

From: Ann <annsk8r@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 07, 2015 9:40 PM
To: infocso
Cc: Heather Siple
Subject: Support for Delaware MET

Board Members,

I am disappointed that the Delaware DOE still has not figured out how to handle charter schools. The situation is urgent. Delaware saw a mass exodus from public schools as parents fled with their children to private schools. Charters have started to win back trust in public schools, and that could leverage a pathway back to creating success in traditional public schools.

But not if you keep opening and closing Charters without giving them a fair chance to operate. The message that you are sending is, "stay away from new Charter Schools." If that happens, no other programs will be able to get off the ground. This might make you happy, but believe me, parents will end up turning to the private schools before going back to the traditional public schools, and DOE will lose the ground you have gained.

I know you don't actually read these letters because I am a Gateway parent. However, on the off chance that you happen to glance over this message and read this far, please consider changing your policy on new charters. They need to be granted permission to be open for a minimum of 3-5 years, but NO LESS than 3. If you do not believe enough in the concept and the management team to make that deal, do not give the charter at all. You are really hurting kids and their families with your inability to stick to a decision. Really.

-Ann Wolfer
CPT, Military Intelligence
US Army
Mother of an Underserved Autistic Student at Gateway Lab School

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

From: aamlewis16@gmail.com on behalf of Amanda Lewis <amanda@lewiscenter.net>
Sent: Monday, December 07, 2015 8:07 PM
To: infocso
Subject: Keep the Delaware MET school open!

Please give the Delaware MET school more time to prove itself. It is a new school with a great concept and the students deserve the chance to experience this modern way of learning, that was unveiled with so much promise. There are a lot of happy students who are starting to like school again - what a gift. The internship program is fantastic and provides an unbeatable opportunity for the students to start thinking about their careers and understanding just where their education can take them. The school just needs more time, but the elements are there for an outstanding education. Thank you for taking my comments into consideration.

Amanda Lewis
Wilmington, DE

From: Shannon Mcgowan <smmcgowan710@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, December 07, 2015 4:37 PM
To: infocso
Subject: The Delaware MET

Good afternoon,

I am writing to give you my personal perspective on the Delaware MET. My son, Elijah, has been a freshman at the MET since the doors opened in August 2015. The second day of school i realized that the MET lacked proper leadership. Kids were free to do as they wished without guidance. When i would try to contact the school to address my concerns my many emails and phone calls were left unanswered and unreturned. Here are a few of some of my issues i have with the Delaware MET:

- Multiple attempts to set up meeting to implement 504 plan ignored
- Poor/no communication from teachers/administration
- Multiple dangerous incidents at school where parents were never notified (fires in bathrooms, possible guns at school, riots at lunch and upon dismissal, etc)
- Home Access Center parent/teacher portal not active
- An advisor was appointed at the beginning of the yr to assist in ensuring students excel at school, Elijah's advisor has failed to contact me without me first reaching out to him.
- The work my son has brought home is, at best, middle school level
- My son was given a F in english by a teacher who is no longer there and a file cant be found to prove these grades are merited. This is after i tried contacting this teacher multiple times since Sept to meet. I met with the principal, Tricia Hunter-Crofton, on Tuesday 12/1 in hopes of rectifying this issue. Mrs Hunter-Crofton assured me she would contact me by the end of last week to fix this issue but i have yet to hear from her. This is his permanent record and i feel it is extremely wrong that he must pay for the negligence of this "learning institution"
- The school has not requested records from my son's previous school, Nativity Prep.

As much as i wish that the Delaware MET was doing what it set out to do, it clearly has not. It seemed like a very promising program in theory and at the spring open house but somewhere along the way it went astray. I feel as if the MET was to stay open for the rest of this school year would be doing our children a disservice.

Thank you for the chance to share my concerns.

With gratitude,

Shannon McGowan

December 8, 2015

My name is Joelle Wagner-Lynch and I am a parent of a student that attends the Delaware Met. I am writing this to be a part of the public record. There is much to be said.

