## In The Matter Of:

Department of Education
In re: Odyssey Charter School

Hearing
June 11, 2019

Wilcox & Fetzer, Ltd.
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## STATE OF DELAWARE

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

IN RE: ODYSSEY CHARTER: SCHOOL:

Hearing taken pursuant to
notice at the State of Delaware, Department
of Education, Townsend Building, Cabinet
Room, Second Floor, Dover, Delaware,
beginning at 5:00 p.m., on Tuesday, June 11,
2019, before Gloria M. D'Amore, Registered
Professional Reporter and Notary Public.

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1	APPEARANCES:
2	
3	On behalf of the Department of Education:
4	LEROY TRAVERS
5	On behalf of the Delaware State
6	Board of Education: VINCENT LOFINK
7	
8	On behalf of the State of Delaware Delaware Department of Justice:
9	JENNIFER L. SINGH, ESQUIRE
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MR. TRAVERS: Good evening. I	
2 declare this public hearing to be open.	
3 My name is Leroy Travers. I am	ı
the Lead Education Associate, and I have been	
	-
6 conduct this public hearing.	
7 At this time, I ask that the	
other people up here with me introduce	
9 themselves for the record.	
MR. LOFINK: Vincent Lofink.	
11 State Board of Education.	
MS. SINGH: Jennifer Singh,	
Deputy Attorney General assigned to represent	_
the Department of Education.	
MR. TRAVERS: The charter of	
Odyssey Charter School was placed on formal	
review by the Department of Education.	
18 As required by law, the matter	
was referred to the Charter School	
20 Accountability Committee for investigation	
and report.	
This joint public hearing is	
23 being held by the Department of Education and	l
the State Board of Education to assist in the	

1 decision of whether the criteria set forth for remedial action in the Delaware Code has 2 been satisfied. 3 4 This hearing provides the CSAC, the Secretary of Education and the State 5 Board an opportunity to receive public 6 7 comments about this formal review. I would like the record to 8 reflect that the notice of the time, date and 9 10 place of today's public hearing was posted at 11 the Charter School Accountability Committee's 12 official place of business, on the Department of Education's official website, and on the 13 14 State Board Public Meeting Calendar on the 15 State's official website on May 17, 2019. Further, the school was 16 17 personally notified of the time, date and 18 place of today's public hearing on May 16, 19 2019. A court reporter is present so 20 21 that a record of this hearing can be made. It will be necessary for each speaker to 22 23 clearly identify him or herself before 24 beginning to speak so that the court reporter

1	will be able to note who you are.
2	If you are reading a prepared
3	statement, we ask that you provide that to
4	the court reporter so that she can make it
5	part of her public record.
6	The record of this hearing will
7	be provided to the Secretary of Education,
8	the Charter School Accountability Committee
9	and the Members of the State Board of
10	Education, together with any written or
11	electronic comments received during the
12	course of the formal review process.
13	To date, comments received on
14	this formal review are listed on the Charter
15	School Office's official website.
16	We will proceed in the
17	following manner.
18	First, we will hear from any
19	representatives of the Charter School who
20	wish to comment on the formal review process.
21	Then we will take comments from
22	anyone else who desires to speak.
23	There are sign-up sheets at the
24	back of the room on the table. If you desire

1	to speak and have not signed up, please do so
2	now. Those that have not signed up will not
3	be permitted to speak and instead will be
4	asked to submit written comment.
5	We will now pause for a moment
6	to ensure that anyone that wishes to sign up
7	can do that.
8	We do reserve the right to
9	limit comment if it is purely repetitive or
10	cumulative. So we do reserve the right to
11	limit time.
12	This is a time to collect
13	public comment. Questions of the Department
14	of Education or the State Board of Education
15	are not permitted and will not be
16	acknowledged.
17	At this point, we will accept
18	comments from any representatives of the
19	school.
20	MR. WOLCOTT: Josiah Wolcott.
21	I'm here for Odyssey Charter School.
22	I just want to thank everybody
23	for coming out on a beautiful night the
24	last day of school. So I thank everybody for

1	taking time out of your busy schedules to
2	come down here and speak. It is good to see
3	a lot of people here.
4	And thank you, again, for
5	coming out.
6	MR. TRAVERS: Any other
7	representatives from the school that would
8	like to speak?
9	At this point, we will accept
10	comments from those that have signed up to
11	speak. Please remember to identify yourself
12	before you begin your comments.
13	First we have Michael Roussos.
14	MR. ROUSSOS: Michael Roussos.
15	R-O-U-S-S-O-S.
16	Well, I'm here to speak as a
17	parent in support of AHEPA and want the DOE
18	to accept the proposal in leadership changes
19	proposed by the Board.
20	So this country is truly the
21	land of opportunity. And many souls before
22	us gave their blood, sweat and tears and even
23	their lives to make it so.
24	I am going to tell a story



