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Delaware State Board of Education
John G. Townsend Building
401 Federal Street, Suite 2
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Delaware State Board of Education:

As an educator, I encourage you to vote in favor of the application for the Freire Charter School Wilmington proposal for the 2015-2016 school year.

I have been teaching Adult Education at West End Neighborhood House for the last three years, and I have had the opportunity to meet many students who dropped out of school. The most common reasons I hear from students as to why they left high school are bullying, violence, and lack of support from teachers or staff. Many of my students believe that if they had not encountered those problems, that they would have graduated from high school and started a career; instead they must split their time between studying for the GED exam and working minimum wage jobs because they do not qualify for anything else based on a lack of education. When they come to our GED program, they often succeed and surprise even themselves. I know that the majority of my students had the academic aptitude to graduate, so I agree with their own assessment that the school environment played a major role in their decisions to drop out.

The Freire Charter School provides an environment that is safe and conducive to learning. I have visited Freire in Philadelphia, and I was amazed at the lack of metal detectors, violence, or rude behavior. I was even more struck by the comments that I heard from students at Freire. The students told me that the number one reason they chose Freire was because it is safe and has a policy of non-violence. I talked to some students who were Peer Mediators, and they told me about Freire's mediation program, which reinforces the policy of non-violence. I was also impressed when the Freire students told me about the support that they received from their teachers and administrators. One student told me that she often sends emails about assignments to her teachers after class, and she always receives prompt responses (her words were, "in like eight minutes"). Other students told me about the extra homework help and college counseling available at Freire. I am sure that the amount of dedication and support that Freire shows its students is the reason for their successes.

I would like to see more of Delaware's youth graduate from high school and start their careers. I believe that your support of Freire Charter School Wilmington's application will help more students achieve their dreams.

Sincerely,
Julie Bieber

