

**From:** [riv81520@gmail.com](mailto:riv81520@gmail.com)  
**To:** [infocso](mailto:infocso)  
**Subject:** Closing of Gateway Lab Charter  
**Date:** Sunday, November 23, 2014 4:34:42 PM

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Mr. Murphy,

My daughter is a student at Gateway Lab Charter school. I have never been so upset as I was when I heard of the possibility that Gateway's charter being revoked.

I know I do not have to tell you any story about how well my daughter is doing at Gateway you probably have heard them all. What I did want to ask of you is to visit our school, see how they are teaching our children, see how they care about our children and see how happy our children are to be there and how they are loving to learn. My husband and I knew we had to find a school for our daughter where she was not made to feel different, where she would wake up in the morning wanting to go to school, but most of all could get the education she deserved. We went to many schools as this would be her first year in middle school and we knew we had to get her out of our district because no matter how many meetings I had, no matter how many phone calls, and no matter how much even though not much intervention they tried my daughter still was failing.

I looked at the testing numbers for the schools we went to look at but when we went to Gateway it was amazing. They gave us a tour, explained the process they use to teach our children, and most of all listened to our concerns related to my daughter's problems. I left there with tears in my eyes knowing this is where she needed to be. I then looked at the testing scores again and thought to myself well they are going up every year which to me showed progress especially for a school so new.

My daughter is thriving in so many ways. She is actually learning. She has a form of epilepsy that affects the part of the brain that processes numbers and comprehension. My daughter sat in front of me last week and did a word problem for math and it was correct. She worked the whole problem out without tears which has not happened in three years since she had her first seizure which took a lot from her including her being able to do even the easiest of math problems. She loves going to school. She loves learning. She loves her teachers and even made the comment "they really help me there mom they really care about me". Coming from an eleven year old that just amazed me. She has become part of this family that has accepted her for who she is and for the first time in many years she does not feel different.

I am asking you to please go to Gateway and see what we saw the first time we went there. Give them the time they deserve to keep helping my daughter and all the other children who's lives they have made a difference in. Please give them the same chance that other charters have been given in the past to show that academically they are progressing and I do believe you will be happy that you gave them that chance.

With many Thanks,

Christina Arnold  
[Riv815@msn.com](mailto:Riv815@msn.com)

Sent from my MetroPCS Android device

**From:** [J.M-C](#)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Cc:** [Jay carter](#)  
**Subject:** Gateway Lab School  
**Date:** Monday, November 24, 2014 10:30:31 PM

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Gateway Lab School, has been absolutely a delight to my child.

In the feeder school my child was behind, a lot and received very little help even after I met with the teacher. Class size to large. Did not have enough time to finish his work. Was not allowed out of his seat. Must remain seated. No activities after school. No clubs to join for my son.

Here at Gateway Lab School, my son in 3 months has truly become a Gladiator! He gets gym everyday, he gets music and Art everyother day. He is allowed to get our of chair. The class size is fantastic. My son is in drum club. My son plays after school activities.

My son can has learned how to focus and listen to the different bass and tones in drum club.

The third grade teacher has taught my son to enjoy math by giving him challenging word problems and he does this without pencil and paper. ( mental math) ( my son disliked math). This teaches the child to just think about it for a few minutes.

Teaches him it is ok to take time to think about the question.

He has learned about Egypt. Demonstrates it out.

In drum club, he has learned to construct an orchestra. He can Demonstrates it to me. He told me that this is the tempo of the persons hand.

While learning about history and the government and the party of the house, they learned geographic of different countries and where they are located and using math to calculate the miles apart.

This independent charter school, has taught my child a lot of knowledge.

Thank you  
proud parent of Gateway Lab School  
Jen

**From:** [Marty Essick](#)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment - 2014-15 Renewal Application  
**Date:** Sunday, November 23, 2014 9:34:42 PM

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My daughter is a current student at Gateway Lab School and I am writing in support of the great work our teachers, students and administrators are doing every day to positively impact the lives of many special children. My daughter entered Gateway in third grade transferring from West Park Elementary. My daughter could not read at grade level and needed much more assistance than a traditional public school could provide. She also had very few friends, felt different and anxious every day. She felt she did not fit in with the other children, to use her words, "they don't get me".