1 about a Delawarean that I spoke to yesterday who is in his mid-'70s and is still running 2 3 his own business. This gentleman told me a 4 story of how his ancestors came to Delaware in the mid-1600's as indentured servants. 5 6 They worked in Lower Delaware for seven 7 years, earned their freedom and became 8 industrious farmers. They expanded their holdings into land wealth as they expanded 9 10 their family. Their family interests 11 divided, and one side moved into the State's 12 famous poultry business. The other side 13 continued to grow crops. 14 In the early 1900's, the 15 farming side had two years of bad crops and lost the farm in foreclosure. 16 descendants of the foreclosed farm have since 17 18 developed their own initiatives and are all 19 doing well and have some sort of business on their own. 20 21 The point of this story is to show that those who are true do-ers possess 22 23 the ability to become something from very little or nothing at all. 24 All it takes is

1	perseverance, sacrifice and commitment.
2	The story of this ancient
3	Delaware family similarly parallels the
4	struggles of the Hellenic culture as they
5	left their homelands for reasons related to
6	foreign occupation and slavery in order to go
7	to other lands and reestablish themselves.
8	The origin of AHEPA represents
9	a common element of organization to help
10	struggling Greeks assimilate, educate,
11	rebuild and generally fit into society.
12	Today, that Greek culture is
13	well established outside of Greece.
14	AHEPA has morphed into a
15	philanthropic organization that is committed
16	to helping people with needs of all cultures.
17	The Odyssey School is an apex
18	example of that here and now before you.
19	Any decision by the DOE to take
20	the leadership role away from AHEPA is a
21	decision to indirectly attack the Greek
22	culture and disregard the sacrifices made by
23	the OCS founders and their ancestors who
24	matriculated into this society.

1	The OCS Board has sent a letter
2	answering all of your concerns and have
3	agreed to address and correct any of the
4	perceived shortcomings regarding the
5	management of the school. They have also
6	offered a solution for the Board composition
7	that would horizontally spread additional
8	representation for all stakeholders. Their
9	offer is reasonable.
10	And I request that you strongly
11	consider accepting the proposal that's on the
12	table.
13	Thank you.
14	MR. TRAVERS: Sir, do you mind
15	if we have your written statement?
16	MR. ROUSSOS: Yes.
17	MR. TRAVERS: John Nicholson.
18	MR. NICHOLSON: John Nicholson.
19	J-O-H-N. N-I-C-H-O-L-S-O-N.
20	Members of the Charter School
21	Accountability Committee.
22	Thank you for the chance to
23	speak to you today in support of Odyssey
24	Charter School and retaining the AHEPA



1	majority on the Board.
2	My wife, Estelle and I, are the
3	parents of rising second and fourth graders
4	at Odyssey. We are not Greek and have no
5	knowledge of AHEPA before coming to Odyssey.
6	When the time came for our
7	daughter to go to kindergarten, we were
8	excited about the idea of a Charter School
9	where she would learn a second language and
10	have extra emphasis on math.
11	When it was our son's turn, we
12	had the luxury of choosing between the gifted
13	program and Odyssey.
14	Given our wonderful experience
15	in the first two years, we applied to have
16	him to be in the first class of the immersion
17	program and we could not be happier with the
18	results.
19	We owe that success both to the
20	outstanding teachers that our children have
21	had, as well as the Greek framework created
22	by AHEPA to start the school.
23	While I believe that the
24	decisions documented by the Public Integrity



1	Commission in their letter were made in good
2	faith by the Members of the Board, having
3	solicited the advice of counsel and other
4	consultants, the PIC's conclusions are what
5	they are.
6	I'm not here to litigate the
7	findings of the PIC.
8	The current Board has accepted
9	the PIC's recommendations and proposed steps
10	to address every item of the PIC report with
11	one exception. Removing the AHEPA majority
12	from the Board.
13	As a parent and donor to the
14	school, I am here to ask that you accept the
15	Board's proposal.
16	Odyssey was created based on
17	Greek language and cultural traditions that
18	have given so much to Western civilization
19	and the foundations of American government,
20	culture and language.
21	With the appointment of Denise
22	Parks and Riccardo Stoeckicht, as co-heads of
23	the school, in whom I have tremendous
24	confidence, the only Greek leadership of the

1 school is the Board. Several years ago, there was a 2 3 proposal to make Greek language an option in 4 both middle and high school, rather than a requirement. It was not adopted. And having 5 6 AHEPA majority on the Board ensures that the 7 school remains focused on its founding principles and mission. 8 AHEPA is responsible for 9 10 leading the way to creation of the very successful immersion program under Dr. Marina 11 12 Mattheoudakis. AHEPA is responsible for the 13 14 relationship with the Greek Ministry of 15 Education that provides native-speaking Greek 16 teachers to Odyssey at the Greek government's 17 cost. Not only do the students benefit from 18 learning from native speakers, the entire Odyssey community benefits from knowing 19 people from another country. 20 21 The AHEPA majority on the Board provides the assurances to the Greek 22 23 government that those teachers will be 24 supported and well taken care of.



