

In The Matter Of:
Department of Education
First State Montessori Academy

Public Meeting
March 7, 2016

Wilcox & Fetzer, Ltd.
1330 King Street
Wilmington, DE 19801
email: depos@wilfet.com, web: www.wilfet.com
phone: 302-655-0477, fax: 302-655-0497



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PUBLIC MEETING
FIRST STATE MONTESSORI ACADEMY

Public Meeting of the Department of Education, taken pursuant to notice at the Carvel State Office Building, 820 North French Street, Second Floor Auditorium, beginning at 5:32 p.m. on Monday, March 7, 2016, before Jennifer M. Guy, Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public.

APPEARANCES:

CATHERINE T. HICKEY, ESQ.
DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL
820 North French Street
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

JENNIFER NAGOURNEY
CHARTER OFFICE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



1 MS. NAGOURNEY: Good evening. I
2 declare this public hearing to be open. My
3 name is Jennifer Nagourney; I'm the executive
4 director of the Charter School Office for the
5 Delaware Department of Education, and I will
6 serve as hearing officer for this public
7 hearing.

8 First State Montessori Academy
9 has applied for a major modification to its
10 charter. As required by law, the matter was
11 referred to the Charter School Accountability
12 Committee.

13 This joint public hearing is
14 being held by the Department of Education and
15 the State Board of Education to assist in the
16 decision of whether the criteria set forth for
17 approval in the Delaware Code have been
18 satisfied. This hearing provides an
19 opportunity for public comment.

20 I will now ask the others with me
21 today to introduce themselves.

22 MS. HICKEY: Good evening. My
23 name is Catherine Hickey; I'm the deputy
24 attorney general with the Delaware Department



1 of Justice, and I'm here today serving as
2 counsel for the hearing officer.

3 MS. NAGOURNEY: I would like the
4 record to reflect that the notice of the time,
5 date, and place of today's public hearing was
6 published in the News Journal and the Delaware
7 State News. In addition, notice was published
8 at the Charter School Accountability
9 Committee's official place of business, on the
10 Department of Education's official website, and
11 on the State Public Meeting Calendar on the
12 State's official website. Further, the school
13 was personally notified of the time, date, and
14 place of today's public hearing.

15 A court reporter is present so
16 that a record of this hearing can be made. It
17 will be necessary for each speaker to clearly
18 identify himself or herself before beginning to
19 speak so that the court reporter will be able
20 to note who you are. The record of this
21 hearing will be provided to the Secretary of
22 Education and members of the State Board of
23 Education, together with any written or
24 electronic comments received at or before this



1 hearing.

2 We'll proceed in the following
3 manner. First we'll hear from a representative
4 for the charter who wishes to comment. May I
5 see a show of hands for all who plan to speak?
6 Let the record reflect one person has raised
7 their hand.

8 And so at this point, we welcome
9 you to make your comments.

10 MS. JONES: My name is Cheryl
11 Jones, and I have been a Montessori educator
12 for 11 years. I'm currently a 2nd and 3rd
13 grade teacher at First State Montessori
14 Academy.

15 In 2013, I joined other committed
16 volunteers who worked to make First State
17 Montessori School become a reality. This was a
18 new venture for the Wilmington community, and
19 as an experienced Montessori teacher, I wanted
20 to contribute to the school's success. And
21 successful it was. There are now waiting lists
22 in many of the grade levels, and the
23 surrounding community has realized how
24 beneficial and successful Montessori education



1 can be.

2 I'm proud to be a part of FSMA,
3 as it has become a great place for children to
4 experience Montessori education. Here at FSMA,
5 children use beautiful materials, have
6 inspiring teachers, and learn in a safe
7 classroom community. Each week, I get to see
8 children have "ah-ha" moments as they learn new
9 concepts in math, reading, writing, and
10 science. Staff members work together to ensure
11 the children are learning at their own pace,
12 but being challenged when needed.
13 Administrators guide and support the school to
14 help us continue to grow and move in a positive
15 direction.

16 I believe that children need this
17 kind of education to be available to them so
18 they can fall in love with learning. Everyone
19 deserves a chance to have a Montessori
20 education. I support First State Montessori
21 Academy expanding to the 7th and 8th grade
22 grade levels. Thank you for your time.

23 MS. NAGOURNEY: Is there anyone
24 else who wishes to comment? If not, this



1 hearing is now closed. Thank you very much;
2 have a good evening.

3 (Hearing adjourned at 5:38 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, Jennifer M. Guy, Professional Reporter
and Notary Public, do hereby certify that the
foregoing record, pages 1 to 240 inclusive, is
a true and accurate transcript of my
stenographic notes taken on February 12, 2016,
in the above-captioned matter.

Jennifer M. Guy, RPR

1 State of Delaware)
)
2 New Castle County)

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5 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

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7 I, Jennifer M. Guy, Professional Reporter
8 and Notary Public, do hereby certify that the
9 foregoing record, pages 1 to 8 inclusive, is a
10 true and accurate transcript of my stenographic
11 notes taken on March 7, 2016, in the
12 above-captioned matter.

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16 Jennifer M. Guy, RPR
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