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Dr. Dennis L. Loftus, President
Delaware State Board of Education
John G. Townsend Building
401 Federal Street, Suite 2
Dover, DE 19901

October 20, 2017

Dear Dr. Loftus,

I am writing this letter of support on behalf of the Early College High School at Delaware State University. Allow me to start with a very brief explanation of what an early college high school is.

- The Early College model is an initiative in the United States, initially funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, that allows students to receive a high school diploma and up to two years of college credit by taking a combination of high school and college classes.
- The primary goal is to increase students' access to a postsecondary credential.
- According to a study completed by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), Early College students are more likely to graduate from high school, more likely to enroll in college, and more likely to earn college degrees.
- There are over 300 early college high schools in this country but there is only one in Delaware. **We are unique.**

We are unique because we offer opportunity. We are unique because we offer a personalized learning environment within the context of project-based learning. We are unique because we offer options – students can take courses in 41 of the 42 majors offered by Delaware State University. The only exception is Aviation due to the age of our students. We are unique because our students have full access to DSU's accomplished faculty and resources. This provides opportunities for internships and community partnerships not easily found. The relationship with DSU is also of direct benefit to the university as it reflects its core values of outreach, community, scholarship, diversity and integrity.

- Nowhere else in this state can you earn up to 60 credits of college course work while still in high school.
- Nowhere else in this state can you earn those credits tuition-free. The cost of tuition is an in-kind contribution of Delaware State University who made a decision to invest in the future of our students.

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- Nowhere else in this state can you earn those credits without having to sit for a special exam. Do our students test? Are they assessed? Absolutely. They are assessed with the same instruments the other college students are assessed with – quizzes, projects, presentations and exams.

As of the end of the Spring 2017 semester, our then 9 – 11th grade students had earned **3,588 credits**. With there being 282 students, that is an average of over 12 credits per student. If you consider only the current seniors, they had earned an average of 32 credits before their senior year. The Early College High School represents a dream and a promise for our community at large, but specifically for parents and students.

I wear multiple hats as it pertains to the Early College High School. I am President of the Board of Directors for the Early College High School. I am Dean for the College of Education, Health and Public Policy at Delaware State University so I have the opportunity to see first-hand how powerful this relationship is and can be. Third, and most importantly, I am the parent of a child that attends the Early College High School. My daughter is strong and bright but academic success has not always come easy for her. She has to study and she has to work hard. She wants to be a doctor and it was her decision to go to the Early College HS. Her reasoning? “Mommy, if I can get started on my college classes early, than the sooner I can graduate and go on to medical school.”

It has been exciting to see her come home from school, focused on completing the hours (yes, hours) of homework, yet committed enough to her own success so that her Dad and I do not have to nag and push and nag and push and nag and push so more! She sometimes gets weary but she never gives up. She is fully supported by her team of teachers, without regard to anything besides her wonderful potential. There are no favorites. They see her as who she is – a young lady who has a desire to excel. We are behind her and they are behind her and she knows that beyond a shadow of a doubt.

I am very proud of the Early College High School at Delaware State University. In three short years they have accomplished what many thought was impossible, and we have only just begun.

If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me via phone at 302-857-6700 or via email at mhorton@desu.edu.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marshá T. Horton

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DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of the President

Dr. Dennis L. Loftus
President Delaware State Board of Education
John G. Townsend Building
401 Federal Street, Suite 2
Dover, DE 19901

October 20, 2017

Dear Dr. Loftus,

In keeping with the land-grant mission of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, I write in support of the charter renewal for the Early College High School. Delaware State University made the decision to charter ECHS after many months of deliberation. We wanted to insure that we would be offering a unique value to primarily first-generation college students who might otherwise lack the opportunity to go to any university, and who certainly would have difficulty paying for higher education.

The Early College High School model seemed to offer that possibility, and after careful study, we concluded that a school allowing students to earn up to sixty college credits by high school graduation was most closely in keeping with our traditional mission of bringing opportunity to under-served populations. However, we wanted to go beyond just providing the opportunity for students to earn credits; after all, dual enrollment programs are increasingly common around our State.

So here is what makes ECHS so special: First, our students and their families do not have to pay one dime extra to amass up to sixty college credits. DSU contributes the tuition-free courses as an in-kind contribution to the students of ECHS. Second, our high school students become rapidly acclimated to a college environment. Unlike many dual enrollment programs, our students sit in classes with regular college students, who become role models and peer tutors for them. These young students receive mentoring from our regular University faculty. It is truly an experience that money alone cannot buy.

DSU is so committed to fully integrating the ECHS experience that a dedicated on-campus facility is included in our future building plans. By analogy to foreign-language “immersion” classes, we see this as higher education “immersion” for these young people.

How successful has this been? As of last count, in the few years, we have been open; our ECHS have successfully completed 1,196 college courses for credit. That’s 3,588 credit hours awarded. Many of our senior will be prepared to enter college not as freshmen or even sophomores, but with junior-level standing—halfway through college with zero debt!

We believe so strongly in the concept that we have invested heavily in it, both with dollars and sweat. Many of our Education majors complete their Early Field Experiences or Student Teaching at ECHS.

Delaware State University is inordinately proud to be the only University in Delaware, and the only HBCU to have chartered its own high school. However, we are also humbled by the trust of the parents who send us their children, the efforts of our students, the skill of the teachers, and the openhearted collaboration of our entire University community with this project. Certainly, we hope that many of our ECHS graduates will choose DSU to continue their studies, but even if their interests lead them elsewhere, we feel quietly satisfied that we have prepared them well, come what may.

I urge the State Board of Education to act affirmatively on our application for renewal of our charter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Williams", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Harry L. Williams, President
Delaware State University