1	I submitted a letter signed by
2	over 145 members of the Odyssey community,
3	family, teachers and staff, who support the
4	maintenance of the current Board structure
5	and lists the significant contributions made
6	by the AHEPA to Odyssey, contributions that
7	outweigh by orders of magnitude any purported
8	benefit to AHEPA or individual AHEPANS.
9	Given all of those
10	contributions, I would ask that you accept
11	the proposal of the Odyssey Board with regard
12	to the PIC recommendations and give the Board
13	a chance to implement them.
14	The issues raised by the PIC
15	are not a funding or educational crisis that
16	threatens the immediate operation of the
17	school.
18	I have confidence that you will
19	see, when implemented, those recommendations
20	will address your concerns. But if they
21	don't, you have a second bite at that
22	particular apple.
23	Since the school is up for
24	renewal of this charter, you can allow the



_	
1	Board to implement the mitigations they've
2	proposed and you can evaluate them as part of
3	the renewal process.
4	If the Board has not lived up
5	to its proposal, then you have the option to
6	require a change in the Board's structure at
7	that time.
8	Thank you for your time and
9	attention.
LO	MR. TRAVERS: Sir, do you mind
11	if we have your written statement for the
12	transcriber?
L3	Marina Mattheoudakis.
14	MS. MATTHEOUDAKIS: Marina
15	Mattheoudakis. M-A-R-I-N-A.
16	M-A-T-T-H-E-O-U-D-A-K-I-S.
17	Members of the Charter School
18	Accountability.
19	Thank you for the opportunity
20	to speak to you today in support of Odyssey
21	Charter School.
22	My name is Marina
23	Mattheoudakis, and I have been working as the
2.4	Dean of the Greek program at Odyssey Charter



1 School for the last two years. COURT REPORTER: Ma'am, could 2 3 you slow down, please? 4 MS. MATTHEOUDAKIS: I am a university professor in Greece, and I came 5 here after an invitation of the former 6 7 president of the OCS Board. As we all know, the Greek 8 9 program is the distinguishing characteristic 10 of this Charter School. And as an academic, 11 myself, being responsible for this program, I 12 would like to present my own perception of how they should be contextualized and 13 14 developed. 15 Based on my academic knowledge, 16 I can assure you that the Greek program, as 17 this is currently implemented at OCS, makes 18 this school a unique educational model. Ιt is not only the language itself that makes it 19 stand out, it is the implementation of the 20 21 program itself, the robust curriculum, the immersion program, which was launched last 22 23 year, the educational background and 24 continuous professional development of the



1	Greek faculty, the educational materials that
2	we are designing and choosing, the networks
3	we have developed with educational
4	institutions in Greece and here in the US.
5	The academic results and achievements of our
6	students, and the list goes on.
7	This is a robust academic
8	program founded on research and particular
9	models of language and position of teaching.
10	Everyone at school is very proud of it.
11	Greeks and Americans alike.
12	I am afraid that none of the
13	above would have been possible without the
14	support and initiatives of the Board.
15	I would not have been here if I
16	had not been invited by the former president
17	of the OCS Board.
18	The heads of the school, Ms.
19	Denise Parks and Mr. Riccardo Stoeckicht, are
20	very supportive of the program and of its
21	needs, and I thank them both.
22	However, this is a
23	Greek-American School, and apart from the
24	AHEPAN Members on the Board, there are no

1	Greeks in its leadership. Unfortunately, for
2	the time being, at least I am on loan from
3	Greece. And at some time, I will need to
4	return to Greece.
5	The Greek program needs to
6	continue to growing as the school grows and
7	as global citizenship is promoted by the
8	Department of Education in Delaware.
9	Multilingualism and multicultural identity go
10	hand in hand. The Greek-American identity of
11	the school does not need only to be supported
12	by the leadership. It needs to be reflected
13	on its leadership.
14	The composition of the OCS
15	Board needs to retain its bilingual and
16	bicultural identity in order not only to
17	safeguard the development of its Greek
18	program, but in order to be consistent with a
19	bicultural identity and ideas of global
20	citizenship the school wishes to promote.
21	Thank you.
22	MR. TRAVERS: Eva Jannelli.
23	MS. JANNELLI: My name is Eva
24	Jannelli. J-A-N-N-E-L-L-I. And I'm a

1 teacher at Odyssey Charter School. 2 I started working at Odyssey 3 about ten-years-ago, nine- or ten-years-ago. 4 But my involvement with the school is way before that, ever since somebody very near 5 and dear to my heart brought an idea from 6 7 Florida, where the initial school had started, something that was like our model. 8 And then a group of people with a vision 9 10 embraced that idea and made it their mission, 11 and that group was AHEPA. 12 I have witnessed the school starting from a rental unit in the back of 13 14 the parking lot, next to a grocery store and 15 car dealership to the multibuilding complex 16 we have now. We used to have a couple of 17 hundred students. The school, nobody had 18 heard about. In the beginning, we had to convince people to enroll their kids. 19 now, we have a thousand students on a waiting 20 21 list and 1,800 students currently enrolled. While the immense success of 22 our school is due to many factors, I feel 23 24 AHEPA, the founding organization, is the



