish to
5 comment on the renewal application. Then we
6 will take comments from anyone else who
7 desires to speak.

8 And just one more time, if
9 anyone else wants to sign up, show of hands.
10 Okay. We're good to go.

11 So I will try to be as liberal
12 and time as reason allow in accepting
13 comments. However, I do reserve the right to
14 limit comments if it is purely repetitive or
15 cumulative.

16 At this point, I will accept
17 comments from any representatives of the
18 school.

19 MR. SCOTT KIDNER: Thank you,
20 Mr. Chairman.

21 MR. CARWELL: And we're going
22 to give it a five-minute limit.

23 MR. SCOTT KIDNER: My name is
24 C. Scott Kidner. K-I-D-N-E-R.



1 Members, thank you for this
2 opportunity again.

3 My name is Scott Kidner. I'm
4 the Chairman of the Board of First State
5 Military Academy. And I wanted to offer some
6 observations and comments as we begin this
7 exciting and important process for the
8 ongoing growth and evolution of our great
9 school.

10 I will be joined by a number of
11 the school's leadership, including Patrick
12 Gallucci, our Commandant, Colonel Robert
13 Wallace, our Senior Marine Instructor, as
14 well as Stacey Clark our Director of
15 Instruction.

16 Also with us this evening are a
17 number of our parents and some of our
18 teachers. I also have with me our school
19 treasurer, as well as Jim Berg, and a former
20 member, Sean Todd, who is also one of our
21 instructors.

22 Before they come up and make
23 their comments, I wanted to talk about where
24 we came from and why First State Military



1 Academy exist.

2 Some seven-years-ago, if you
3 can remember that, John, in January of 2011,
4 at the urging both Chuck Baldwin, the Founder
5 of DMA and former President of Wilmington
6 Charter and U.S. Senator Tom Carper, who is a
7 strong support of charters, I called together
8 40 or so of my friends to a meeting to see
9 who might be interested in starting a school
10 like DMA here in Kent County.

11 Knowing absolutely nothing
12 about schools and what needed to be done, I
13 purely conned about 15 of them to join me on
14 the founding board. And, yes, they are still
15 friends of mine.

16 As we begun to look at the
17 various schools and what we thought was
18 needed here in Kent County, and for that
19 matter in our State, a number of basic tenets
20 came forward.

21 These are things like
22 discipline, hard work, respect for teachers,
23 quick thinking and taking responsibility for
24 your actions when you mess up.



1 However, as we examined the
2 public education system, these basic tenets
3 and other important issues seem to be
4 missing, or, at least from our point of view,
5 needed to be reenforced at the building
6 level.

7 Underlining all of this, of
8 course, is to educate and help kids grow and
9 get ready for life after high school.

10 There were many, many steps
11 involved in this process. Our Commandant,
12 search for our building, search for our
13 facilities, and the most important issue was
14 our cadets. The school and our vision is
15 something different. We have set in place a
16 school where students are given a sense of
17 expectations, what they are responsible for
18 and held accountable for.

19 Since our inception, it has
20 been the vision to provide the framework
21 where our teachers are respected and are a
22 part of the leadership of the school. A
23 place where students who choose to be held to
24 a higher standard from their peers can come



1 and grow. And to do so without what I refer
2 to as noise of the typical classroom. And a
3 choice for parents who wanted a different
4 look and feel of a high school. A place
5 where a dedication to duty, dedication of
6 doing what is right is expected and not just
7 for our cadets, but for our teachers and
8 staff.

9 In closing, I wish I could
10 express the many emotions that I've
11 personally experience since this started.

12 I will tell you, watching our
13 cadets conduct their Battalion March of 400
14 this past September. Now we are a U.S. Naval
15 Honors Program as awarded by Quantico. Our
16 first graduating class this past May.
17 Teachers who just joined, saying they
18 couldn't think of anywhere else to be. These
19 are good things.

20 I do know we have many more
21 things to accomplish. I know there are
22 things that are part of this renewal that we
23 have to address and we'll work on.

