



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

Supporting School Success, LLC

Juanita Wilson, SSS Partner & Associate Director,
FLEX Program
1101 Smyrna-Leipsic Road
Smyrna, DE 19977
302-242-3224

October 24, 2017

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

Dear Dr. Loftus,

I am writing in support of the charter renewal for the Early College High School Charter School. It has been my honor to serve on the ECHS Board for the past two years. As a retired teacher, principal, and district administrator, I have had over forty years of experience in public education. It is my assessment that the ECHS is providing a unique and valuable educational opportunity for high school students in the State of Delaware.

The concept of an early college high school is built on the idea that students can be supported toward a college track by specialized support and a school culture and environment that provides opportunity – opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge, and maturity that is necessary to be successful in a college setting. An original intent for the school was to support potential candidates who would be the first members of their families to attend college. That has continued to be a charge for recruitment, but is not the only criteria for enrollment. Recruitment has been statewide and families have been fully informed of the rigor of the program and the mission of the school. As a result, the current enrollment has risen to 425 students in grades 9 through 12.

Currently, students are provided a solid foundation in grades nine and ten to ensure that they are prepared to take college courses in grades ten through twelve. Students are meeting high school requirements as well as earning college credits.

It has been my observation that the partnership between the school and its parent partner, Delaware State University is positive and exceptional. DSU has provided many resources including the facilities on and off campus, course registration and fulfillment of course offerings.