1 cornerstone from which it is all based. Their vision has attracted and 2 3 inspired talented teachers, who are 4 tirelessly committed and passionate about our students' highest achievements. 5 Those of us who have been with our school for a while 6 7 know very well that none of what OCS has achieved would have been possible without the 8 continuous and tireless support of the AHEPA. 9 10 The contributions from the 11 AHEPA are numerous and they influence every 12 aspect of the school; from the money they provide to start up the school, to the 13 ongoing commitment of those who serve on the 14 15 Board and gave their time and their efforts, 16 to the acquisition of the facilities, 17 including extra buildings that act as a 18 rental unit and provide income, to the ongoing fundraising and networking that aids 19 the school and creates unique opportunities 20 21 for the students. 22 With any kind of growth comes 23 growing pain. And there are some 24 disagreements and there are some mistakes



1	probably that have been made.
2	I just feel that getting rid of
3	the AHEPA majority on the Board of OCS will
4	not solve this issue.
5	I feel that AHEPA majority is
6	necessary in order to ensure that the mission
7	and vision of the school continues and that
8	the Greek programs remain a vital part of our
9	school.
10	I kindly ask you to take my
11	point of view into consideration because not
12	only have I been here for a while, but I am
13	one of the oldest teachers here. So I feel
14	that AHEPA'S vision is what makes us unique.
15	It is what attracts donors, investors,
16	parents and students alike. Implementing the
17	vision, this vision is what ensures student
18	success.
19	And I would like to ask you to
20	support us on continuing on this path of
21	success.
22	Thank you.
23	MR. TRAVERS: Maria
24	Paraponiari.



1	MS. PARAPONIARI: Hello. My
2	name is Maria Paraponiari.
	_
3	P-A-R-A-P-O-N-I-A-R-I.
4	As a new Greek language
5	teacher, there were many times that I
6	experienced AHEPA situation in support of
7	Odyssey Charter School.
8	First, I cannot ignore the fact
9	that I was hired
10	COURT REPORTER: Maria, could
11	you slow down, please?
12	MS. PARAPONIARI: As a new
13	Greek language teacher, there were many times
14	that I experienced AHEPA situation in support
15	of Odyssey Charter School.
16	First, I cannot ignore the fact
L7	that I was hired by (inaudible) and teaching
18	(inaudible) which was implemented later in
19	my job.
20	In the last three years, AHEPA
21	gave us all many opportunities to thrive and
22	succeed. One of the great opportunities was
23	for me to work in an (inaudible) program and
24	also another great opportunity was for the

1	participation of the Greek (inaudible) such
2	at the Phillies game, which helped me be more
3	competent and gain many performing skills.
4	MS. SINGH: Ma'am, she has to
5	keep track of everything that you're saying.
6	So it is much easier for her to do if you
7	speak more slowly, please.
8	MS. PARAPONIARI: Many AHEPA
9	played a major role since they organized many
10	events and sports families, even financially
11	to participate in such a theme.
12	Also, thanks to the AHEPA, the
13	Greek department had the opportunity to
14	collaborate with many academic teachers from
15	all over the world who gave us many
16	opportunities to address as teachers and as a
17	result get better at doing their jobs.
18	For all of those reasons, I
19	believe that AHEPA is a very important
20	element of Odyssey. With AHEPA, all the work
21	is better. And without their help, the Greek
22	department is not going to be the same.
23	We are all a big family. This
24	is a message I receive everyday from our

1	school. And AHEPA wants us to continue.
2	Thank you.
3	UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr.
4	Travers, she can send that to you as well.
5	MR. TRAVERS: Yes. That would
6	be wonderful.
7	Can you send your notes? Would
8	you be able to E-mail those?
9	MS. PARAPONIARI: I can send it
10	to you via E-mail.
11	MR. TRAVERS: Thank you.
12	Zafeirios Ntouvis.
13	MR. NTOUVIS: Zafeirios
14	Ntouvis. Z-A-F-E-I-R-I-O-S. N-T-O-U-V-I-S.
15	I'm a one of the Greek teachers
16	working at OCS. I've been with the school
17	for one year. I would like to read some
18	excerpts from a letter that was written by
19	Vicky Goulis, who is another Greek teacher,
20	but was not able to be here today.
21	Odyssey Charter School was
22	founded because of the collective belief in
23	creating a rich cultural education for
24	students, with a focus on academics, Greek



1	culture and mathematics.
2	We believe AHEPA'S dedication
3	and vision have kept this mission alive for
4	the past 12 years since the inception of the
5	school.
6	When I, along with other
7	teachers and the administration were hired by
8	Odyssey Charter School, we were all aware of
9	AHEPA'S mission and goals. And we made our
10	decision to commit to their vision.
11	We believe there is absolutely
12	no reason why this should be cast out now.
13	If we all truly have the
14	students' best interest at heart, there
15	should be a significant effort by everyone to
16	improve and move our community forward,
17	instead of the needless power struggles.
18	AHEPA has been and should
19	remain at the heart of Odyssey. It is a
20	unique school, like no other. And without
21	AHEPA, Odyssey would not have been and be the
22	exceptional school we have all come to know
23	and love.
24	It is my sincere hope that you



