

In The Matter Of:
*Department of Education
and Board of Education*

*In Re: Delaware Met Charter School
December 7, 2015*

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JOINT PUBLIC HEARING BY THE STATE BOARD OF
EDUCATION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

In Re: Delaware Met Charter School

Carvel Office Building
820 N. French Street
Auditorium, 2nd Floor
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Monday, December 7, 2015
5:09 p.m.

BEFORE:

SUSAN HABERSTROH, Director, Policy &
External Affairs

TERI QUINN GRAY, President, State Board of
Education

DONNA JOHNSON, State Board Executive
Director

PAT HEFFERNAN, State Board Member

APPEARANCES:

CATHERINE T. HICKEY, DEPUTY ATTORNEY
GENERAL

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1 MS. HABERSTROH: Good evening,
2 everyone. I declare this public hearing to be
3 open. My name is Susan Haberstroh and I'm the
4 director of policy and external affairs at the
5 Delaware Department of Education. I've been
6 designated by the secretary of education to
7 conduct this public hearing.

8 The Delaware Met was placed on
9 formal review by the Department of Education
10 with the assent of the State Board of
11 Education. As required by revocation the
12 matter was referred to the Charter School
13 Accountability Committee. Last week the
14 Charter School Accountability Committee issued
15 its final report with a recommendation of
16 revocation of the charter effective
17 January 22nd, 2016.

18 This joint public hearing is being
19 held by the Department of Education and the
20 State Board of Education to assist in the
21 decision of whether the criteria set forth for
22 remedial action in the Delaware Code has been
23 satisfied. This hearing provides the school
24 an opportunity to provide and receive public



1 comment. I will now ask the others with me
2 today to introduce themselves.

3 MR. HEFFERNAN: Pat Heffernan from
4 the State Board of Education.

5 MS. JOHNSON: Donna Johnson,
6 executive director, State Board of Education.

7 MS. HICKEY: Catherine Hickey,
8 Delaware Deputy Attorney General with the
9 Department of Justice here serving as counsel
10 to the hearing officer this evening.

11 MR. COVERDALE: (In audience.) I'm
12 Greg Coverdale with the State Board of
13 Education.

14 MS. HABERSTROH: I would like the
15 record to reflect that the notice of the time,
16 date and place of today's public hearing was
17 published in The News Journal and Delaware
18 State News. In addition, notice was posted to
19 the Charter School Accountability's official
20 place of business, on the Department of
21 Education's official website and on the State
22 public meeting calendar on the State's
23 official website. Further, the school was
24 personally notified of the time, date and



1 place of today's public hearing.

2 A court reporter is present so that
3 a record of this hearing can be made. It will
4 be necessary for each speaker to clearly
5 identify his or herself before beginning to
6 speak so that the court reporter will be able
7 to note who you are. The record of this
8 recording will be provided to the secretary of
9 education and members of the State Board of
10 Education together with any written or
11 electronic comments received at or before this
12 hearing.

13 We will proceed in the following
14 manner. First we will hear from any
15 representatives of the charter who wish to
16 speak. Then, we will take comments from
17 anyone else who desires to speak. There are
18 sign-up sheets at the front of the table. If
19 you desire to speak, please sign up now. I
20 will now pause for a moment to permit anyone
21 who so desires to sign-up to speak.

22 MS. JOHNSON: If there is anyone
23 who has not yet signed up, there is a sign-up
24 sheet here.



1 MS. HICKEY: Even if you aren't
2 speaking, please sign the sheet that Ms.
3 Johnson has.

4 MS. HABERSTROH: In the interest of
5 making sure everyone gets a fair opportunity
6 to speak we will provide each speaker with
7 three minutes. Ms. Johnson will be keeping
8 the time and will let you know when there is
9 one minute left. Because you will be speaking
10 from here and Donna will be to the left please
11 keep an eye on her. I intend to try to be as
12 liberal as time and reason allows in accepting
13 comments, however, I do reserve the right to
14 limit comment if it is purely repetitive or
15 cumulative.

16 At this point I will accept
17 comments from any representatives of the
18 school.

19 MS. HICKEY: We are just going to
20 pause one minute to allow people who have just
21 come in to sign-in.

22 (Brief pause.)

23 MS. HABERSTROH: Hello, we are
24 going to start with the comments. So, when



1 it's your turn to talk, we would like you to
2 come up to this podium.

3 MS. HICKEY: We are leaving the
4 sign-up list down on the table for those folks
5 coming in late. Make sure you sign-up when
6 you come in. And we have another member of
7 the Board here.

8 MS. HABERSTROH: Yes, there was
9 another member of the State Board of Education
10 who has joined us and if Dr. Gray would
11 introduce herself.

12 MS. GRAY: Dr. Teri Quinn Gray,
13 president, State Board of Education.

14 MS. HABERSTROH: Is there anyone on
15 behalf of the school who would like to speak
16 first?

17 MS. JOHNSON: Anyone from the
18 school that would like to speak on behalf of
19 the school?

20 MS. WHITE: Hi, I'm Vania,
21 V-A-N-I-A, White. As members of the student
22 council we are here to explain our thoughts
23 and opinions on our school. We understand
24 that around December 1st the CSAC came to the



1 conclusion of revoking our charter license.
2 We do not want that. There are many kids and
3 adults who haven't done what they needed to do
4 in this school and we understand this, but as
5 a charter school it is our job to help our
6 peers grow during this process.

7 The school so far has improved
8 dramatically. When our school first opened,
9 it was unorganized and the students were very
10 insubordinate. For example, there were many
11 altercations during the first few weeks.
12 Teenagers were running the halls, skipping
13 class, and leaving school without adult
14 consent. It was a hard transition for
15 students, especially 9th graders, because they
16 aren't used to what high school is really
17 like. For us 10th graders it was a holy
18 grail.

19 Until about two months ago the
20 school was chaotic, just a repeat of daily
21 madness, but no longer. Now that we have more
22 staff such as Mr. Rob and Mr. Barnhill, who we
23 all know, everything is falling into place.
24 The code of conduct is finally enforced.



1 Students are finally attending and succeeding
2 in class and teachers are building bonds with
3 us. They have gone through so much to help
4 our school and according to them they're never
5 going to give up, so, as students why should
6 we?

7 This school is a last resort for a
8 lot of students. We have made really strong
9 bonds with other students. It's like we have
10 become family. I know a lot of students who
11 really like the way this school is set up and
12 it is a model of what we want. If the Met
13 closes, a lot of us will drop out because
14 other schools do not have what we need. Our
15 teachers really care. In other public schools
16 it's too many students that we don't receive
17 the one-on-one time that students need.

18 One thing that you may forget is
19 that we are an in-town school filled with
20 in-town students. We need that one-on-one
21 time with our teachers. We need peers we can
22 trust and count on. We need these internships
23 and we need help. As the student council we
24 believe help someone else if you can't help



1 yourself. This is why we are speaking here
2 today.

3 (Audience applause.)

4 MS. HABERSTROH: Sharon Bell?

5 MS. BELL: Good evening, everybody.
6 My name is Sharon Bell. I'm here because my
7 son, Santee, goes to the charter school. The
8 charter school provided a place for my son to
9 go to learn. It was the first time since we
10 moved here to Delaware that he felt proud. He
11 was excited to get his report card because his
12 previous school was just not a place for him.
13 The curriculum and the way that the school is
14 set up catered to my son's needs as to how he
15 learns. So, to him if the school is going to
16 close is very troubling for me as a parent and
17 for my son because his previous school was
18 very unsafe, unstable, overcrowded and just
19 not a place where he needs to be in.

20 So, I would hope you would take
21 these things into consideration about how this
22 will affect these kids and the parents because
23 it causes us a lot of anxiety to send our kids
24 to a place that is not safe for them.



1 MS. HABERSTROH: Santee Redwick?

2 MR. REDWICK: Hi, everybody, my
3 name is Santee Redwick and I go to Delaware
4 Met Charter School. I see people back there.
5 I came today because, um, I want the school to
6 stay open because I'm really looking forward
7 to the internships. My grades like improved
8 dramatically with every single class. Like
9 the class I was struggling in in my old school
10 like I'm just like ten times better in this
11 school. It has made a huge change and in so
12 many years like -- I'm not good with public
13 speaking.

14 (Audience applause.)

15 Um, this year was the first year I
16 was actually like excited to get my report
17 card. Even though it was like some spots
18 where I think weren't that good because the
19 teachers and stuff were unstable, it was still
20 way better than what I'm used to doing. Um,
21 this internship will really help me out this
22 summer if I get hired because I really like to
23 help with the bills and stuff and stuff like
24 that. Thank you.



1 (Audience applause.)

2 MS. HABERSTROH: Just a reminder
3 you need to come in and sign-up so we know you
4 are here; and if you would like to sign-up to
5 speak the sheet is down there also. Next
6 person on the list is Kelsey, K-E-L-S-E-Y,
7 Grant.

8 MS. HICKEY: Are you both speaking?

9 MS. GRANT: I'm Kelsey Grant.

10 MS. ZAYAS: And I'm Idalis Zayas
11 and I am part of the student council of Del
12 Met. I came to Delaware Met because they said
13 they would give the students one-on-one time
14 with the teacher. I also came here to start
15 over. At my other school I wasn't doing so
16 well. I had bad grades. I was hanging with
17 the wrong crowd and I got in trouble a lot.