24 But I know one thing is clear,



1 we are doing good things for our cadets. We
2 are doing good things for our parents. And
3 we are doing good things for Delaware.

4 Thank you. Thank you for this
5 opportunity to allow me to speak and provide
6 some comments.

7 I will be followed by our
8 Commandant and our leadership.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. CARWELL: Thank you, sir.

11 MR. PATRICK GALLUCCI: Good
12 evening. My name is Patrick Gallucci. First
13 State Military Academy.

14 Thank you for giving me the
15 opportunity to speak on behalf of the school
16 in which I lead.

17 We are a New Tech Network High
18 School where every cadet is a member of the
19 Marine Corps JROTC.

20 These two worlds provide a
21 unique environment and cadets grow and learn
22 in more ways than I ever could imagine.

23 And I've spent 25 years in
24 education. My first 17 were in the



1 classroom. And I have never experienced some
2 of the things that we're doing now.

3 We are more than just a high
4 school. We begin by focusing on our purpose,
5 which is to provide all cadets the knowledge,
6 skills and attributes they will need to
7 thrive in post-secondary education, work and
8 civic life. We have a standard of
9 expectation every day in which our attributes
10 play an integral part in our days.

11 We follow our mission to
12 prepare all cadets for the 21st Century. Our
13 project-based learning instruction provides
14 cadets with the skills necessary for success.
15 To obtain the goals we have build upon each
16 year using our purpose and mission as our
17 driving force in everything we do.

18 We have worked diligently to
19 develop and sustain a culture of learning and
20 help cadets establish relationships through
21 our policies and structures.

22 Our culture also enhances our
23 safety as we found that we've met FEMA's
24 seven recommended proactive steps to prevent



1 incidents, and these steps were already a
2 part of our every day culture.

3 We have empowered and supported
4 our teaching staff to be creative and
5 encourage them to do things differently.

6 We have a 90 percent retention
7 rate since we opened our doors. This has
8 allowed our instruction to guide our cadets
9 into deeper learning and asking them to solve
10 complex problems and to develop critical
11 thinking skills.

12 Our assessments challenge
13 cadets to use high-level questioning in order
14 to solve problems and develop skills in
15 authentic assessment.

16 When they leave the school,
17 they will be aware, they will be eligible,
18 and they will prepared to pursue
19 post-secondary education or training.

20 We know that at the completion
21 of our process, our cadet achievement will
22 occur.

23 I would like to share with you
24 two quotes from former cadets that were with



1 us for three years. They graduated this past
2 May.

3 Attending First State Military
4 Academy was a massive change from a typical
5 high school, but positive. FSMA helped to
6 shape me into the person I am today.

7 Attending this school teaches you so much.

8 One of the main things being that even the
9 little things matter. I was strengthened in
10 all areas and was conditioned on how to be
11 strong morally, mentally and physically.

12 This has shaped me into a more well-rounded
13 person. I am thankful for this opportunity
14 to become a better student and person both
15 inside and outside of the classroom. If I
16 had gone to traditional high school, I would
17 be getting a standard diploma on graduation
18 day, but I know I walk away with much more.

19 So here I am, as I thought in November, I am
20 ready for tomorrow and all of the days ahead.

21 I wouldn't be the person I am today without
22 the structure and education I have received.

23 I have followed up with this
24 cadet and asked her how she is doing in



1 college. And she found no difficult
2 adjustment periods and she was able to fit
3 right into the University of Delaware.

4 Earlier this summer, a cadet
5 and I took a trip to Israel on a program
6 called Birthright. It was an educational
7 trip for ten days to learn about Israel. We
8 were with 36 other college students from
9 around the United States. We were the
10 youngest on the trip that was between the
11 ages of 18 and 24. And we were the only
12 recent high school graduates. There were
13 students from the Ivy League colleges, small
14 community colleges and big universities. And
15 we lived and shared everything for ten days.
16 Even with us being the youngest, I felt we
17 were the most serious, mature and
18 responsible.