1	would consider accepting AHEPA'S proposal and
2	keep our school the number one school in
3	Delaware.
4	Thank you.
5	MR. TRAVERS: Sir, do you mind
6	if we have the remarks?
7	Paul Brooks.
8	MR. BROOKS: I have a
9	relatively easy name.
10	Honorable Members of the
11	Charter School Accountability Commission.
12	I am an Odyssey parent and
13	Chairman of the CBOC. My family has been at
14	Odyssey for seven years now and we are very
15	happy with the school.
16	The dual language program is
17	why we picked Odyssey, but we are sticking
18	with Odyssey because of the excellent, well
19	rounded education that our children are
20	receiving. And we fully intend to see our
21	children graduate from Odyssey.
22	I operate a small business. So
23	I understand how budgets work. In the past
2.4	four-and-a-half years that I have been on the

1	CBOC, I have never seen anything improper in
2	financials. I have seen some numbers that
3	are higher than what I would have expected,
4	like the line item for legal expenses. But I
5	understand in any business that is growing,
6	expenses are growing as well.
7	I do believe that improved
8	communication could have mitigated some of
9	the mistrust that developed over the
10	leadership. I firmly believe that Odyssey is
11	a great school because of the partnership
12	between the Board, the administration,
13	teachers, parents, students and AHEPA.
14	In closing, I just hope that we
15	can put all of the divisiveness behind us and
16	start working together again to keep Odyssey
17	great and give our children a bright future.
18	Thank you.
19	MR. TRAVERS: Maryann Yaram.
20	MS. YARAM: First name is
21	Maryann, M-A-R-Y-A-N-N. Last name is
22	Y-A-R-A-M.
23	MS. YARAM: Respected Members
24	of the Charter School Accountability



1 Committee. My name is Maryanne Yaram. And I work 2 a parent of a child at Odyssey. there as a Staff and Student Development 3 4 Specialist. 5 I have been a part of the 6 Odyssey community for ten years now, first as a parent, then as a staff member. I am also 7 a member of the union. And I would like to 8 express my support for the Board. Not just 9 10 as a first generation immigrant, but also as someone who has given a lot of time and 11 12 dedication to explore the fields of education. I do know the value of cultural 13 14 intelligence. 15 As our world becomes smaller 16 and smaller into a global village and perspective clash, it's here that cultural 17 18 intelligence becomes a vital part of the fabric of our world. It develops tolerance, 19 understanding, mutual respect, and most of 20 21 all, empathy. All critical traits to live in a world of differing perspectives. 22 23 I gave to Odyssey what was most 24 precious to me, my children, because I knew



1	that Odyssey valued cultural intelligence and
2	global citizenship.
3	There are very few schools that
4	prioritize these values that AHEPA infused
5	into the school.
6	So I am not saying that the
7	organization is perfect, or that they didn't
8	make mistakes.
9	The Board could have done
10	better with keeping track of finances and
11	being more sensitive to balancing the public
12	image of AHEPA at Odyssey.
13	However, the decisions, I
14	believe, were made not for anyone's personal
15	benefit, but for the collective benefit of
16	providing the best education to as many
17	families as possible.
18	Their ambition to make it
19	possible to provide a high quality education
20	makes for a more equitable society and it
21	should be something that is encouraged and
22	not deterred with a conflict of interest.
23	It is AHEPA'S passion and
24	ambition that took the school from its humble

1	beginnings to what it is now with 1,800
2	students and a vision of a global campus.
3	You, the Members of the Charter
4	School Accountability Committee, now have the
5	power to safeguard the unique nature of the
6	school by allowing the Board to keep its
7	AHEPA majority or contribute to making
8	Odyssey just like any other school.
9	As you make your decision,
10	please consider two other factors. Question
11	the news that you come across. The very same
12	people who built this school with a vision
13	for the past 12 years are now being accused
14	of misogynistic. But if they were, why is it
15	44 percent of our Board Members are women.
16	While Newark Charter has only 36 percent and
17	DMA has only 14 percent? Why did they vote
18	to have a woman as the head of school? Why
19	are they okay with two out of the three deans
20	being women?
21	The other factor I would like
22	you to consider is the authenticity of the
23	vote of no confidence.
24	As a member of the union, it



1	caught me off guard when the vote of no
2	confidence was sent. No official discussion
3	made about it.
4	In the absence of an open
5	discussion, I would question the validity of
6	the vote. Conclusion were arrived at without
7	an open discussion.
8	In conclusion, I request you to
9	weigh the various angle cautiously while
10	making your final decisions.
11	Thank you for your time.
12	Can I leave the letter that I
13	sent? Some of the E-mails bounced back.
14	MR. TRAVERS: Certainly.
15	Tami Soltow.
16	MS. SOLTOW: My name is Tami
17	Soltow. T-A-M-I. S-O-L-T-O-W.
18	First of all, I just want to
19	say that this meeting today is not about
20	AHEPA. It is about a school, Odyssey Charter
21	School. And we should be talking more about
22	the school than about an outside
23	organization.
24	Not only am I a parent to two