18 At my other school the teachers
19 were not helping me as much. I felt like they
20 didn't care. They have over 5,000 kids to
21 teach. At times they didn't know who they
22 were dealing with and it was hard to get their
23 attention. At the Delaware Met these teachers
24 care and they want to help and that's what I



1 need. Even though things haven't been perfect
2 things are increasingly getting better.

3 Closing down the school I feel
4 would make it worse for me. I really don't
5 want to go back to my old school because I'm
6 not going to have what I had at Delaware Met.

7 MS. GRANT: Kelsey Grant. The way
8 me and Idalis both relate to this we were both
9 going through the same stuff. We both didn't
10 focus last year in school. We messed up our
11 freshman year. So, we came into school to
12 start over fresh because things wasn't going
13 so good at her school and my school. So, the
14 things that they're doing for us at the
15 Delaware Met, internships, one-on-one more
16 time with the teachers and smaller classes, it
17 helped us more with our learning. So, it's
18 going to be really sad if you guys close the
19 Delaware Met and we don't want that to happen
20 because we love the staff over there. That's
21 it.

22 (Audience applause.)

23 MS. HABERSTROH: Jahbarry Victor?

24 MR. VICTOR: My name is Jahbarry



1 Victor and I go to Delaware Met and I don't
2 know if I should say, but I just want to say
3 that I like the school and I don't want it to
4 get shut down.

5 (Audience applause.)

6 MR. MARTIN: Jalen, J-A-L-E-N,
7 Martin. I just wanted to say that I want the
8 Delaware Met School to stay open because it
9 helps me with my schoolwork because I can go
10 to any teacher like that that I could run
11 something through like Mr. A.J. and everybody.
12 And just like if something is not right, I can
13 talk to them about it to help me get through
14 the day like. So, say I'm struggling with
15 work, I take a day like to just get it done so
16 my work is done instead of slacking off or
17 doing any random.

18 So, yeah, I just want the Delaware
19 Met School not to close because if I go to any
20 other school, I'm going to end up like getting
21 all F's and stuff and I don't want that.
22 Thank you.

23 MS. HABERSTROH: Noel Cosby?

24 MS. COSBY: Hi, my name is Noel



1 Crosby and I just want to say I was here last
2 time so I pretty much got to say what I was
3 going to say, but I don't want this school to
4 close down because I believe this school would
5 be successful for me and my brother and a lot
6 of students at the school. So, if you shut
7 this school down, you will block that from me
8 and my brother.

9 Me and my mom were so excited to go
10 to this school and everything like that. So,
11 if you all shut the school down, I'm going to
12 be really upset and I don't know what to do
13 after that. So, please don't shut the school
14 down.

15 (Audience applause.)

16 MS. HABERSTROH: Darlene Willis?

17 MS. WILLIS: Good evening,
18 everyone. I am here and I was excited to hear
19 about Met. I was excited to hear about their
20 vision and their mission and I felt that it
21 lined up with what my son needed because I
22 didn't feel as though he was getting what he
23 needed in public school, that he needed that
24 one-on-one attention, that he needed someone



1 to pay attention to his educational plan that
2 would work with him. The classrooms were
3 smaller and the teachers were all supportive
4 of the vision.

5 I understand that there were some
6 problems at the beginning of the school as far
7 as students and things just getting out of
8 order. Just like when you first open up
9 something you got to put it together. Anyway,
10 I pray that Met does not close and that it
11 does work and it's going to take some work.

12 We all know nothing is given to us
13 and we have to work for it. We can work for
14 it individually and we will work for it
15 collectively and I find because of how gifted
16 and talented and intelligent my son really is
17 with the internship he is a hands-on person.
18 With the internship I felt like that would
19 keep him focused.

20 So, I just hope that Delaware Met
21 doesn't close because that really will give me
22 an excuse to leave Delaware to find a better
23 education because we've been through the
24 ringer from the time that my son even started



1 school. It has been a constant battle with
2 education because of his level of learning and
3 I don't want my son's -- I don't want him to
4 be discouraged and not want to learn at all.

5 I also would like to see his full
6 potential come out, which he is a very
7 intelligent child, and with the proper work
8 and the proper tools and us working together
9 we can make this work. The teachers can't do
10 it all, the students can't do it all, but
11 students you all play a big part in it. You
12 have to want to learn, you have to want to be
13 about the vision and you have to want to be
14 about the mission and it cannot be about
15 hanging out. You have to keep your mind
16 focused on your studies.

17 So, a lot of it is, you know,
18 students you have to pull it up. And I'm not
19 saying everyone -- it's going to take a lot of
20 work. I don't want Met to close because, like
21 I said, I've been -- I've taken my son out of
22 two public high schools and for me to hear
23 that it was chaotic and chaos at the beginning
24 I'm kind of thrown aback by that and you



1 cannot have a chaotic environment if you want
2 to learn, if you want to meet the vision and
3 you want to be part of the mission. Thank
4 you.

5 (Audience applause.)

6 MS. HABERSTROH: Rita Cosby?

7 MS. COSBY: Good evening, my name
8 is Rita Cosby again. I was here at the last
9 meeting and I have been through several of the
10 other board meetings and town meetings. To my
11 surprise what I've learned is that even with
12 all the things that have gone wrong at the Met
13 -- even with everything that has gone wrong
14 you have developed a community of students
15 that really want to be at the Met. So,
16 whatever you thought they were doing wrong
17 something good, something great, has come
18 together at the Met.

19 Again, my son when he came out of
20 eighth grade he had five F's at the end of
21 year. He told me that the teachers weren't
22 paying attention to him. At the Delaware Met
23 he is getting A's and B's. That is saying
24 something to me as a parent. So, whatever you



1 thought is going wrong even with the chaos
2 something is definitely going right because
3 they have developed this community.

4 So, sure, some of the students have
5 left, but there is a whole lot of students
6 that are really going to stay. My daughter,
7 she is an AP student. She is doing so much
8 better. She went to Delcastle, struggled, and
9 now she is getting the support she needs.
10 That's what each individual student needs and
11 with the model at the Met it meets everybody's
12 individual needs. They're not going to get
13 that if you send them back to their feeder
14 schools. They will get lost in the whole run
15 of things.

16 At William Penn he wanted to go to
17 college for engineering. He couldn't even get
18 along with the engineering instructor. So,
19 that was going down the tubes fast. At the
20 Delaware Met two months into the school year I
21 had four schools call me at home because he
22 gave them the wrong number to call. And the
23 internship for different places they were
24 calling at the house to set up an internship



1 for my son going into the coming year. That's
2 what the Delaware Met was doing.

3 So, whatever you felt they were not
4 doing, they're getting it done. You really
5 need to focus on what is happening right
6 instead of what is happening wrong because it
7 does work. The model does work and I'm a
8 parent that has been here. My kids decided to
9 be at the Met versus any other school and they
10 love being at the Met. They want to be there
11 and I'm quite sure they didn't show up tonight
12 for nothing. They all could have went home.
13 Some of them even caught the bus, but they're
14 here because they want to keep the Met School
15 open.

16 So, whatever the problems are they
17 can be fixed. Whatever you think can't be
18 fixed, it can be fixed.

19 MS. HICKEY: Ms. Cosby, your time
20 is up.

21 (Audience applause.)

22 MS. HABERSTROH: I'm going to pause
23 for a minute to give everyone who has not yet
24 signed up to sign the attendance sheet an



1 opportunity to come forward and do so. Please
2 check the box on the sign-in sheet if you want
3 to speak.

4 MS. HICKEY: We have a request from
5 the court reporter especially. You kids in
6 the front row, you young adults in the front
7 row, when you talk it is very difficult for
8 the court reporter to hear the person that is
9 up here speaking and it's extremely important
10 that we make sure we get everything that is
11 said tonight down. The court reporter has to
12 take it down and will transcribe it so the
13 secretary and the State Board of Education has
14 that to read to inform their decisions. So,
15 please try to keep that in mind. Thank you.

16 MS. HABERSTROH: I'm going to ask
17 everyone to remain quiet so that the
18 transcriber is able to hear the comments being
19 made. Beverly Wilcher, W-I-L-C-H-E-R? Again,
20 if you could keep your voices down, we would
21 greatly appreciate it.

22 MS. WILCHER: Good evening. Thank
23 you. I don't have a student that attends Del
24 Met. I don't have a spouse that teaches at



1 the Del Met. I'm under the impression that it
2 takes a village and I'm a part of the village
3 and I just cannot believe that the Board would
4 think about doing this to our children. I say
5 our children because I'm a part of the
6 village. Four months into the school year and
7 you would consider just shutting and locking
8 the doors and for them to do what? For them
9 to go where? You would be typically just
10 throwing them out into the streets.

11 I'm sort of old school with the PS
12 or Howard or Wilmington High and we had
13 teachers that taught that cared and if the
14 teachers are willing to teach these students,
15 then it's up to you, Board of Education, to
16 find out what the problem is and fix it. It's
17 your responsibility. That's why you get the
18 big bucks.