19 Thank you for the way you run
20 First State Military Academy and the things
21 you taught us because it's, obviously,
22 working. We saw that we could have been
23 acting like if we didn't go to your school.
24 I think First State Military Academy helped



1 us. Thank you for treating us the way you
2 did and teaching us what you could.

3 Thank you. Thank you for your
4 time tonight and I appreciate it.

5 MR. CARWELL: Thank you, sir.

6 At this point I will accept
7 comments from anyone else who would desire to
8 speak. Please introduce yourself.

9 COLONEL BOB WALLACE: Colonel
10 Bob Wallace. I'm the Senior Marine
11 Instructor at First State Military Academy.

12 In the summer of 2015, my wife
13 and I made one of the best decisions of our
14 married life when we departed South Carolina
15 and moved to Delaware and joined First State
16 Military Academy.

17 There are a few times in life
18 when you have the opportunity to prove a
19 concept that, if successful, will impact the
20 lives of thousands of our youth.

21 First State Military Academy,
22 through the concept of merging the
23 educational framework of New Tech Network for
24 MCJROTC, will do just that. We are well on



1 our way toward releasing hundreds of model
2 citizens into the fabric of our Nation.

3 I am confident in that
4 statement as I'm sitting before you tonight.

5 What began in 2015 with two
6 Marine Instructors, including me, and 202
7 cadets, who had little to no idea what they
8 were signing up for, has grown and matured
9 into five Marine Instructors and a battalion
10 of 436 cadets.

11 Along the way, we have
12 established a Tier I Drill program and a
13 Raiders program, a Marksmanship Program and a
14 Staff Development program.

15 Our drill team has twice
16 finished second at the State Championship and
17 our Staff Development program, which teaches
18 cadets the basic tenets of military planning,
19 hones its skillsets daily as they plan and
20 execute a wide variety of school events, such
21 as parades, field trips, volunteer events and
22 summer camps.

23 In addition, this past August,
24 in only our third year, First State Military



1 Academy was named a Naval Honor School, a
2 distinction many of the 265 MCJROTC programs
3 nationwide that are achieved.

4 To put another qualifier on
5 this, of the 65 MCJROTC programs in the
6 Northeast region, only nine met the
7 requirements for Naval Honor School last
8 year. And we were, obviously, one of them.

9 The tangible benefit of the
10 Naval Honors program is that I, as the Senior
11 Marine Instructor, am authorized to nominate
12 six FSMA cadets for appointment to one of the
13 three U.S. Military Academies: The U.S.
14 Military Academy at West Point, the U.S.
15 Naval Academy and the Air Force Academy.
16 Naval Honor School is a reflection of
17 everything that has become FSMA, the staff,
18 parents and guardians, but mostly, the
19 cadets.

20 The Marine Corps JROTC program
21 is intended to be a cadet-led program that
22 focuses on leadership and character
23 development skills of each cadet.

24 The evidence that we're on the



1 correct path was unmistakable this past
2 summer. Our rising sophomores, who are
3 already seniors, planned and executed our
4 first 5-day New Cadet Orientation Camp.

5 For three long days prior, 42
6 of our return cadets, referred to as Cadre,
7 prepared for the Cadet Orientation Camp by
8 reviewing the plan, conducting rehearsals,
9 task organizing, briefing Marine Instructors,
10 all for the arrival of 122 new cadets. Then
11 for the 5-day Cadet Orientation Camp under
12 instructor supervision, the cadets, cadre,
13 literally ran the camp, mentoring and
14 instructing the new cadets through our
15 standards and expectations, academics,
16 teaching methodology and Marine Corps JROTC
17 classes and uniform issues.

18 The Cadet Orientation Camp was
19 a huge success and equally impactful from the
20 cadet cadre as it was on the new cadets.

21 The goal of the Cadet
22 Orientation Camp was to bridge the gap
23 between middle school and First State setting
24 the conditions for success for all new



1 cadets. In large measure, that's exactly
2 what the cadets achieved.