1 children, but I am also a teacher at Odyssey and Member of the School Board for the past 2 3 three years. 4 And during these past three years, I have been appalled by the behavior 5 and continued actions of this Board and their 6 7 blatant disregard of the law, the regulations and facts. 8 And I want to make note that 9 10 besides our Board President, I'm the only 11 Board Member here tonight. 12 I do not come here lightly. 13 Because in the past three years, not only have I missed, and I'm going to be personal, 14 15 events and time with my family for the voluminous amount of hours with the Board 16 17 only to discuss AHEPA and Ithaka and not 18 Odyssey Charter School, but I've been yelled I've been cursed at. I've been 19 demeaned by Board Members, both personally 20 21 and under their breath in recorded Board And I've had my job threatened. 22 Meetings. 23 I've been looked at negatively 24 and told that I'm out to destroy the school.

1	No. I'm here to talk about the truth and the
2	facts.
3	The funny thing about facts, my
4	friends, is that despite the attempts of the
5	Board, they cannot be interpreted. They
6	cannot be changed, and they cannot be
7	maligned for they are facts.
8	And the facts are that this
9	Board violated state laws, DOE rules and
10	regulations and maybe even criminal code
11	laws.
12	To break it down, let's talk
13	about three different things.
14	Let's talk about the five.
15	Their failure to abide by fiduciary duty and
16	financial impropriety.
17	In my three years on the Board,
18	five AHEPA Members vote together. In fact,
19	they have only voted against one another two
20	times. The first was with the supermajority.
21	The next month after that vote, one of them
22	resigned and the other reversed his decision,
23	his vote.
24	In a May 2, 2018, four-hour

1 long Executive Session Meeting, when Members of the five went against one another and 2 voted to hire Ms. Denise Parks, yes, she is a 3 4 woman, but she is a qualified woman. We were told within days that AHEPA had a change of 5 heart, and they were going to go with the 6 7 dual headed model. Riccardo, who made over \$70,000 8 of Odyssey money working for AHEPA, was then 9 10 hired. 11 I was told in a telephone 12 conversation as a Member of the Hiring Committee that we have the five. You must 13 14 compromise. 15 And I implore you to listen to the Board Meeting minutes of Spring 2018. 16 You can hear the frustration of the teachers 17 18 to the failure to appoint Denise Parks as They would not even entitle 19 head of school. her as a title of head of school. 20 21 Now, that led to the union. And the union is a good union. 22 The main 23 reason the union was cultivated was because 24 of the Board. How do I know? Because I



1 started the union. Now, there is this ridiculous 2 3 notion about AHEPA choosing the Board 4 Members. And look at where it has taken us It has taken us to secret meetings 5 today. 6 with the Governor and arranged meetings with 7 a certain few who agree with the five so that 8 they could have access to our investor consultant and financial records. 9 10 I'm not a member of the five. 11 I'm not a member of AHEPA. And I'm a woman. 12 So I don't get to know the Board Members who 13 are voted in until the monthly meeting. 14 did I get to know that Joe was appointed as 15 the President, even as a Board Member, until 16 the regular Board Meeting. I didn't even 17 know about the meeting with the Governor 18 until I read about it. 19 Where in this country is it permitted that I can't go in and vote for a 20 21 Board Member, or even be allowed in a room as a woman and not a member of a certain 22 23 organization? You see, it has always been 24 about the five, and it will always be about

1	the five until you stop it. It should always
2	be instead about Odyssey Charter School.
3	The second point I want to say
4	is their failure to abide by fiduciary duty.
5	Members of a public school
6	board have a fiduciary duty to act in and for
7	the best interest of the school. And this
8	duty has been breached by most of our Board
9	Members. They have given money to
10	AHEPA-sponsored Ithaka, rather than to our
11	school. They've given money to a gala that
12	has been coded under local funds until I
13	talked about it in a January meeting where I
14	was yelled at and the next day it was then
15	changed.
16	Their unilateral decision to
17	meet with the Governor due to governance
18	issues. And putting a letter together to
19	you, CSAC, without a vote because the
20	president, and I will quote, Believes
21	submitting it is within the scope of
22	authority, and that has already been given to
23	him.
24	This Board has looked for



1	outside interests rather than the school.
2	They have chosen to advertise their
3	involvement, and look on our website, please,
4	rather than actually be involved.
5	It is the teachers reason. The
6	teachers are the reason for the school's
7	success.
8	To say allowed that AHEPA was
9	the reason why 30 students went to Greece,
10	this past spring break is false.
11	The reason is, it's because
12	those students paid \$3,000 through EF Tours
13	to go.
14	These Board Members have little
15	to no ideas about the program. Yet, they
16	show up once a month for a meeting and feel
17	entitled. Their cavalier dismissal of the
18	PIC Opinion as political.
19	Using the phrase that laws and
20	regulations are just guidelines and can be
21	interpreted. And dare to say that OCS is an
22	incorporation and subject to corporate law,
23	rather than a public school, is wrong.
24	The third thing is the breach