19 (Audience applause.)

20 MS. WILCHER: So, as being part of
21 the village I'm asking you to fix the problem.
22 Thank you.

23 MS. HABERSTROH: Brooklyn Silas,
24 S-I-L-A-S?



1 MS. SILAS: First off I'm going to
2 make a few apologies to you guys if I cry
3 because I'm not going to be attending this
4 school for long, but I just want to say that I
5 come from a horrible background from a state
6 where the teachers just really don't care
7 about it and I feel like even though the
8 teachers -- I'm from Illinois. I grew up in
9 Chicago and in Chicago, man, you get it how
10 you live. It's all about you. And I feel
11 like you don't need teachers, you don't need
12 students. You got adults out here and you all
13 need to be here for us to support us.

14 (Audience applause.)

15 MS. SILAS: First things first, you
16 all need to create a safe environment for
17 these kids because in Chicago it ain't game,
18 man. I've been losing two to six people I
19 love every single month and I feel like if you
20 all supply a safe environment and happy
21 environment to make kids want to learn, then
22 they're going to come to school to do the
23 things they need to do in these classes. And
24 I feel like the fact that these kids are



1 making bonds with these teachers that's a good
2 thing because in Chicago it's not like that at
3 all.

4 If you send these kids out, how are
5 you going to open a school and then shut it
6 down after putting so much faith and hope in
7 us? If you take on that job, you start
8 something, you need to finish it. That's how
9 I feel. I feel like out of all the schools
10 I've been to you can't just submit this and
11 you all are going to give internships and you
12 all are going to help get us to get to
13 college. If you are going to help us get to
14 college, be real and do that.

15 We need somebody to support us. If
16 you keep giving us that support, you will
17 inspire us to keep doing. Like that lady said
18 you are the Board of Education, you opened the
19 school. If you got a problem, you fix it
20 because that's your job. We'll put in our
21 part. I promise you if you put in the right
22 structure that this school needs to keep
23 going, then it will do what it said it was
24 going to do in the beginning.



1 (Audience applause.)

2 MS. HABERSTROH: It says ZaQuan
3 Platt?

4 MR. PLATT: Hello, my name is
5 ZaQuan Platt and I'm here because I don't want
6 my school to shut down. I feel like if this
7 school stays open, I will succeed in life.
8 With the internships in I go out like in the
9 summer when the jobs come around and I do what
10 I need to do. Like I can get an internship --
11 not an internship, but a job before the other
12 kids get a job because I have experience and
13 they don't. I feel like if that happens, then
14 I can help my mom so we can get out of the
15 struggle and maybe even like go to a different
16 state or something like that.

17 Even, you know, at this school it's
18 not a lot of kids, but still we make a lot of
19 bonds with all the teachers because it's not a
20 lot of kids and that's a good thing. It's
21 only like 150 kids at this school. 200? It's
22 only a small number of kids in the classroom
23 and that's a good thing. In overcrowded
24 schools they ain't learning nothing. Like



1 that's the truth.

2 In Delcastle and all that they're
3 not learning nothing really, not like we are
4 learning. They come to our school, but they
5 don't really see how it is in our school.
6 They don't go to our school. They try to say
7 our school is dumb and all that, but they
8 don't go to our school.

9 (Audience applause.)

10 MR. PHIPPS: Hello, my name is
11 Chandler Phipps. Like I was saying Delaware
12 Met is like a second home to me and like all
13 the friends I meet ain't nothing else going to
14 get better than this. It's like I made
15 another family here. I'm not -- first time I
16 came here I was like failing, like I had bad
17 grades and everything. Until I met Coach Rob,
18 Coach Barnhill, Mr. A.J., I had a lot of
19 problems, but, you know, they helped me --
20 they were like my role models because back
21 where I grew up it was like me on my own.
22 Nobody was helping me.

23 So, all these other role models
24 have been teaching me I can do better in life,



1 make a better life for myself and for
2 everybody I care about. I come here looking
3 for a dream. All these teachers right here,
4 all these students, Kelsey, everybody, they
5 all helped me look to myself in the future,
6 look like a better me and, you know, I don't
7 want the school to shut down because like I
8 love the school. Probably if you all shut
9 this school down, I'm probably going to get
10 F's somewhere else. So, you are blocking my
11 future.

12 I love this school. You know,
13 Delaware Met is where it's at, you all.

14 (Audience applause.)

15 MS. HABERSTROH: Desirie Zapata?

16 MS. ZAPATA: I am a freshman at
17 Delaware Met Charter School and I also am the
18 vice-president of student council. Along with
19 everyone else here I'm here to speak about our
20 school. This school was unstable from the
21 beginning. Not something any school would
22 like to look forward to. Students now have
23 created bonds with both other students and
24 staff members. Most students attend here



1 because they like the message behind the
2 model.

3 We're here today to tell you guys
4 that we love this school. The people who are
5 here today have wrote speeches and went out
6 their way and their education just to keep
7 this school open. Just like me because I'm a
8 part of the student council and everyone in
9 this front row we also care about the school a
10 lot and we did a lot to help the school. We
11 have created bonds with these teachers and the
12 people who are here, like real bonds how we
13 stay after school and we have bonds where we
14 talk about stuff.

15 We don't even talk about to other
16 teachers like in regular schools. This is my
17 first experience of any high school. I've
18 never been in no high school and I'm just
19 coming from middle school and I love this
20 school life. I have friends here and I've
21 made bonds with the people here. They're so
22 strong and they're all new faces I've never
23 seen them before and they're real close.

24 If it wasn't for Ms. Sharise and



1 Mr. A.J. and Mr. Rob and Mr. Barnhill I would
2 still be in F's and D's and all that other
3 stuff, but I'm getting A's, B's. I'm going to
4 all my classes and doing what I got to do
5 because last year was a mess. I love this
6 school and I don't want it to shut down. Take
7 into consideration to please not shut the
8 school down and revoke the license of our
9 charter. Thank you.

10 (Audience applause.)

11 MS. HICKEY: Only one trip to the
12 podium per person.

13 MS. ZAPATA: Well, what she was
14 going to say is she doesn't want the kids --
15 we're going -- half of Delaware Met is African
16 American and the people here -- 85 percent of
17 Delaware Met is African American. Half the
18 people here is 10th grade and they have been
19 to regular high school, but when they were at
20 regular the high school I'm pretty sure all of
21 them was in the streets and doing what they --
22 basically being a statistic.

23 At this school the teachers try to
24 like not let that happen, like not let the



1 kids here be statistics in life like. They
2 don't want them ending up in jail. They don't
3 want them ending up in the streets and smoking
4 and stuff like that. They want them to be
5 role models. They want them to show like
6 stuff to the Delaware Met like, you know.

7 When we signed up for this school
8 on the top it says, I also understand that if
9 I removed my child from the Delaware Met
10 Charter School during the first year and
11 attempt to re-enroll and go to another school
12 the school is not required to accept my
13 application. So, why are you guys going to
14 shut down the school if it's not required to
15 get an application? Where are we all going to
16 go? We are going to be struggling out of
17 school looking for another school. It's just
18 not right.

19 (Audience applause.)

20 MS. HABERSTROH: Chandra Belle.

21 MS. BELLE: Hi, my name is Chandra
22 Belle. I am a parent of a student that goes
23 to the Delaware Met. I'm going to tell you a
24 story about my son. I'm getting emotional.



1 We have been through hell and back with the
2 public school system. My son has two
3 behavioral disorders. This is what he was
4 called, ignorant, a distraction, defiant,
5 rude, get out of the class. I was called
6 every day.

7 He came to the Delaware Met and the
8 teachers really took an interest in him. One
9 teacher in particular, Mr. Barnhill, he called
10 me at work and when I saw the number I
11 automatically thought that he was in trouble
12 again; but, he said to me, he said, Ms. Belle,
13 I just want to tell you you have a special
14 kid, he brings a lot to the classroom and I'm
15 so glad to have him as a student.

16 No one has ever said anything
17 positive about my son in the nine years he has
18 been in the public school system. For you to
19 just close the school I feel that they have
20 not given my son a proper chance. In this
21 community we have no other school like this
22 one. They're taking the time to get to know
23 the kids on an individual basis and find out
24 what they're willing to do in their careers.



1 The other schools, I tried to get
2 him in Howard and this is what they said. His
3 grades weren't high enough. We can't
4 accommodate him. In other schools he is just
5 a test score. He is pushed through the
6 system, pushed in special ed., left there to
7 fail. The other schools he was failing
8 everything.

9 Let me show you this is his report
10 card. He only failed two, but that's good
11 because in the other schools he was getting
12 all D's and F's. College preparatory Algebra
13 a B. That's amazing because my son has a
14 learning disability. For him to get a B in a
15 college course do you know what that means?
16 He has passed just about all the classes with
17 a B and a C. He even had an A in gym. He is
18 playing basketball. He is making friends. He
19 loves coming to school in the morning. He
20 gets himself up in the morning.