Gateway Lab School has been the catalyst to reaching her full potential. She is now reading at grade level, is excited about going to school everyday and has many, many friends. This school has closed an educational gap that has been present in the DE school system for many years. Children with learning differences, like my daughter, need specialized strategies, one on one instruction and a loving patient environment. This is what Gateway has provided her and many others. I am distressed to learn that the Delaware DOE is considering not renewing its charter due to poor test scores. Poor test scores? Really? These special children don't fit the traditional learning mode and can not be expected to meet the same testing standards as kids without learning differences. Closing this school sends the message to the children and parents of special children in Delaware that the state does not care about us. I ask that you please reconsider the renewal of the schools charter and send the right message to our kids and families that the Delaware Public School system values everyone. Test scores don't reflect these kids handwork every day and the struggles they face in learning differently from their peers in traditional schools. I pray that common sense and compassion prevails and Gateway can continue to help many more children.

**From:** [Susan Krewatch](#)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** Save Gateway Lab school  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 25, 2014 8:57:19 AM

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I am shocked that you would consider closing this very needed school. The reason the scores are low is because all the children who go there have special educational needs and learning problems. Of course the scores will be low!

I know several kids who go to this wonderful school and have benefitted greatly from the fabulous teachers who understand them.

Please reconsider and keep this school open. It would be a tragedy to have it closed.

Susan Krewatch

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Quinn Ellie N](#)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Gateway Lab School  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 25, 2014 10:38:57 AM

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To Whom It May Concern:

Gateway Lab School has been hugely beneficial to my nephew's academic life. He started as a third grader behind in reading and writing by at least 1 grade level, and disliked school very much. The teachers and staff at Gateway have used new and emergent curriculum, along with compassion and encouragement to challenge my nephew and boost his self-esteem. My nephew is now on the honor roll, reading at his grade level and is equipped with empathy and compassion for those who may also be struggling with a learning difference.

I happen to be a school counselor and test coordinator in a public school and understand that standardized test scores is used to see where a student grows but it should not be the only piece to the puzzle. Have you met with teachers & parents to ask them if their son with ADHD or daughter who is on the spectrum succeeded since they started at Gateway? Please reach out to the families & faculty to find out what is going on every day in their classroom before basing your decision on test scores. Thank you for your time and consideration for keeping Gateway Open!

Ellie Quinn, M.Ed.  
School Counselor  
Heritage Elementary  
454-3424 ext. 141

**From:** [Rachel Fawcett](#)  
**To:** [infocso](#); [Johnson Donna R](#); [Nagourney Jennifer](#); [Murphy Mark](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Gateway Lab School  
**Date:** Monday, November 24, 2014 2:31:57 PM

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Good Afternoon:

I am the proud parent of a Gateway Gladiator. I also have the privilege of being a proud aunt to another Gateway Gladiator. I am not going to get on my soapbox about how standardized tests and students with learning disabilities are a recipe for failure. I believe that anyone with common sense and half of a brain can understand the correlation. I surely hope that those factors (as well as the research and studies that support it) will be taken into consideration without having to hear parents advocate for it. Instead, I will share with you my experiences with the school.

My experience with Gateway Lab School began two years ago when my nephew started as a 3rd grade student. I personally saw his struggles in the school setting from the time he was in preschool up until he entered Gateway Lab School. It was heart wrenching to see educator after educator fail him year after year.

Similarly, my daughter, Grace, has also struggled in school. I could tell she learned differently from the time she was a 3-year old preschooler. At the time, and for many years following, I always chalked it up to her being my "spirited" child. We trucked on through 4-year old preschool, kindergarten, kindergarten (again), and first grade. Finally, in first grade, she was diagnosed with ADHD. Throughout these early years, Grace received private tutoring, therapy, and school counseling. She improved, but she did not *thrive*. I came to accept that Grace would probably always be a mediocre student. Was I advocating for her? Absolutely. But, there was only so much her previous school could do for her. They had limited resources and did not specialize in teaching students with learning disabilities. Second grade came along and Grace did well, but she still struggled socially. She always felt different from her other classmates. She would come home crying and exhausted from the stress and anxiety she felt from being in a school that was so chaotic for her, due to her ADHD. She would have to constantly be talked to for being distracted or not sitting still or even for having handwriting that was not considered neat. Imagine what that is like for a seven year old.