1	of the fiduciary duty causing the financial
2	impropriety.
3	Why, why did a public school
4	give money to AHEPA-sponsored program? And
5	then dare to rework it to say, Prove it, that
6	these were no longer public funds. Creating
7	a preschool is against Odyssey's charter. It
8	was coded to local funds. To say, so what,
9	we may have made mistakes. So what, we may
10	have spent funds in the glean of millions.
11	You cannot just simply defy the law and
12	rules.
13	AHEPA Members have repeatedly
14	stated on the record in our meetings that
15	this is AHEPA School Board. And to
16	cavalierly really say that is a slip of the
17	tongue is wrong because it wasn't. It was
18	with purpose. And so is my presence here.
19	You cannot argue with invoices and the facts.
20	The fact is that the PIC
21	Opinion is powerful and it is correct. It
22	shows the extreme that others will go to
23	maintain control.
24	And I want you to Google a



1	video. Google AHEPAN Odyssey Charter School.
2	It is a 14-minute long video. And I
3	encourage you to watch it. It will clear up
4	a lot of your questions.
5	And as I close, the mission and
6	vision argument is quite emphatically
7	nonsense. Who better to carry out the
8	mission and vision of the school than the
9	trained and dedicated and qualified teachers
10	who are at OCS, Odyssey Charter School, every
11	moment of the day and don't use it as a
12	showpiece.
13	To argue that we're going
14	change the charter is to simply say that DOE
15	can't tell us what to do with our school.
16	And again, it is wrong. Never once has the
17	union or teachers or the public said that
18	AHEPANS have to go. It's all about control.
19	And if not, they are not happy
20	with the four being a minority, then they are
21	telling us, and they are telling you how
22	little they value that for a minority.
23	I am the minority. They
24	literally devalue me by refusing to become



1	me.
2	The reach of the Board further
3	goes beyond the mission and vision of the
4	school. They make every single decision
5	relating to that school. Not the mission and
6	vision.
7	The facts are that this group
8	of five and others have breached their
9	fiduciary duty and conducted financial
10	improprieties. And they have failed to look
11	out for the best interest of our school.
12	I implore you to help out our
13	school to make the right change. We are on
14	the precipice we are on the precipice of
15	something that has gone terribly wrong. We
16	are going to lose our teachers. We are going
17	to lose our students. And we are going to
18	lose our school, not AHEPA school.
19	Thank you.
20	MR. TRAVERS: I noticed someone
21	came in and signed in.
22	MS. BALLAS: Jennifer Ballas.
23	B-A-L-L-A-S, which is, by the way, Greek.
24	Excuse me for being late. I



1 was transporting children in traffic. I did send an E-mail on Friday 2 3 to the Department of Education. And so, I'm 4 not going to reread that. I'm going to actually respond a little bit to what I heard 5 6 today. 7 First off, just to give a 8 history. I've been with Odyssey since year I have 12 years of tenure there with 9 two. four children. I was on the School Board for 10 11 seven, possibly eight years. I can't 12 remember because it was quite a long time. And I'm up here to tell you 13 14 that what Tami has said is true. And what 15 I've heard with other people, yes, that AHEPA 16 is wonderful and AHEPA has helped, but they 17 haven't seen it. They were not in Board 18 Meetings when there were no tape recordings. So I kind of want to go through a little bit 19 20 of my notes. 21 First off, AHEPA, you do not have to be Greek to be AHEPA. You just have 22 23 to be a man. Therefore, the argument that 24 AHEPA leads, the mission and the culture goes

1	away is untrue because you don't have to be
2	Greek to be in the AHEPA organization.
3	If Odyssey wants to remain a
4	Greek school and work with the Greek
5	ministry, we can do that with or without
6	AHEPA.
7	Additionally, Greek leadership,
8	someone spoke about Greek leadership. Greek
9	leadership was written into the Bible to be
10	at the headmaster level. And there was a
11	requirement that the headmaster had to be
12	Greek.
13	And I remember when Mr.
14	"Schotel" (phonetic) passed away, there were
15	lots and lots of arguments about whether we
16	had to retain that and we did with Dr. Nick.
17	I was absolutely stunned and
18	happy when they hired Denise. As Tami said,
19	not more than a month or two later here comes
20	Riccardo at the same salary to do directions
21	in the parking lot is what I saw two days
22	ago.
23	So that Greek leadership
24	doesn't have to be at the Board. It needs to



1	be at the headmaster level.
2	I requested that the DOE make
3	AHEPA an equal, a minority or an ex officio
4	amount in the Board. And equal meaning,
5	three AHEPA, three teachers, three parents,
6	not four and four or a minority. And if they
7	don't like that, let them leave.
8	AHEPA touts that they've given
9	us money. Well, yes, we get donations. But
10	I have not seen a gymnasium that they have
11	promised us for years. I have not seen
12	\$100,000 check or received an E-mail from
13	Denise or Riccardo that AHEPA has given us
14	\$100,000 check from AHEPA Gala.
15	So while where they say they do
16	things, where is the proof? I just see the
17	bills where they are getting Odyssey to pay
18	for their things, to pay for their endeavors
19	and pay for everything.
20	I also recommended at one point
21	in my tenure on the Board that the Odyssey
22	mission not change unless all Board Members
23	vote to change it.
24	So if you were to minimize the