21 I just feel like you are not giving
22 the school a chance and with the proper
23 resources has anyone tried to put any
24 resources into the school, tried to give them



1 any support to stay open? All they're doing
2 is talking about all the negative aspects of
3 the school, but when a good school comes along
4 with a good model to try and help the
5 community and our school nobody wants to do
6 nothing, they want to shut it down.

7 Well, I can tell you for my son and
8 me this has been a blessing and if you close
9 the school, I don't know what me and my son
10 are going to do. Not all the children are
11 born perfect. Some have behavioral problems,
12 yes, they do and a lot of kids do, but, this
13 is the only school that treated him like an
14 individual and didn't treat him like he was a
15 problem and they took the time to get to know
16 him.

17 All I'm saying is you need to keep
18 the school open for the community, not only
19 for our children. What is going to happen to
20 these teachers when they lose their jobs, what
21 is going to happen? They're going to be out
22 of work.

23 MS. HABERSTROH: Thank you. A.J.
24 English?



1 MS. HICKEY: Remember you have to
2 be quiet so the court reporter can take down
3 what Mr. English is going to say. Okay, thank
4 you.

5 MR. ENGLISH: Good evening. When I
6 first came to this project here at Delaware
7 Met Mr. Swanson brought me to this project and
8 he told me it was going to be a community-
9 based, a community-based situation, where it's
10 not only going to be a school, but it's going
11 to be a place where we can nurture the
12 community. If you listen to these kids,
13 that's what you hear. You hear nurturing the
14 community.

15 I listened to -- I was at the
16 meeting down in Dover last week and I listened
17 to one of the people on the Board and they
18 were talking about our babies, our babies, our
19 babies. You don't know these kids, you don't
20 know them. You don't know how to look in
21 their face and call their names. You don't
22 know the situations that they're dealing with
23 in the mornings when they come to school.

24 It is way -- this is way bigger



1 than their education. Like we're here to save
2 lives, try to keep these kids out of the
3 system, trying to keep these kids in an
4 environment where they know they're loved.
5 And I get on them, I get on them when they're
6 doing wrong, but I love on them when they're
7 doing right and it's every day and I'm
8 consistent and I'm persistent with them.

9 Whether it's at the Met, whether
10 it's somewhere else, every last one of these
11 babies I'm going to still deal with. I'm
12 going to still use all of the resources that
13 are provided to me to reach out to these kids
14 to see them through life because I made a
15 promise to some of these kids. I made a
16 promise to all the kids I deal with that I'm
17 going to help them. I'm going to help them to
18 be successful in life.

19 When you all make these decisions,
20 I ask that you all take into consideration
21 that they're not just a dollar sign and
22 they're not just a social security number, but
23 there are lives that go along with that
24 paperwork. Thank you.



1 (Audience applause.)

2 MS. HABERSTROH: Michael Willis?

3 Michael Willis?

4 A VOICE: That's my brother, I'll
5 speak for him.

6 MS. WILLIS: My name is Carmella
7 Darlene Willis speaking for Michael Willis and
8 Carmella Black, which is my niece, and she
9 aspires to come here. She receives
10 positivity. She has a goal set for herself
11 that she knew that she was not going to be
12 able to attain or achieve in public high
13 school because of all the distraction. This
14 child was in tears that they were going to
15 close her school.

16 She calls it her school because she
17 is getting the attention and also the help
18 that she needs to pursue her education. So,
19 things are lining up for her and she feels
20 like where am I going to go now, daddy?
21 Because she doesn't want to go back to public
22 high school. I'm not going to say she has had
23 some experiences, but she does have like older
24 sisters and cousins and brothers that go to



1 public high school. She was just coming out
2 of middle school. She doesn't want her high
3 school experience to be a bad one because she
4 feels like that she will be so totally
5 distracted by things that are going on because
6 the school district board -- like that
7 gentleman said you don't know what these
8 children are going through at home or what
9 they have been through. Thank you.

10 (Audience applause.)

11 MS. HABERSTROH: The next name I'm
12 not exactly sure. Wilson? Does somebody have
13 Wilson in their name?

14 MS. HICKEY: S-U-J-H or S-U and
15 maybe D-O-M-E? There is no printing on this
16 so it's very difficult to read it. It looks
17 like Wilson.

18 MS. HABERSTROH: No? We are moving
19 on. Adriane Strange?

20 MS. STRANGE: Good evening,
21 Department of Education, staff, students,
22 Candace. I'm a board member of the Delaware
23 Met and I've been on this mission technically
24 since 2010 with Innovative Schools, the



1 original Met School in Providence, Rhode
2 Island. I know the model works. I stood
3 behind the model. I have volunteered years of
4 time because I knew that the City of
5 Wilmington would benefit greatly behind this
6 model for the students.

7 So, what I want to say is that I
8 hope that the DOE takes into consideration
9 that as board members we are on-board working
10 tirelessly with Innovative Schools to make
11 this model work. We know the challenges that
12 we face, we know that we have had two years of
13 planning and we know that things don't look
14 good for us; but, we also know that the things
15 that aren't looking good for us can be fixed.
16 We have too many students that we can't just
17 drop the ball on and whatever we can do to
18 make this happen for them, for us, for the
19 community, for everyone, even you guys.

20 And I understand -- and let me just
21 speak on behalf of the DOE because what you
22 guys don't understand is when you open a new
23 school there are things that you are supposed
24 to have done in a timely manner to make sure



1 that as the doors open everything is in place.

2 Those things that we did not have
3 ready we've been hit on and it's to no fault
4 of anyone that I would say just wanted to not
5 have it ready. We should have had it ready
6 and as adults like you students are saying
7 there is really no excuses for it. Because
8 when you have adults that are in charge of
9 taking care of lives that make a difference,
10 we should have done a much better job.

11 Can we fix it? Yes, we can, but,
12 again, we have to do what we have to do to
13 make things happen and right now the time is
14 going really fast. To the students out there
15 if you guys can remain and encourage all your
16 parents to do what they have been doing
17 because, yes, you see me and Ms. Jillian, you
18 see us in the hallways. As long as you guys
19 keep moving forward and bring all your parents
20 in to do positive things I think we can
21 survive because right now our reputation is
22 bad.

23 The good things that you guys are
24 doing in the school is what they don't see. I



1 challenge everyone when you guys are doing
2 good things put that stuff on Facebook.

3 MS. HICKEY: Time is up, Ms.
4 Strange.

5 MS. STRANGE: Thank you so much and
6 have a great evening.

7 (Audience applause.)

8 MS. HABERSTROH: Jillian Wattley?

9 MS. WATTLEY: Hello, good evening
10 all. As you know, I'm sure most of you are
11 aware, my name is Jillian Wattley, Ms. Jill.
12 I'm on several committees dedicating my time
13 as much as possible encouraging the students
14 throughout the hallways and simply wanting the
15 best for the Delaware Met and students, simply
16 wanting the best for the parents, and we as a
17 board want definitely to fix it. We hear you
18 and together with Innovative Schools we are
19 working to fix it.

20 It has been a challenge because,
21 unfortunately, when you start something new
22 everything is not perfect. On paper it is,
23 but in actuality you have different things
24 that come up that you just have to address.



1 And, unfortunately, we didn't know what we
2 didn't know, but now that we know we want to
3 get it right. We just want to ask the DOE to
4 please give us an opportunity to get it right.
5 We are working tirelessly to get it done.

6 We are, as Adriane said, always at
7 the school. We see the progress the children
8 are making. We understand the behavioral
9 issues, the situation that you mentioned,
10 tremendously, the bonds that are happening
11 between the students and teachers and because
12 we are there so much even ourselves. We
13 really dedicate ourselves to see the school
14 succeed and we really just want to have the
15 opportunity to get it right.

16 Shutting down the school is not the
17 answer, but helping us fix it is and time is
18 what we need to do that. We just beg you to
19 please enable us to do what we need to do. We
20 have the potential to put specific structures
21 in place. The board is consistently meeting
22 to address the issues because in some of the
23 instances, although we didn't know about it,
24 once we learned we did. We learn and we do



1 and together we believe that the community,
2 the children, the students and parents and
3 everybody just want an opportunity to make
4 this a success. Please let that happen.
5 Thank you.

6 (Audience applause.)

7 MS. HABERSTROH: The next name is
8 Shabazz, last name is Shabazz?

9 MS. SHABAZZ: Good evening, my name
10 is Hanifa Shabazz, councilwoman, and the
11 Delaware Met school is in my district. I've
12 been involved from the onset. When they first
13 came and they wanted to go to a different
14 location, it was my understanding that the
15 school would definitely have community
16 involvement with the kind of education
17 curriculum they were providing to the students
18 because we did need a high school that fit the
19 needs of the students that you see out there.

20 I do understand too another
21 councilman, Councilman Nnamdi Chukwuocha, has
22 been to Met several times to assure that the
23 quality of education was being provided to the
24 students and we do know you were having some



1 upsets and hiccups. One of the biggest things
2 I want to say, and I don't want to repeat a
3 lot of things everybody has already said, but
4 the school realizes there were some errors and
5 mistakes that were made. Those were adult
6 errors and mistakes that were being made and
7 it's the adults' responsibility to do the
8 things that are necessary.