3 As you have heard, First State
4 Military Academy is a special school that
5 focuses on the development of each and every
6 cadet.

7 First State Military Academy is
8 also special in the respect that out of the
9 265 Marine Corps JROTC programs nationally,
10 only two are MCJROTC academies, one of those
11 being First State Military Academy.

12 At First State Military
13 Academy, the cadets wear the MARPAT or
14 camouflage uniform every day. They are
15 learning to live up to our core values of
16 honor, courage and commitment. They are
17 learning to persevere that work ethic,
18 attitude and accountability matters. They
19 are figuring out what it takes to be
20 successful in adult life.

21 Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you
22 very much.

23 MR. CARWELL: Thank you,
24 Colonel.



1 MS. STACEY CLARK: Good
2 evening. My name is Stacey Clark. And I am
3 the Director of Instruction and Student
4 Services of FSMA.

5 So thank you for allowing me
6 the opportunity to comment this evening.

7 At the heart of First State
8 Military Academy's instructional approach is
9 to design learning that is contextual,
10 creative and engaging, where students
11 collaborate on projects that require critical
12 thinking and communication.

13 Our staff works to prepare
14 every cadet who walks through our doors with
15 the necessary skills and knowledge needed to
16 succeed in an ever-changing world.

17 Our Schoolwide Learning
18 Outcomes provide the critical attributes that
19 our cadets need to engage in school and then
20 in life.

21 We do this through establishing
22 a professional culture of trust, respect and
23 responsibility to set the stage for building
24 agency. Raising academic rigor through



1 complex tasks supported by scaffolding and
2 differentiation. Engaging students to see
3 the relevance and make meaning of what they
4 are learning while developing critical
5 skills.

6 Through project-based learning
7 at FSMA, cadets develop positive attitudes
8 and beliefs about themselves as learners.

9 These attitudes and beliefs
10 increase their academic perseverance and lead
11 them to engage in productive academic
12 behaviors. They take responsibility for
13 their own learning, which fosters the
14 life-long learning mindset needed to grow and
15 succeed beyond the school walls.

16 Our cadets are encouraged and
17 pushed to take on big questions that force
18 them to sort and synthesize multiple sources
19 of information and select the most
20 appropriate problem solving and presentation
21 skills. They develop and draw from a
22 baseline understanding of knowledge in an
23 academic discipline and are able to transfer
24 that knowledge to other situations to think



1 critically and to solve complex problems.

2 Teaching students a structured
3 way to communicate about the problems and
4 challenges they are experiencing in each
5 project is a step toward fostering true
6 teamwork. The development and strengthening
7 of listening and incorporating others
8 feedback, understanding diverse audiences and
9 delivering effective oral and written
10 presentations is another tenet of each
11 project design and implementation.

12 We recognize that offering
13 opportunities for high school students during
14 college credit provides valuable longer-term
15 benefits.

16 In the past two years, we've
17 added AP courses, as well as incorporated
18 Dual Enrollment college courses during our
19 regular school day.

20 By offering the courses during
21 the school day, through two of our teachers
22 who are university adjunct professors, we
23 allow every cadet the opportunity to enroll
24 in the program without restriction unless



1 required by the university.

2 This year in our three AP
3 courses, we have 67 cadets. We have 28
4 cadets in Dual Enrollment English 121 and 28
5 in English 122, with 21 cadets taking our
6 Dual Enrollment Military History course.

7 I'm excited about the work that
8 we do here at First State Military Academy.
9 I've worked in Charter Schools in the past,
10 as well as within the District Schools. And
11 I found that working in a Charter School
12 speaks to my true passion. It allows me the
13 opportunity to work with teachers and
14 students to create a learning environment
15 that not only focuses on teaching, but
16 teaching the whole child.

17 In my new role, it's my desire
18 to continue to promote growth in our teachers
19 and our students as we utilize innovative
20 strategies to educate and engage each and
21 every cadet.

22 Thank you.

23 And, John, I have something
24 from Cassandra McKay, who was not able to be



1 with us tonight. She is the Director of
2 Administration.