AHEPA majority, ensuring that you would need a unanimous vote to change the mission, once again, keeps Odyssey at its core the Greek language which makes us special. Okay. Nobody wants to see AHEPA leave. We want them to not be in control and power, which they have been since day one. The five -- I grew up with the five. The first two years on the School Board, I don't think I said anything because I was terrified of the five. And then, I grew in my strength to realize that they can't kick my children out of the school. They cannot do anything They threatened me. They stated I to me. had too many children in the school. called me crazy. They said that I was also out on a mission to destroy the school. called me hysterical. In meetings where I behaved just as the AHEPA five and I yelled back when they screamed at me, I was told I was out of line. Yet, the AHEPA Member that was yelling

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1 at me was not. If AHEPA is allowed to 2 3 continue, what will not happen is, our 4 teachers will not get the pay raise that they deserve to make the Red Clay pay scale. 5 6 Everyone talks about what AHEPA has done. 7 Well, let me tell you what AHEPA did not do. AHEPA did not fight and create 8 9 a pay scale for these teachers. I fought 10 with Katie Clemmons and Mary Lou Strauss to 11 get our teachers on a pay scale. Do you want 12 to know how they were paid? There were paid And let me tell 13 on an Excel spreadsheet. 14 you, when I analyzed that spreadsheet, men 15 who had less years were paid more. 16 Women, who made George Chambers 17 angry in the face-to-face negotiations they would have, got paid less. 18 If you were a 19 favorite, you got more. If you pissed any of the Greek five off, you got paid less and you 20 21 are not allowed to get promoted. You were not allowed to get bigger raises. 22 23 And I spent a better part of a 24 year fighting with the AHEPA five to get the



1 PT teachers on a pay scale that was ten 2 percent under Red Clay. They are still there 3 five or six years later. 4 I continuously fought in my tenure to get that raised up so that they 5 6 were equal to the Red Clay pay scale because 7 we're going to lose our teachers, and we already lost a whole bunch of good ones. 8 And my fear is we are going to lose a whole bunch 9 10 more. 11 I will tell you this. 12 gentleman that spoke about the CBOC, I, as well, was on the CBOC Committee for two 13 14 And just so you know, CBOC Committee years. 15 sees budget lines. They do not see the 16 details behind the budget line. 17 So, yes, our books are 18 pristine. Every dollar is accounted for. The problem is the dollars and where they 19 Where they buried those invoices under 20 went. 21 what budget lines. Because it's there. if the state auditor would do her job, we 22 23 could actually find that out. 24 At one point AHEPA hired a



Greek -- it wasn't a teacher -- a Greek staff member behind closed doors. It was a friend. They were not paid on the pay scale. were issues with background checks. were things that we brought up over and over again in non-recorded Board Meetings and we were told to back off and stay out. So I just want you to make sure you understand that Tami is not crazy. What happened to her is true. It happened to It happened to Kate Clemmons. had 12 years to change its behavior. behavior is not new. It has happened forever, since I have been there. And like I said, I think I'm the longest term person here with Odyssey. And I beg you, beg you to please change the Board makeup. Take their majority he away. Make them an equal or a minority or ex officio. And let the people that care about this school and the teachers do what is right by the school and the teachers. Keep the money in the school. Stop asking parents to raise \$85,000 or more

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1	for things that we would had dollars for had
2	we not hired an extra head of the school that
3	we don't need. Give money away to Ithaka
4	that we don't need. We don't need a feeder
5	into Odyssey. We have a wait list over 500
6	kids. We have enough kids that want to come.
7	So please do what needs to be
8	done. Disband the AHEPA five and allow the
9	school to grow the way it needed to over the
LO	last 12 years.
11	Thank you.
12	MR. TRAVERS: Does the school
13	wish to provide any closing remarks?
14	MR. WOLCOTT: Not at this time.
15	Again, I would like to thank
16	everyone for coming out on a beautiful
L7	Tuesday night in June.
18	So thank you, everybody, for
19	everything you said, and we look forward to
20	continuing the process.
21	Thank you.
22	MR. TRAVERS: I want to thank
23	all of you for participating today.
24	The Secretary and Charter



1	School Accountability Committee will consider
2	your comments in making their decision at the
3	conclusion of the formal review process.
4	This hearing is now closed.
5	(The hearing was concluded at,
6	approximately, 6:00 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 50 inclusive, is a true and
10	accurate transcript of my stenographic notes
11	taken on Tuesday, June 11, 2019, in the
12	above-captioned matter.
13	IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
14	my hand and seal this 13th day of June, 2019,
15	at Wilmington, Delaware.
16	
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18	Franci (Incore
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20	GLORIA M. D'AMORE, RPR
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