9 We as a council made a moratorium
10 on charter schools because of what is
11 happening right now. Someone comes in and has
12 a better idea of providing school education in
13 a different way. So, we buy into that we and
14 we support that idea. It's just like
15 businesses is going belly up today because
16 they are unable to do the things they say they
17 want to do.

18 What is hurting is 210 students.
19 There are a lot of children that are from
20 alternative schools, some of them are special
21 ed.'s, and my understanding is that the school
22 did not take into account all of the special
23 needs that the children would need.

24 I understand the students are



1 loving the teachers and that the teachers have
2 evidently come with culture competencies that
3 are necessary to deal with what the children
4 need to deal with, but my question to the
5 Department of Education if you close this
6 school down, what are you going to do with the
7 210 students? Where are they going to go?

8 What is the transitional plan set
9 to make sure that they transition from this
10 school to another school with the same quality
11 of education? They're going in at the end of
12 January, who is going to make sure that they
13 are up to par so that they can have a smooth
14 transition? And some of them I understand are
15 from alternative schools and those alternative
16 schools -- so they can't even go to another
17 public school.

18 When you are making the decision to
19 close the school that evidently might not be
20 as the kids say pure 100, but evidently there
21 is a buy-in from the students that I haven't
22 heard in the long time. The students are
23 saying they're loving the school and teachers
24 and that they are progressing. So, to have it



1 established like that it would be our
2 responsibility to ensure that they have the
3 necessary resources and support systems so
4 that they can continue to do what they're
5 definitely doing, making the progress that
6 they're doing.

7 So, I guess my question is if you
8 do close the school down, who is going to be
9 held accountable for the 210 lives that should
10 not falter because they can't go back to a
11 regular public school? They might drop out of
12 school and the other schools will not take
13 them. That's a question that as a legislator
14 I demand to have that answer before the
15 Department of Education declares a closing. I
16 want to know what the alternative plan is.

17 MS. HICKEY: Your time is up.

18 (Audience applause.)

19 MS. HABERSTROH: The next person on
20 the list, Wellington Reyes?

21 (No response.)

22 MS. HABERSTROH: Ange George?

23 MS. GEORGE: I'm just here to beg
24 for you guys not to shut it down because this



1 is more than just a school to my daughter.
2 Sorry. She was bullied to where she cut
3 herself. This actually helped her get over
4 her fears of school and I don't want to go
5 back to that again. I'm begging you keep it
6 open for all the kids that suffer from
7 bullying and being attacked.

8 She wants to go to school now. She
9 is up at five o'clock in the morning with her
10 makeup on and I haven't seen that in years.
11 So, think of the kids and not the money and
12 statistics, please. Thank you.

13 (Audience applause.)

14 MS. HABERSTROH: Last name is
15 Kelley?

16 MR. KELLEY: Nycier, N-Y-C-I-E-R,
17 K-E-L-L-E-Y. Hi everybody, how are you doing
18 today? I'm good, but my name is Nycier
19 Kelley. I just want to do say if it wasn't
20 for this school, I probably wouldn't be going
21 to school to be honest. Like I've been to a
22 lot, did a lot. Like I got kicked out of the
23 school I was in because I got arrested and I
24 had two felony charges that I was facing, but,



1 um, felony charges and whatever, and I wasn't
2 going to go to school because they was trying
3 to send me to an alternative school.

4 But I signed up for this school and
5 they accepted me to come here. If you close
6 down this school, where am I going to go? I
7 probably will not even go to school and like I
8 don't want to end up being the only one of my
9 mom's kids to not graduate. My mom got six
10 kids. Four out of six of her kids graduated.
11 It's only my little brother left. Me and my
12 little brother we both go to this school too
13 and I don't want to be the only one that don't
14 graduate.

15 But this school started off rough.
16 A lot of things happening. You all heard a
17 lot of rumors. The school is not as bad as it
18 seems. How could you close down a place that
19 you have never been through and try to close
20 it down and you never even been there? Just
21 come to the school and see how -- feel the
22 environment. It's not as you all think it is.
23 It's not as bad as it looks or what it seems.
24 It's a whole bunch of he said, she said.



1 Coming from -- I just want to say
2 if you close down the school, I don't know
3 what we would do. When I came here I was
4 learning, I learned. That's all I wanted to
5 say.

6 (Audience applause.)

7 MS. HABERSTROH: Rachel
8 Blumenfield?

9 MS. BLUMENFIELD: My name is Rachel
10 Blumenfield. Today is my sixth day as a
11 teacher at Delaware Met. I teach English. By
12 the end of my first week I knew the names of
13 all my more than 100 students and the names of
14 many students that I don't even have. I found
15 out that when I would speak to the other
16 faculty members about students I'm worried
17 about, that they know the students just as
18 well, if not significantly better, than I know
19 them.

20 I've had students tell me about
21 family members who are their only source of
22 support getting killed in front of them. I've
23 had students tell me about parents who are
24 addicted to drugs. I've had students tell me



1 that they don't have anyone to care for them,
2 how they want to change their situations and
3 get jobs instead of selling drugs and
4 fighting, how they don't want to give into the
5 anger they feel towards a world that is so
6 unfair to them.

7 When students tell me these things,
8 they often mention that now on top of
9 everything else they're worried about they
10 have to worry about their school closing too
11 and about what it will be like if they have to
12 go to another school where they're going to
13 get lost in the crowd. The Delaware Met is
14 not perfect. We need more structure, we need
15 more teachers, but at four-months old how
16 could it be perfect?

17 What I can tell you is that we are
18 constantly working to fix our problems to
19 become better educators and mentors and
20 despite our problems there is no other school
21 where you will find teachers that care as much
22 and give these students as much support and
23 attention as we do. If these students have to
24 go back to their feeder schools, a majority of



1 them will get lost in the system. It will be
2 that much harder for them to create the lives
3 they so desperately want for themselves.

4 In order for us to give them the
5 chance they need you have to give us the
6 chance we need. If you give up on this school
7 because things are hard, what is it teaching
8 these kids to do when things are hard for
9 them?

10 (Audience applause.)

11 MS. BLUMENFIELD: So, I'm not
12 asking for you guys to just say that
13 everything is fine and keep the Met open
14 forever, but I'm asking that you give us until
15 the end of the year, I don't feel like that's
16 unreasonable, but give us until the end of the
17 year. Come see how things are going and
18 re-evaluate then. Thank you.

19 (Audience applause.)

20 MS. HABERSTROH: Shonda Wilkins?

21 MS. WILKINS: My name is Shonda
22 Wilkins. A lot of the kids know me, I'm
23 familiar with them. I built a bond with these
24 kids. Back when the school first started,



1 like you said, it was a lot of problems, a lot
2 of things going on. So, I asked the teachers
3 as a parent what can we do to help them? So,
4 they told me what we could do, so, I did that.
5 I volunteer my time to these kids, okay? I
6 come into the school and they're not
7 disrespectful. They respect -- you respect
8 them, they will respect you.

9 They're looking for things that
10 they're lacking at home and when they come to
11 school, that's where they get it. I'm big on
12 charter schools. My daughter she came from a
13 charter school. I want to continue a charter
14 school education because I know where it
15 leads, the big picture. I know what it is.
16 These kids they need help.

17 The teachers that you are looking
18 at right here these are the teachers that are
19 left. We are looking for more like them to
20 educate them to give them what they need, the
21 love, the care, the attention, the one-on-one.
22 You don't know where they are coming from in
23 the morning, like she said, and my question to
24 you is when you close those doors, what



1 happens? So, what you are telling them is you
2 don't care. You cared in the beginning. Now
3 you don't care because you want to close the
4 doors on them because the big picture is not
5 planning out like you thought it was going to
6 plan out with the little hiccups that need to
7 be fixed.

8 When you fix it, you got to fix it.
9 You got to fix what is wrong. Closing the
10 door is not fixing it. Closing the doors is
11 just leaving them in the balance to go sell
12 drugs, shoot somebody, rob somebody's house,
13 maybe yours. Would that be okay? No, I'm
14 really serious, I'm really serious, I'm really
15 serious because any of these kids sitting
16 right here could do any of those things to you
17 because you said basically you are turning
18 your back on them. We don't care about you
19 anymore, that's why we're going to close the
20 doors on January 22nd and you just there.

21 What are the kids supposed to do?
22 They got to go to school. So, if no other
23 school is going to open up their doors to them
24 to let them in because of this, what happens?



1 What are they going to do? Do you have an
2 answer for them? Do you have an answer for
3 the parents? What is a parent to do? Where
4 should I go for January 22nd? What steps
5 should I be taking to put my kid in another
6 school?

7 If the school is going to accept my
8 kid, are they going to accept the credits and
9 grades and everything that come along with my
10 kid? Are they going to accept those things?
11 I just want to know. My name is Shonda
12 Wilkins. You are looking on a paper, I can
13 tell you, Shonda Wilkins. I just want to know
14 what is going to happen.

15 MS. HICKEY: Time is up, Ms.
16 Wilkins.

17 MS. WILKINS: Oh, my time is up
18 because you can't answer the question? That's
19 fine.

20 (Audience applause.)

