



Odyssey Charter School
Nurturing a Lifelong Love of Learning

May 28, 2019

The Honorable Susan S. Bunting, Ed. D.
Secretary of Education
Townsend Building
401 Federal Street, Suite 2
Dover, Delaware 19901-3639

Dear Secretary Bunting,

I am in receipt of your May 15, 2019 letter, which we received by email on May 16, notifying the Board of Odyssey Charter School (“OCS”) that the OCS charter will be placed on Formal Review by the Delaware Department of Education. The Board respects the Department’s decision, and intends to engage fully in the review process in order to reach the very best outcome for school and its students.

The Board expects to address fully and satisfactorily all issues presented in your letter over the course of the upcoming review process. However, in this letter, we propose to you a significant revision to Board’s constitution and provide you with the important reasoning behind it. Specifically, the Board respectfully suggests a new board structure consisting of eleven members, with six members to be appointed jointly by the local chapters of AHEPA and the Daughters of Penelope. Critically, those six appointees need not be AHEPAn and need not be Daughters. At least three of those appointees must be women. The additional five members will be community members, such as parents, teachers, and community leaders, which would be nominated by a committee. This structure would ensure that a bare majority of the Board’s members are appointed by Delaware’s Greek community, and that at least half of that bare majority will be women. It would also increase the size of the Board commensurate with the increased size of the school and would provide additional voices on the Board from other diverse and important groups of stakeholders. In addition, the revised conflict of interest proposed in our May 1 letter will still apply to all appointed members that are also AHEPAn or a Daughter.

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The above change in Board composition is a significant step towards addressing the concerns set forth in your letter. The change also addresses the following concerns that are of paramount importance to members of our Board and the community they represent.

As you know, OCS was founded in 2006 through the efforts and dedication of numerous members of Delaware's long-established Greek-American community. The founding of the school was an endeavor that the local Greek community strove extremely hard to accomplish, and has since become something of which it is deeply proud. The mission of the school, as set forth clearly in its charter, and as approved by both the Department and the Red Clay School District, is inextricably linked with Greek educational values, language, ideals, and culture. The school was created to pass on this rich and ancient heritage to any child in the State of Delaware who would choose to learn and benefit from it.

In the context of the upcoming review, the single greatest concern of the Board is what this process may mean for the school's unambiguous mission. To put it more directly, the Board, as well as members of the broader Greek-American community, is extremely concerned that this process may lead to a reconstitution of the Board which will reduce the Greek community's presence to a minority, which in turn will set the stage for the gradual elimination of the Greek elements of the school's curriculum. These elements are not ancillary or optional. Rather, they have constituted the very core of OCS since its founding, and indeed were the reason for its founding in the first place.

The phasing out of the Greek elements of OCS's curriculum would be disastrous. It would not serve the interests of those who matter most – the OCS student body. Nor is it a result that is consistent with this State's well-established values of diversity, multiculturalism, and equal opportunity.

We therefore respectfully submit that if the school's original mission is to be preserved for the long term, it is absolutely crucial that the majority of the Board be appointed by Delaware's Greek community. At the same time, while we believe strongly that AHEPA seeks nothing but the best for OCS and has not acted improperly or against the school's interests, we do take very seriously all the raised concerns and especially those referring to gender inclusion. As a school for both boys and girls, we value the



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diverse viewpoints of all members and we agree that it is necessary and essential that any structural concerns about gender representation be fully removed from our governance.

We hope this letter and the suggestions it contains are well-received by the Department, and that it shows the Board's commitment to engage in the review process energetically and in good faith, as we seek to jointly address the concerns presented by all stakeholders. We stand willing to enter into discussions at any time, with the aim of fully resolving all issues and concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Josiah Wolcott, Board President

Cc: Leroy Travers
John Carwell
OCS Board members
Denise Parks, Head of School
Riccardo Stoeckicht, Campus Operations Officer