

Dear Secretary Murphy,

My name is Christine Chaney and I am a 5th grade teacher at Family Foundations Academy. For the past few months our school has been talked about and written about in a very negative manner. Despite the gossip, accusations and audit findings, there are many positive things happening at Family Foundations Academy.

First and foremost, our students have shown consistent academic growth for the past several years. The teachers at our school work very hard to ensure that our students are learning and achieving. Although our school day is not over until 4:00 many teachers stay later to plan lessons that are challenging and rigorous for our students. The teaching teams work closely with each other to discuss learning strategies, formative checks for understanding, and students who need that extra push. Throughout the past month the staff have maintained their focus on the students and their learning,

Secondly, the students themselves are amazing and interested in Family Foundations Academy. Many of the students now and previously, have been at FFA for more than five years. They believe in the education they are receiving here and believe in the caring, enthusiastic staff that wants to help them succeed. I am the FFA Middle School Student Council Adviser and I have seen students step up to make our school better in many ways. For example, last year, the student council spent hours sorting the library books of the catholic school so we could have a library. Student Council has hosted 3 high school fairs for our 8th grade students so they could learn about their choices of schools in which to apply. These fairs enabled our students to choose schools based on the information provided to them. Our student council also planned three career days in which people from different businesses and community. Our students believe in their school and want to continue their efforts.

Thirdly, we have an amazing academic coordinator and current interim head of school. Mrs. Amy Novosel has been at Family Foundations Academy since the beginning of the school. She works harder than any teacher I have ever known. When I first started she was at school planning lessons for her third grade students or tutoring until late in the evening. She was also helpful to me as a new teacher. I was amazed by her dedication to the students. (and she has 4 children of her own.) Her faith in the school not only motivated her to work for the students but all four of her children have attended FFA. Two of her children have graduated and one was accepted at Charter School of Wilmington!! Mrs. Novosel has been the Curriculum Coordinator for the past three years and she has worked diligently to make sure teachers have what they need to plan the best lessons for their students.

Also, Mrs. Kathleen Connor, who was just appointed interim head of school, is an amazing teacher who I worked with when we both taught 8th grade at the middle school from 2012-2014. Her wealth of knowledge about teaching and education allowed me to learn from her and adjust to being an 8th grade teacher. (I had never taught 8th grade before). Plus, she is a very optimistic, kind-hearted person who believes in the mission of the school. With her at the helm, the teachers will be united as one!!! I, as well as many others, have the utmost faith in her ability to lead the school in a positive direction.

As for myself, I have seen many changes since I started at FFA in in 2008. Due to our academic strengths, supportive staff and positive school climate the school has grown from 1st grade to 4th grade in 2008 to a K-8 school with two buildings to oversee and maintain. We grew so fast based on people's belief in us that we had no room at the elementary to grown. In fact, we first had the middle school in the reformatted elementary school cafeteria in 2010. During that school year, teachers had to eat with

their students in the classroom while the cafeteria was used as middle school. The teacher sacrificed willingly in order to provide more education for more students. When we moved into the current middle school building we realized that we would be separated from the rest of the student body. But again, the staff sacrificed in order to provide education for more students. We are still separated from the rest of the student body, but we are maintaining a positive spirit and a willingness to work hard for our students.

Although, I am an award winning teacher with 25 years of experience I choose to stay at Family Foundations Academy because I believe in the mission of the school, the staff, and most of all the students.

These are just a few of the positive things that are continuing to happen at FFA. Please renew our charter so our students can continue to succeed and continue to believe in their school. They deserve that opportunity.