21 MS. HABERSTROH: The last name is
22 Kelly and I can't read the first name.

23 MS. KELLY: Amaani, A-M-A-A-N-I,
24 Kelly, K-E-L-L-Y. I didn't have anything to



1 say, but since we are on a topic about our
2 school I just don't understand why you all
3 will open a school if you all wasn't very
4 organized or ready to open it? I want to know
5 why you all opened it. I'm just confused. I
6 could have been in a vo-tech school learning
7 something. I created these bonds with these
8 teachers and staff members and you all trying
9 to close the school down.

10 I'm not even going to lie to you,
11 I'll say I'm switching schools, I don't like
12 this school all the time, but at the end of
13 the day this is where I am. I have no other
14 choice. Like I understand that you all
15 already got the money and the funds so what is
16 the point of closing the school down? You all
17 got the money that we need. We don't have no
18 books. Like I don't understand. I like this
19 school.

20 I like to be an independent person.
21 I don't depend on nobody for nothing except my
22 dad, but you all know how that goes. I want
23 to be an independent person, that's why I came
24 here. You all said we want our internships,



1 yeah, I want that experience. I want to be
2 able to say, yeah, I'm ready to be an OBGYN,
3 stuff like that.

4 I can't even have that experience
5 because you all saying you are closing the
6 school down. I just want you all to think
7 about us students. Where are we going to go
8 when you all close the school down? Where are
9 we going to go? We be home not learning
10 anything, just sitting there, watching TV.
11 Amaani, why are you home? My school closed
12 down. You are going to make us look dumb. We
13 are going to be dumb because we are not
14 learning nothing at all.

15 So, you all got educations. I see
16 you all up here, nice suits and everything,
17 but still -- if you all want us to go on the
18 same steps as you all, teaching, being
19 OBGYN's, doctors, we're your future. Your
20 kids, if you have any kids, we're your future.
21 We're going to have to teach your kids. Well,
22 we're going to teach our kids to be
23 independent, their kids when we get older.
24 Teach them, teach them how to be doctors.



1 This is our future and if you all
2 don't care about our future, I care about my
3 future. Anybody else care about their future?
4 I'm very intelligent, I like a challenge.
5 Like I could have been like -- again, I'll say
6 I could have been at a vo-tech school actually
7 learning something, but I'm not getting that.
8 You all are the people that we are depending
9 on right now and you all are not giving us
10 that umph that we need, that keep it going.
11 You are all giving up. You are teaching us to
12 give up. That's what you are teaching us
13 like.

14 I came from a horrible background
15 -- I'm sorry, my time up?

16 MS. HICKEY: Your time is up.
17 Thank you. We are going to take a break so
18 some people can move their cars from the
19 parking lot.

20 (Brief recess.)

21 MS. HICKEY: First of all, thank
22 you for your patience during that little break
23 so we made sure nobody got stuck in the
24 garage. Secondly, throughout this time some



1 people have expressed their concern that they
2 weren't able to have enough time to get their
3 message across. So, I wanted to remind
4 everybody that the record is remaining open.
5 There is an opportunity to give written
6 comment if you wish to do so.

7 The third thing I wanted to make
8 sure everybody understood is that this is an
9 opportunity for whoever wishes to provide
10 comments. It is not an interactive process.
11 It's an opportunity for the public to provide
12 comments that will be considered by the
13 decision makers when they make their decision
14 later this month. So, as long as we have that
15 understanding I think we can proceed.

16 A few people came up and said they
17 haven't had the opportunity to sign-in and
18 would like to speak. So, there will be a few
19 more people speaking and we are committed to
20 being here for as long as we need to give
21 everybody their time to speak. There is a
22 continuing opportunity to be able to provide
23 additional comments should you wish to do so
24 in writing.



1 MR. HEFFERNAN: How would they get
2 the comments to us?

3 MS. HICKEY: The comments are done
4 via -- well, we have an e-mail. There is an
5 e-mail on the website. There is an e-mail
6 address that you send your comments to and I
7 don't know what it is off the top of my head.
8 Ms. Johnson, could you help me with that?

9 MS. JOHNSON: I will double-check
10 and I will look it up. It's part of the
11 Department of Education on charter schools,
12 but I will look so we can announce it.

13 MS. HICKEY: It's part of their
14 website. Thank you, we'll get that to you.

15 MS. HABERSTROH: Jalique Holden?

16 MR. HOLDEN: J-A-L-I-Q-U-E. I've
17 been to three different high schools in one
18 year. I've been to Dickinson, Howell and I
19 came here. I left Howell, one of the best
20 schools. I left it because I was given an
21 opportunity to get internships and I was like
22 why wait until 12th grade? This sounds good,
23 okay. The plan they had they were selling it
24 to me so I was just getting it. Okay, cool.



1 I don't consider none of these
2 people in here my friends. I look at all
3 these people as family. Because I'm like if
4 this school shut down -- I'm like an emotional
5 person. I'm like crying because I know how it
6 is. I look at all the new people. I walk in
7 the school. I give everybody hugs. It's all
8 good. That's it.

9 (Audience applause.)

10 MR. HINSON: T-Y-I-O-N,
11 H-I-N-S-O-N. Hello, you all. I really don't
12 speak much, but I came up here because I have
13 a question for you all. If the school was to
14 shut down I want to know just what would be
15 happening with that building because there
16 would be no point in taking all our students
17 out and shutting the school down and just
18 leave empty space sitting in the middle of the
19 City where everybody can be in there learning?
20 It don't make no sense. So, I just had to say
21 that. I don't talk much.

22 (Audience applause.)

23 MS. HABERSTROH: While Ms. Hickey
24 is looking that up the next person on the list



1 is Sonya Barlow.

2 A VOICE: I think she left.

3 MS. HABERSTROH: How about Kennedy
4 Brown?

5 (No response.)

6 MS. HABERSTROH: How about Shirley
7 Wilson Daniels?

8 MS. DANIELS: My name is Shirley
9 Wilson Daniels. All I have to say to you is a
10 few things. Don't think me as being harsh,
11 but at this point I'm angry and I'm
12 disappointed. I come from a family of
13 teachers, supervisors, board members,
14 secretaries, all that, and everyone I talk to
15 none of them agree with what is going on down
16 there. They said they never heard of this
17 happening where a school shut down in the
18 middle of a school year. So, all I'm saying
19 to you all is how in the heck are you all
20 going to just close the door on these kids,
21 210 kids, and put them and send them where to
22 do what?

23 My granddaughter for two years been
24 trying to get in Delaware Met for two years.



1 She wants to be a cosmetologist. The
2 invitations and cards to pass out, all the
3 hair, nail stuff. I mean, she is really into
4 it. If we are going to shatter her dream like
5 this, that's not even nice. I got to listen
6 to her cries, her moans and worries. You
7 can't just send her back to Dickinson and say
8 pick up where you left off. She is a human
9 being, she has a heart.

10 These kids have a heart. You all
11 can't just do them like that. They're not
12 trash or garbage. You don't throw them out
13 there like they don't matter. Whatever you
14 all did wrong, fix it. It can't be that
15 serious, it really cannot be that serious. I
16 mean, anything broke can be fixed. If we all
17 shatter these kids' dreams like that to those
18 who want to be somebody, become somebody,
19 that's not nice.

20 What are they supposed to do? What
21 are they literally supposed to do? I know we
22 heard it more than once, but what the hell are
23 they supposed to do? That is the question.
24 And send them back to do what? A lot of these



1 kids ain't going to make it. And that's not
2 nice because of some of the things that the
3 grownups didn't do. You all are grownups,
4 they're the kids.

5 They look at you all -- I mean, if
6 you will turn your back on them, then what
7 they got to look forward to? I don't want my
8 granddaughter to be a statistic. She is a
9 human being and has a heart. She is not
10 garbage, she is not trash, she is not gum on
11 nobody's feet and I don't want her to treat
12 her like that. I love her to death. She
13 might get on my nerves, but I love her. And I
14 don't want nobody, I mean, nobody, whoever
15 they are, are going to treat my child like she
16 is not a person because she is and she does
17 matter and she matters to me.

18 I'm taking it personally because I
19 don't like that shit. I am so sorry, but I
20 don't like it. Please fix it. Don't shut
21 that school down.

22 (Audience applause.)

23 MS. HABERSTROH: Next person on the
24 list is Lee Herburt.



1 MR. HERBURT: Good evening. I'm
2 not sure what my role at the Met is. I'm a
3 contractor basically and a diligent observer.
4 My observation is this. I look at these young
5 kids and I see myself. I'm just an older
6 version of them and nobody quit on me. I hear
7 all the questions and I have concerns. The
8 school was broken when it opened on
9 August 24th. It was broken in September. It
10 was broken in October. It was broken in
11 November and we're in December and it's still
12 broken. Who was driving the bus the whole
13 time? Nobody is questioning the
14 administration. Who was driving the bus?

15 You look at these kids, they're
16 here, they're here for one reason because they
17 don't want to quit. The building, there is
18 nothing wrong with the building, there is
19 nothing wrong with these kids. The only
20 question, common denominator across that
21 board, is the administration. That's what
22 needs to be fixed. Thank you.