3 Do you want me to read it in or
4 turn it in?

5 MR. CARWELL: We can include it
6 as Exhibit A.

7 (Document was marked as Exhibit
8 A for identification.)

9 MR. CARWELL: Leslie
10 Stapleford.

11 MS. LESLIE STAPLEFORD: Hi. My
12 name is Leslie Stapleford.

13 My son, Jase, is a junior at
14 First State Military Academy. And he is also
15 a Cadet Staff Sergeant.

16 We began our Charter School
17 journey when he was finishing sixth grade.
18 He was bored at his middle school, not being
19 challenged by teachers and often being
20 distracted by other students that did not
21 seem to want to learn.

22 Jase was as disappointed as we
23 were in that school. We found a Charter
24 School that fit his needs for 7th and 8th



1 grade, but when high school came around, we
2 needed to look for another option. And even
3 though we only lived within seven miles of
4 First State Military Academy, we stumbled
5 across the school on the Charter application
6 website. It had only been open for one year
7 when we applied.

8 When we visited the campus and
9 met with the school officials, we knew
10 immediately it was the fit for us, both as
11 parents and for our student.

12 The first year was filled with
13 a lot of change, going from a normal school,
14 to one based in military and project-based
15 learning. The teachers and staff were great
16 during our transition and have since improved
17 by creating the Cadet Orientation Program for
18 in-coming freshmen. That first year, daily,
19 our son would come home with stories on how
20 the Marine Instructors were working with and
21 challenging him as a young cadet.

22 And I can say physically the
23 transformation the first year was incredible.
24 PT does a body good.



1 Induction day his sophomore
2 year was powerful for Jase. He was moved so
3 much by the speeches given during the
4 ceremony that he has decided to pursue a
5 career in the service. He felt called to
6 support his country. We always knew he was
7 that kind of kid. I am so proud that this
8 school helped him become that kind of man he
9 has come into it.

10 He wants to be involved in the
11 school and really contributed. He is on the
12 lacrosse team and National Honor Society, Leo
13 Club and volunteers whenever he can. This
14 school really drives all cadets to do more
15 for themselves, their school and their
16 community. And their intent is to make them
17 better contributing human beings in the
18 world, prepare for college, service or
19 whatever life has to offer after they finish
20 high school.

21 And I have to say that I can't
22 imagine a better environment for students.
23 Obviously, it's not for everyone, but we
24 definitely could not have found a better fit



1 for our son.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. MARY HECKER: Good evening.

4 My name is Mary Hecker. I am parent of a
5 student at First State Military Academy.

6 And everything you heard Mr.
7 Kidner and Commandant Gallucci and Colonel
8 Wallace say this evening is what my family
9 and our son heard when we visited the First
10 State Military Academy campus.

11 I wanted to come tonight
12 because my son transitioned to First State
13 Military Academy after attending private
14 school for eight years.

15 So a Charter School or a public
16 school was new to us. David, my son, came to
17 us in the eighth grade and said that he would
18 like to search out other educational
19 opportunities is how he presented it to us.
20 And we were concerned that something was
21 wrong at the school that he was attending.
22 He assured us that it was not. But he had
23 the opportunity to meet with some cadets from
24 First State Military Academy and he was



1 interested in seeing what they had to offer.
2 We allowed him to make that decision.

3 We did sit with three cadets
4 from First State Military Academy. David and
5 I actually peppered them with questions for
6 probably two hours. And we asked them almost
7 everything that you could ask them from
8 personal questions about bullying and time to
9 academic questions, school lunches,
10 everything that there was that we could
11 possibly learn.

12 When David left that meeting,
13 which was after ten o'clock at night, he
14 said, Mom, I would like for you to call the
15 school tomorrow and ask them if I could come
16 shadow a student for the day. And I did.
17 The very next day, I contacted First State
18 Military Academy. He went to Caravel. I
19 also contacted Caravel Academy and explained
20 that David was interested in exploring other
21 opportunities.