I finally made the decision to enroll her into Gateway as a third-grader this year. And what a difference 3 months have made! She went from being a mediocre student, to excelling. She has straight As. She is coming home with skills she (and I) never knew she had before. She writes stories. Not just a few sentences of rambling, but pages of well thought out stories. She is doing 4th grade level math. She is reading chapter books that I could never get her to read before. She is teaching ME about Ancient Egypt. Most importantly, she feels *normal*. She doesn't feel like she doesn't fit in or is different from her other classmates. She doesn't feel inferior to her friends and classmates. She feels like she is smart and can learn now.

Enrolling Grace into Gateway Lab School is the best decision I ever made for her. I do not have State test scores to measure her progress in that aspect, but I believe that my paragraph above illustrates exactly how Gateway has improved my

daughter's academics - even her confidence and self-worth.

I do not want to see Gateway close. Grace will have to re-enter a new school - one that does not specialize in educating students with learning disabilities. Grace will go from being a confident, straight A student, back to being a mediocre, C student. Her confidence and security will suffer. She should not have to suffer or feel bad about herself because she learns differently. At Gateway, she has an *entire* school of educators and administrators who specialize in and feel passionately about teaching children with learning disabilities. Why take Grace from that and put her into a school in which only a few educators (if any) have experience with teaching children with learning disabilities? I am pleading with you to please allow Gateway to continue to provide my daughter and other students with a safe, productive learning environment in which she excels. This school is making a difference in the lives of students and families. It would be a travesty to see that resource taken away.

I close with a quote taken from the United States Supreme Court Opinion in *Brown v. Board of Education*:

"A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn."

Very truly yours,  
Rachel Fawcett

**From:** [Ashley Marissa](#)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** Support for gateway school  
**Date:** Monday, November 24, 2014 1:46:00 PM

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To whom it may concern,

I was informed of the possibility of the closing of the school. I hope this is reconsidered. This is a great school for children on the autism spectrum. This is a safe place to let each child be themselves. I have seen great improvements in my cousin who attends this school. He is more outgoing, doing great in school, and has not been bullied. Before my cousin would stay to himself, and dreaded school, he was bullied not only in school but on his bus, now he loves school and is doing well. He isn't afraid to go to school anymore. Who would want to take that safety net away from a child, especially a child who needs that security of knowing school is a safe place. I truly wish the school remains open, and helps these children continue to flourish in a comfortable safe environment.

Thank you for your time,  
Ashley Arnold



**From:** [Johnson Donna R](#)  
**To:** [Nagourney Jennifer](#); [Kay-Lawrence Sheila](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Closure of Gateway Lab School  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 25, 2014 11:40:13 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Please add to the public comment record for Gateway

*Donna Johnson*

Executive Director

State Board of Education

401 Federal Street, Suite 2

Dover, DE 19901-3639

302-735-4010

[www.destateboarded.k12.de.us](http://www.destateboarded.k12.de.us)

Twitter: @destateboarded

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**From:** bevnickcam@comcast.net [mailto:bevnickcam@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 25, 2014 11:12 AM  
**To:** Johnson Donna R  
**Subject:** Closure of Gateway Lab School

Please do not close Gateway Lab School. Gateway has been a lifeline for me and my daughter, she was lost at other elementary schools she attended even with special education being offered. At Gateway she has thrived academically, emotionally and socially. Before she was labelled as having ADD as she was lost in the classroom exhibiting disinterest. At Gateway she is involved in classroom discussions, she has a voice, she isn't being judged on what she says and how she says it, she feels included. Students work together to help compensate for each other's disabilities and she has never experienced any bullying here. She feels comfortable asking teachers questions as she feels they are interested in what she says. She comes home and tells me what she does at school, where before when I asked how school was, all she would say was 'ok'. My daughter was very introverted, now she has friends from school and does not feel alienated. She even asked me why can't they have a high school like this. She has learning disability but here she feels empowered not disabled and I contribute the environment at Gateway for enabling this to occur. Please consider the negative repercussions on these students if they lost this school. Thank you.

Beverley Pottinger

**From:** [Johnson Donna R](#)  
**To:** [Nagourney Jennifer](#); [Kay-Lawrence Sheila](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Gateway Lab Charter School  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 25, 2014 6:58:43 AM

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Please add this letter to the record of public comment for Gateway Lab School's renewal application.