23 That's your job to fix that
24 administration. That's what you should be



1 closing down is that administration and put
2 some other things in place that can help these
3 kids stay in school, keep that building open
4 and give these kids the opportunity that
5 they're looking for. Thank you.

6 (Audience applause.)

7 MS. HABERSTROH: Bahaia Wilkins?

8 MS. WILKINS: My name is Bahaia
9 Wilkins and I attend Del Met High School and I
10 am a sophomore there. I just want to say just
11 like all the rest of the parents and students
12 I seen, what are they going to do with us if
13 you shut us down? All these students I'm
14 hearing like they said 210 kids, where are we
15 going to go? You expect us to sit back and
16 sit home and think it's okay. I mean, some
17 parents may think that's fine, but for me it's
18 not.

19 When I first came here I wanted to
20 go since you all opened in the beginning. My
21 9th grade year I wanted to stay home and just
22 not go to school. I actually want to get up
23 and come to school and learn something because
24 I have improved myself and showed I can be



1 somebody. With you all telling me you are
2 going to shut this school down where do you
3 think we are going to go? Imagine if that was
4 one of your kids. You all would be up here
5 fighting for this school to be open as well as
6 of the rest of the parents out here.

7 What would you all say if your kid
8 came home and told you they wanted this school
9 to be open and they want to be something in
10 life, their internships, and telling them this
11 is what they're going to do and this is how
12 they're going to do it. You would be upset
13 just as well as some of the rest of the
14 students and parents are. I beg my parents
15 every day not to change my school and I cry.

16 We got a cheerleading team and
17 basketball team. They may not be the best of
18 everything, but they're trying. They are
19 putting forth efforts. They made a student
20 council. Our cheerleading coach, our
21 basketball coach, they were made to come here
22 today because this is something that these
23 kids want to do. They're not just somebody
24 who wants to sit back and say, Oh, we don't



1 care.

2 My mom came to the school. Kids
3 ask about my mom every day, where my mom at,
4 because she done helped the school out. I'm
5 not going to say this is not going to happen
6 overnight, it's not going to happen next week,
7 it ain't going to happen a week after that.
8 Everybody has problems, everybody can make a
9 way. Everybody can change and with the help
10 from these students and staff we can make our
11 way, but with you all telling us we are going
12 to shut us down we're not going to make it.
13 You are all just showing us when things get
14 hard, give up.

15 No. Because I'm not the type of
16 person that want to give up. I want to be
17 something in life. I tell my mom every day
18 I'm going to do something with my life.

19 (Audience applause.)

20 MS. HABERSTROH: Sydney Phipps?

21 MS. PHIPPS: Hello, how are you all
22 doing? I don't go to this school, but my
23 younger brother, Chandler, does and I don't
24 like getting up and talking to people, but I



1 will for my brother. Him as a young African
2 American male does not deserve to have his
3 school shut down when they have been doing
4 good things for him. I see a big change in my
5 brother from middle school. At the beginning
6 I didn't want him to come here because I heard
7 the things until I seen him change. He smiles
8 more. He laughs more. He actually increased
9 his learning to be honest with you.

10 But how do you all give them a
11 one-year contract to stay here, but then they
12 got to leave on the 22nd? How does that
13 sound? Like keep them to the end of the year
14 to actually see what they're going through.
15 All these kids are coming from different
16 cities, different hoods, different blocks we
17 call it, and some people don't have a mom or
18 father, but they look to these teachers as
19 mothers and fathers. They can talk to their
20 teachers, they can have one-on-one
21 conversations, deep conversations with their
22 teachers.

23 You all don't know what they got to
24 deal with when they come home to their



1 parents. Some are abused. Some don't even
2 have a home to go to and they come here and
3 treat these kids as family. I can look at all
4 the students here and you all smart, right?
5 You all want to be somewhere, right? I would
6 come here myself if they had 11th grade, but
7 the fact that you all wanted to shut the
8 school down where are they going to go? Where
9 are they going to be?

10 I know me and my brother live right
11 across the street from Howard, but I feel like
12 he would be better here. He wanted to play
13 basketball. Is that the end of his basketball
14 career? What if he doesn't make the team at
15 Howard? What if he doesn't make the team
16 anywhere else? You all got to think about
17 what state these kids are in and what they're
18 doing at home.

19 My brother come home with a bookbag
20 full of homework and I'm like, Yo, Chand,
21 where you been at, bro? He is like, Oh, yeah,
22 I go to Delaware Met. He is proud to show off
23 his school. Every time we are at Howard he is
24 like Delaware Met is where it is all at. I



1 thought Mt. Pleasant was something. This
2 school, whew, man.

3 If you are intelligent -- raise
4 your hands if you are intelligent. You are
5 intelligent, right? You are intelligent,
6 right? We all intelligent. So, why shut the
7 school down because of one little thing? Give
8 them a chance because they deserve it. That's
9 all I got to say.

10 (Audience applause.)

11 MS. HABERSTROH: Before I move
12 forward I think there are a couple other
13 people who wanted to speak so let me put this
14 back down.

15 A VOICE: I already put my name on
16 the list. Ms. Barnes.

17 MS. HABERSTROH: It wasn't checked
18 that you wanted to speak. Do you want to
19 speak?

20 MS. BARNES: Yes.

21 MS. WHITE: Hi, everybody, my name
22 is Dominique White. I'm a freshman at the
23 Delaware Met High School and, one, it breaks
24 my heart to hear that the Charter is thinking



1 about closing the school down because I really
2 learn at this school. Before I came here I
3 was in trouble every day. I got suspended,
4 phone calls, fighting teachers. I was a bad
5 student. Anything you name I did.

6 But when I came to Delaware Met, I
7 realized that all of that was going to follow
8 me to high school and I did not want to have a
9 reputation to reflect me as a person. When I
10 get jobs I think of that and I realize like
11 it's just not going to get me anywhere in
12 life, but I want the Delaware Met School to
13 stay open. I don't want it shut down.

14 I love everybody that goes to the
15 Delaware Met. I love Mr. Barnhill, Mr. Rob,
16 Ms. Barnes, I love everybody. Has anybody
17 ever stopped you all from persuing your
18 dreams? Like when I look at these students at
19 Delaware Met, I see potential in these kids.
20 Like all these kids -- I said I didn't want
21 this school to stay open me personally at the
22 beginning of the school year because I seen
23 how it was.

24 Once I came back and I realized



1 that we got laptops, we got things that other
2 schools didn't, internships, that was a
3 privilege that we needed and they took the
4 time out of their day to give it to us. Even
5 though we didn't -- we still are getting stuff
6 that we did not deserve.

7 My sister she goes here too and
8 like she might not like the school, but I love
9 the school and I just -- I don't know.

10 (Audience applause.)

11 MS. HABERSTROH: Denise Barnes?

12 MS. BARNES: Good evening,
13 everyone, and thank you for this opportunity.
14 My name is Denise Barnes and I as of this
15 morning am interim administrator at Delaware
16 Met. When I was first asked to come to the
17 school, it was to, quote/unquote, mentor the
18 current administration. The reality is when I
19 got there there were no current
20 administrators. There were people who were on
21 leave for various reasons, death in the
22 family, babies being born, some other things
23 were going on. So, I was not allowed the
24 autonomy that I felt I needed to make some of



1 the changes I felt could be made.

2 When I first came here there were
3 two other retired administrators who were with
4 me and we went through the building. We met
5 with all the teachers. We talked to the
6 children and we just visually looked at things
7 to see where do we need to be and what could
8 we possibly do to change things. While I was
9 there DOE did come into the building. I don't
10 remember all the names, but the folks that
11 were there asked me what did I think.

12 I said to them I see some issues
13 here. I'm not going to sugar coat it. I'm
14 not a sugar-coater kind of person. I tell it
15 straight, give it to you how it is. However,
16 there is not one thing in here that I don't
17 see that isn't fixable and with the right
18 guidance and direction that we could get it
19 done.

20 At that point we made an entire
21 list of things that we saw as issues that
22 needed to be addressed. We also gave them a
23 complete list of possible solutions to the
24 situation. Unfortunately, because of all the



1 changeovers that have happened no one has
2 taken the lead to get those changes done.

3 I'm a praying woman and there is
4 some folks that have been praying with me
5 because we love these kids and -- I don't want
6 to cry. We love these kids. When I look at
7 them I see my kids and the thing is I'm the
8 kind of person like this. If I'm not going to
9 let my own child go there, then why would I
10 want somebody's to go there? Right now the
11 school is not quite where I want it to be, but
12 I refuse to turn my back on it.

13 And these kids you have dedicated
14 parents sitting here. You have Mr. Herburt
15 who didn't give himself credit, the man
16 volunteers to do stuff in that building. We
17 have volunteer parents coming in all the time.
18 You have got parents here who are dedicated.
19 You have a staff who is dedicated. You have
20 people that care. I don't care what else you
21 do you can't take away the caring and the fact
22 that we care about these kids is what is going
23 to make the difference in this school.

24 I started this morning in a



1 capacity where I can actually make the
2 difference. Give me time. That's all I'm
3 asking. Give me time to work with the people
4 who want to work with me. These kids wouldn't
5 be here if they didn't care. Their parents
6 wouldn't be here. You have a whole lot of
7 staff sitting here. Give us all time.