22 From the day that David
23 shadowed, he came home and said, This is
24 where I'm going. I'm going to be a cadet.



1 And he was a very quiet child. He's not now.
2 He was much more academic than athletic. I
3 was concerned that PT and athletics would
4 dissuade him.

5 From the moment that David
6 decided to attend First State Military
7 Academy, he has been set on being a good
8 cadet, being the best cadet that he could be,
9 being a good student, being a good human
10 being.

11 He makes a point to try to
12 teach other students about First State
13 Military Academy. If my son could travel
14 around this State and enter middle schools to
15 try to convince them to go to a Charter
16 School, he would be there every week. It is
17 something that he feels like is his calling.

18 I understand that First State
19 Military is not for everyone. But when David
20 interviewed, the project-based learning
21 excited him. The PT excited him. The fact
22 that he could be at school in ten minutes.
23 He could stay there was Wi-Fi on the bus
24 where our cadet could take care of doing



1 their school work when they needed to be.

2 And the Marine Corps JROTC has,
3 as Mrs. Stapleford said, the transformation
4 that it has on the cadets is absolutely
5 amazing. He truly enjoys it. We love to see
6 him come home excited about his day.
7 Everything from academics to the Marine
8 Corps.

9 We really don't feel like there
10 could have been a better option for us. And
11 I just really wanted to share that. And I
12 feel like if I could fill this room with 50
13 or 100 parents, I would for you. Because I
14 think that you'll find that we are excited.

15 I have tried to do everything I
16 could to be a part of First State Military
17 Academy because my son enjoys it. I want to
18 be there. I want to help the school and do
19 everything that I can to make them successful
20 as well. And I hope that you will look upon
21 their Charter Renewal in a positive light so
22 that we can continue to grow. And that on
23 Saturdays when we have Raiders events that I
24 can go there and see our campus full of



1 students like we had this past week end.

2 Thank you for allowing me to
3 speak.

4 MR. CARWELL: Mr. Todd.

5 MR. SEAN TODD: Sean Todd. I
6 teach Biology, Engineering and Chemistry at
7 First State. This is my third year there.
8 I'm also a teacher for the board and the CBOC
9 Committee also.

10 I've been in education for ten
11 years now. So not too long. But I taught in
12 both the public and Charter Schools. I
13 raised two boys that have come up in the
14 Appoquinimink School District. Graduated
15 from there. One is a teacher at Design Lab
16 Thinking Lab. So he's a business teacher
17 there and also the Athletic Director. And my
18 wife is the Nurse Tech teacher at Hodgson
19 Votech. So I may not be correct, but I think
20 I'm entitled to an opinion on Charter
21 Schools.

22 Also, I am in the second year
23 Doctoral Program and I go to school with some
24 of our Superintendents and also leaders of



1 other Charter Schools. And when we are in
2 class and I speak of our school, it is looked
3 at as something to be admired.

4 So when I talk about the
5 project-based learning, the things that are
6 happening with our cadets, our leadership,
7 our school is the envy of some of the other
8 schools and school districts. And my
9 experience being there as a teacher is unlike
10 any place I have been. My sons are older
11 now, but when they come visit the school,
12 they wished they had an opportunity to go to
13 a school like that.

14 My daughter just started high
15 school. She is going to St. Georges, but
16 that is only because she did not like the
17 military. But that was the other option. If
18 she did not get into St. Georges, she was
19 coming to First State Military Academy.

20 But in terms of this Charter
21 Renewal, I just don't think there is another
22 school like our school. Our school is
23 unique. And I just believe what we're doing
24 in our school needs to be replicated at some



1 of these other schools. It is very unique.
2 Also what we're doing both academically and
3 athletically in terms of the culture and
4 things that we're doing to build up our
5 cadets in terms of how they're going to
6 approach the world when they leave our
7 school. That goes beyond what they learned
8 in the classroom.

9 So I don't have a script and
10 nothing to give you. But I will give my full
11 endorsement for First State Military Academy.