Public v. Private. Public v. Charter. School choice. Portability. The civil rights issue of our time. 21st century skills. College and career ready. Familiar buzz words that dominate our educational landscape not only in the state of Delaware, but all across the country. I would like to add a few situation specific words to the local lexicon; lack of accountability, profit margin, laissez faire, “those” students, “those” people, “that” school, disturbed, disruptive, disengaged, and destructive. These words have been used in association with what describe what I perceive to be one of the largest educational debacles in this state.

The Delaware Met Charter High School is predicated on a national model that has proven effective in many areas of the country. I am familiar with the model and of the success that it can bring about for the student who has not found his/her way in a more traditional setting. As a parent, it is my responsibility to find the best academic “fit” for my child. I wholeheartedly believed that the Big Picture model was the best for him as a highly intellectual, innately curious albeit nominally academically motivated child that doesn’t quite fit the traditional school model. I did not look to the more traditional public school as an alternative given the relatively recent history of the Delaware schools with minority males. This model, if implemented correctly, would have been the missing piece of the puzzle for my son.

I knew the initial opening of the school would be rocky; any new endeavor is. I felt reasonably confident that all of the players involved in the establishment and implementation of the school were committed to its success. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case. The school was not prepared. The teachers were not prepared. The students were not given the guidance they needed to make the necessary adjustments to realize success. Chaos ruled the day. The charter management organization immediately distanced themselves from the management they failed to provide. The school leader position became a revolving door. Office personnel changed weekly. There was no sense of stability. There was no sense of a shared or common purpose. Students received no guidance. Major changes regarding class schedules, class choices and teachers happened at least 3 times in as many weeks. The promised programs never materialized.

I believe in educational opportunity. Charter schools were designed to provide positive educational alternatives for students, teachers and parents. Ironically they are quickly becoming a cesspool of greed, classism, racism, and indifference. What has been committed here is nothing short of educational malpractice and those who are responsible **MUST** be held accountable. Innovative Schools has proven themselves to innovate nothing. It is my sincere hope that they are sanctioned appropriately for this. It is also my hope that the DOE take a long hard look at the charter school process in the state. I seek an immediate remedy for my son who has lost time in this morass.

From: Heather Siple <heather@sipleart.com>
Sent: Monday, December 07, 2015 4:00 PM
To: infocso
Subject: Delaware MET

I am writing in support of the Delaware MET. Although this school has had its challenges, it is a place where my son has been thriving.

Unlike many charter schools in Delaware, the MET opened its doors not just to the best and brightest, nor to the "safe" demographic areas, but to everyone. It offered a way for the hardest-to-reach students to learn what they needed to learn and WHY they needed to learn it. They offered a school structure that made sense to good students who felt frazzled by the standard Delaware public schools. It has struggled to get the ball rolling because they attracted so many who needed a place to turn around. After only a few weeks, the school was already under fire because the magic system didn't work. Do I really have to tell anyone in the education field that there is no magic solution that will change every hardened teen instantly?

Meanwhile, my son thrives in a place where perhaps one would expect not. He's a sheltered, middle-class white kid who spent most of his education in private school. Now he's in a predominantly black school with only a few pale faces of any type and his classmates are not exactly the best-behaved. But, he's comfortable there. No one gives him any trouble. He loves his teachers. He loves the way the school works. My class clown announced after a couple weeks that since the rest of his class was so immature he was going to straighten up and set an example. And he did. He missed straight As by one class in his one and only marking period so far. He's working more seriously now than ever before. He digs into his homework and gets it done without fail or even supervision - for the first time since he started getting it assigned in elementary school!

Despite accusations that the school isn't following its model, they have come through to begin having students apply for the internships that are so crucial to their model. My son and a friend were two of the first to try out. For two days they spent the morning learning everything there was to know about Gmail and the afternoon helping a non-profit work out their difficulties with that software. The boys were thrilled. The school was thrilled. The non-profit was thrilled. My son's goal in life is to work in Information Technology. That's why he was matched up with this project. What more can you ask than this kind of experience? More can follow, but only if the school stays open long enough.

We have discussed our options as a family several times. Does he want to stay? Does he want to face having to make up an entire semester if he waits to transfer somewhere else at the end of the semester? To every question we pose his answer is the same. If he leaves and it stays open, how much will he miss for having left this opportunity? He is very emphatic that he wants to stay. Please let him!

Heather Siple