8 I realize my time is up, but can
9 you give me three of those minutes that
10 somebody didn't come up and speak about?
11 These children have so much potential. We
12 have a lot to do. I have a list of things we
13 are going to put in place. We have meetings
14 coming up and training sessions coming up.
15 It's going to change and it will change for
16 even the better.

17 Most of these kids will tell you
18 when I walked in the door it was a hot mess.
19 Now it's a mess and we are going to get it
20 less and less messy as each day goes by, but
21 it's not -- like someone said you can't throw
22 out the baby with the bath water. Just give
23 us time is all I'm asking.

24 There is a poem by Maya Angelou



1 called Alone. Part of the poem says, Alone,
2 alone, nobody, but nobody can make it out here
3 alone. I'm asking you to stand with us, stand
4 for us, stand behind us, come with us and help
5 us do what we need to do for our children.
6 Thank you.

7 MS. HABERSTROH: Is there anyone
8 else who desires to speak?

9 A VOICE: Yes, one comment.

10 MR. BARNHILL: Bryan Barnhill,
11 B-R-Y-A-N, Barnhill. I really don't have a
12 lot to say this time. I came up here twice to
13 a couple of your meetings and spoke on behalf
14 of the school and students and staff. I
15 think, like I said, about two months ago when
16 I first walked into the school and took an
17 evaluation and I said this was an easy fix, I
18 said, but you can't expect a house to be built
19 if you give them the wrong tools. That just
20 doesn't happen. You have to build a
21 foundation before you build the house.

22 I heard a lot of students talk
23 today and parents basically said the same
24 thing. Again, my favorite phrase, a mind is a



1 terrible thing to waste. And no child left
2 behind means just what it says, no child left
3 behind. I've had a lot of kids come through
4 my hands over the past 33 years from education
5 to juveniles, alternative schools and
6 different types of recreational programs, and
7 I can tell you everybody deserves a second
8 chance. And you have a big diverse background
9 of kids that you put into a building and say
10 that's it, it doesn't just happen like that.

11 Especially with the different
12 background, families, educational levels,
13 learning disabilities that's just impossible
14 for something like that to succeed in a matter
15 of four months and you don't put a lot of
16 things in place that should have been in place
17 before the school opened.

18 I just want to say again, you know,
19 I've sat and talked to a lot of these kids and
20 mentored to a lot of these kids about life.
21 It's not about the basketball that I coach or
22 the other extracurricular activities. It's
23 about life what they need to do and what they
24 need to be thinking about preparing themselves



1 for life. I keep telling them that you are
2 not bad kids, you just made bad decisions and
3 bad choices. I've dealt with bad kids for
4 33 years and I can assure you those kids
5 aren't bad kids. They just made bad decisions
6 and bad choices.

7 Again, this falls on your
8 shoulders, the Board, State, government. You
9 need to fix this. You need to give us the
10 tools. You need to give us the tools that we
11 need and the support we need. And, again, I
12 keep telling you if you come into that school,
13 not a walkthrough, and you come and visit not
14 for one hour, stay for two or three hours,
15 come from eight to 12 or come from 12 to four,
16 you are going to see some little hiccups; but,
17 you are going to see a lot of good and you are
18 going to see a lot of mentoring and a lot of
19 relationship building. You are going to see
20 that everything that you hear outside the
21 school is not what is going on inside the
22 school.

23 Again, that is what I need to say
24 to you and, again, this is not the answer of



1 closing this program. Thank you.

2 (Audience applause.)

3 MS. HICKEY: I just wanted to make
4 sure in response to Mr. Heffernan's comment,
5 question, Ms. Hunter on December 3rd, by
6 letter, dated December 3rd, sent out a message
7 to all of the parents and guardians of the
8 Delaware Met and in that it has the address
9 that you need to submit written public
10 comment. It also tells you when the public
11 comment is over. The period is over on
12 December 11, 2015. And it provides you with
13 the information about the rest of the
14 proceedings in this process.

15 MS. BARNES: How about if I take my
16 copy back? If the children need copies, they
17 can come and see me.

18 A VOICE: Is there any way we can
19 have that e-mail address forwarded to the
20 administration so that way if any of the
21 parents want to send additional letters of
22 support?

23 MS. HICKEY: What administration
24 are you talking about? She has it.



1 MS. BARNES: I have the address you
2 can send all your comments to. If you want to
3 take a picture of it before you go and that
4 way you have it and you can go to the link and
5 then send your comments in. So, that will
6 probably be beneficial.

7 MS. DANIELS: Shirley Wilson
8 Daniels. I just want to know after it's all
9 said and done when are you all going to really
10 actually let someone actually know if the
11 school is going to stay open or closed and
12 don't just drop the bomb on it? Because I
13 think we are going to need time to process it,
14 not only the kids, but parents.

15 MS. BARNES: I think it's
16 December 17th, Shirley.

17 MS. HABERSTROH: Is there anyone
18 else who desires to speak? If not, I want to
19 thank you for participation. The secretary
20 will consider your comments as part of a
21 decision-making process. Your comments will
22 also be available for the State Board to
23 consider. And that will all happen --

24 A VOICE: We have one more person.



1 MR. PRITCHETT: Good evening,
2 Maurice Pritchett, P-R-I-T-C-H-E-T-T. I'm a
3 retired principal for 35 years in the State of
4 Delaware, actually, 40 years as an educator.
5 My wife also has done 40 years, so, a total of
6 80 years in education. All of my time was
7 spent on the east side of Wilmington. I was a
8 principal at Bancroft all the way up past
9 until I retired in 2008 as an assistant
10 superintendent for family community engagement
11 for the Christina School District, which is
12 really not important.

13 The bottom line is I worked hard to
14 help open up this school. I went out into the
15 community. I met with students. I went to
16 the various schools. One of the things that I
17 would like to say that I spent a lot of time
18 with the open house, spent a lot of time with
19 the various events that took place at the
20 Delaware Met and I observed these youngsters
21 from the beginning up until now. I've seen a
22 big difference. I want to go on the record as
23 saying that.

24 I'm very proud of these young



1 people. They are coming to school. They're
2 speaking to each other. They're showing love
3 and respect. And I want give a special shout
4 out to the discipline team, Ali and Mr.
5 Barnhill and Mr. Rob, who is not here, and
6 also to the acting principal, Ms. Barnes. I
7 was asked to select people to come in and make
8 a difference in the school within the last
9 month and I assigned various administrators
10 from my business, Pritchett & Associates,
11 which was developed by my wife, Juanita
12 Pritchett.

13 So, we train staff, we train
14 principals, we train teachers. I work with
15 community people. So, I've been involved. I
16 didn't sit back and observe. And I'm one to
17 just say to all these young people you made a
18 difference and you don't give up. Just keep
19 doing what you are doing and you can prove
20 people wrong. They can make decisions, but
21 that doesn't mean that's the end of the world.
22 And I'm going to support you. I have a lot of
23 support. I don't go out and publicize.

24 As principal of Bancroft School I



1 was the first principal to ever have the
2 president of the United States to come and
3 visit and spend a whole day at Bancroft. That
4 was done. I also had the president of the
5 United States, President Clinton, spend time
6 on the phone with me about the progress that
7 we made at Bancroft. So, I know good things
8 when I see it. I also know about when things
9 don't go well. I was a young man growing up
10 in Wilmington and couldn't go to school with
11 white students. We had to go to one school.

12 Things have changed. You guys have
13 a lot of schools are doing various things
14 giving children an opportunity to achieve.
15 That's what this is all about. Everybody
16 can't go to the same school, everybody can't
17 go to the same school district. The bottom
18 line is you got to find a place where you can
19 go and get your education -- I know my time is
20 up.

21 But, in any event, I'm going to
22 support the Delaware Met. I want to go on
23 record as saying I'm going to continue to come
24 in there and help out any way I can. I'm



1 going to support you, Ms. Barnes, and I'm
2 going to support anything that you are trying
3 to do in that building and I'm hoping the
4 board members will come and visit the school
5 as well, but I will be there.

6 MS. HABERSTROH: So, I want to
7 thank all of you for participating today. The
8 secretary will consider your comments as part
9 of the decision-making process. Your comments
10 will also be available for the State Board to
11 consider. The secretary of education will
12 announce the decision, which would require the
13 assent of the State Board of Education, at the
14 December 17th, 2015 State Board of Education
15 meeting at one o'clock on the second floor
16 cabinet room of the Townsend Building, which
17 is located at 401 Federal Street in Dover.
18 The hearing is now closed.

19 (The hearing was concluded at 7:19
20 p.m.)

21
22
23
24



1 State of Delaware)
)
2 New Castle County)

3
4 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

5 I, Christina M. Vitale, Certified Court
6 Reporter and Notary Public, do hereby certify
7 that the foregoing record, pages 1 to 82
8 inclusive, is a true and accurate transcript
9 of my stenographic notes taken on Monday,
10 December 7, 2015 in the above-captioned
11 matter.

12
13 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
14 my hand and seal this 10th day of December,
15 2015, at Wilmington.

16
17 

18
19 Christina M. Vitale, CCR

20
21
22
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