12 Thank you for your time.

13 MR. CARWELL: Thank you, sir.

14 At this point, I will accept
15 comments from anyone else who desires to
16 speak.

17 MS. DIANE HAINSWORTH: Diane
18 Hainsworth.

19 I'm a parent. My son, Michael,
20 is a senior at First State Military Academy.
21 And I want to tell you a little bit about him
22 and our family.

23 One, he is the youngest of four
24 kids. He was always the happy kid, blonde



1 hair, blue eyes, running around, and always
2 has a smile on his face. Always goofy.

3 Something happened when he went
4 into middle school and he became quiet and
5 reserved. We found out that he was being
6 bullied. He's a good kid. He's a smart kid.

7 But in today's schools, in
8 middle school, it's not cool for a boy to be
9 smart. It's not cool for a boy to be a good
10 kid. So he was bullied.

11 We knew about it. We were
12 addressing it with the school. We just
13 happened to go to a presentation at MOT
14 Charter School in regard to a new military
15 academy coming in. We listened to it. We
16 decided we would take a look. And we took
17 Mike down. And this was before the buildings
18 were open and before all of the renovations
19 were done. And we talked to the folks there.

20 And it was a very tough
21 decision to make. We're in Appo School
22 District. It is one of the top public school
23 districts in the State. We knew if he went
24 to Middletown High School, we knew he would



1 get a good education. But we were worried
2 about the whole kid. So we sent him to First
3 State Military Academy.

4 Within the first couple of
5 weeks there, two of the military instructors
6 that were there saw something in this kid.
7 He changed almost overnight. He's a
8 competent, driven, respectful kid.

9 And I can't thank these folks
10 enough for what they have done for him and
11 the changes that they have made by having the
12 school discipline and school structure. It
13 doesn't enable all of that other noise to
14 come in.

15 On a bigger family note, as I
16 said, my kid is one of four kids. The school
17 doesn't just affect the kid. It affects the
18 family. Three of my four children have
19 decided or have opted for the military option
20 for their careers. And I could not be
21 prouder.

22 But it is because of this
23 school and this structure.

24 The other thing is in my



1 day-to-day life, I am the Director for
2 Emergency Medical Services and Preparedness
3 First State. My husband is the Department
4 Chair at Allied Health at DelTech Community
5 College. And we have worked with some of the
6 kids from First State Military Academy who
7 want to go into a paramedic technology degree
8 or other health care degrees. They've come
9 over to DelTech. They've had a chance to go
10 through the labs. Everyone of them is
11 respectful, driven and intelligent. I would
12 never question -- the kids that I have met as
13 the EMS Director for the State -- integrity
14 is a huge issue. These kids have tremendous
15 integrity.

16 So I support First State
17 Military Academy one hundred percent. And
18 even though my son will graduate, he better,
19 in a few months, I will be proud to support
20 the school in the future as well.

21 Thank you.

22 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

23 Is there anyone else who
24 desires to speak?



1 If not, I want to thank you all
2 for participating today.

3 The Secretary will consider
4 your comments in deciding at the conclusion
5 of the renewal process what decision to
6 submit to the State Board for ascent, if
7 needed.

8 This hearing is now closed.
9 Thank you.

10 (The hearing was concluded at,
11 approximately, 5:46 p.m.)

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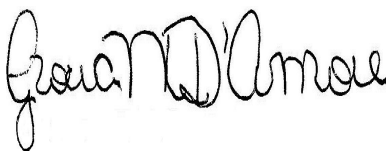
1 State of Delaware:

2 New Castle County:

3
4 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

5
6 I, Gloria M. D'Amore, Registered
7 Professional Reporter and Notary Public, do
8 hereby certify that the foregoing record,
9 Pages 1 to 38 inclusive, is a true and
10 accurate transcript of my stenographic notes
11 taken on Tuesday, October 9, 2018, in the
12 above-captioned matter.

13 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
14 my hand and seal this 13th day of October,
15 2018, at Wilmington, Delaware.

16
17
18 
19 _____

20 GLORIA M. D'AMORE, RPR

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24



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