Donna Johnson  
(sent from my iPhone)

Executive Director  
State Board of Education  
401 Federal Street, Suite 2  
Dover, DE 19901-3639  
302-735-4010  
<http://www.destateboarded.k12.de.us>

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Rutt Barbara <[Barbara.Rutt@DOE.K12.DE.US](mailto:Barbara.Rutt@DOE.K12.DE.US)>  
**Date:** November 25, 2014 at 5:49:00 AM EST  
**To:** Johnson Donna R <[donna.johnson@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:donna.johnson@doe.k12.de.us)>  
**Subject: Fw: Gateway Lab Charter School**

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**From:** Rebecca Zedan <[beckiennate@me.com](mailto:beckiennate@me.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 24, 2014 7:29 PM  
**To:** Rutt Barbara  
**Subject:** Gateway Lab Charter School

Mrs. Rutt,

I'd like to let you know about my children, and why we need Gateway Lab Charter School.

I don't know where we would be without Gateway. My children were being left behind in their school. My daughter Sierra was getting in trouble a lot, and it wasn't because of behavior. It was because by the end of her lessons on Monday she knew what she was supposed to know. So Tuesday thru Friday she would pull a book out and read or start drawing. She would get in trouble because the other kids would then want to do that as well. The problem was that they had not learned everything that they needed to learn for the week. Sierra was not being challenged at all. I begged and pleaded with the school to help her, to challenge her. Their only option was to put her in "enrichment classes". Enrichment classes were for the advanced students, they met once a week for 30 minutes. How does this change anything? We put her in the enrichment class hoping that they would help even a little while we struggled to figure what else to do. Homeschooling was a definite

and very real option for us as it was for many of our friends in the area with the same or similar issues.

Towards the end of Sierra's 2nd grade year I was talking to a close friend (again) about both Sierra and Savanna's issues in public school. She told me about this charter school that had a whole different concept for teaching children. She gave me the info, and my husband and I checked out the school. I'm pretty sure I was in tears by the time I was done reading everything I could find about it. We quickly filled out the application and set up an interview.

Sierra has been at Gateway since the doors opened and Savanna is in her second year. Both of my girls are thriving in Gateway, something I never thought possible before Gateway. I think we were about a month into school in Sierra's first year when I got a phone call from Sierra's teachers. They wanted to start working on 4th through 6th grade work with her because she wasn't being challenged enough. Those were their words, not mine. Someone else saw her potential and knew she needed more.

Savanna is thriving at Gateway as well. She is learning and actually understanding not just memorizing like she was at her other school. She is no longer bullied, no longer comes home from school in tears. Her self esteem has blossomed in Gateway in a way it never would have in her other school.

We are so thankful for Gateway. In fact we love Gateway so much that I recruited our neighborhood. We have our own hub stop and now have 5 families that get on and off at our stop. We have families that can't wait for their children to graduate 2nd grade so that they can get them into Gateway. I honestly never thought that the day would come when I wouldn't have to fight with my kids every morning to get them to go to school. Now that they are at Gateway we get in trouble with the kids if we have to pick them up early!

The teachers take the time to talk to the parents, email the parents, and work with the parents to make sure each child is working to the best of their ability and being challenged. Gateway teaches our kids with art-based learning which makes it fun as well as educational for them. They are always striving for excellence with our kids, pushing them to be the best that they can be. You would never know that our school is 63% learning disabled children when you walk through it. The kids are all engaged in learning in every classroom. We are thankful beyond words for Gateway, we would be a homeschooling without them! Please take this into consideration before you turn off the light at the end of the tunnel.

This community cannot afford to lose Gateway Lab Charter School. Neither can these children and their families.

Forever Grateful for Gateway,

-Rebecca Zedan

Mother of two Gateway Gladiators  
"Gladiators never give up!"

**From:** [Nagourney Jennifer](#)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Gateway Lab School  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 25, 2014 2:24:59 PM

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Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Melton, Tasha A." <[Tasha.Melton@va.gov](mailto:Tasha.Melton@va.gov)>  
**Date:** November 25, 2014 at 10:54:57 AM EST  
**To:** ""[donnajohnson@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:donnajohnson@doe.k12.de.us)"" <[donnajohnson@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:donnajohnson@doe.k12.de.us)>, ""[jennifer.nagourney@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:jennifer.nagourney@doe.k12.de.us)"" <[jennifer.nagourney@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:jennifer.nagourney@doe.k12.de.us)>, ""[mark.murphy@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:mark.murphy@doe.k12.de.us)"" <[mark.murphy@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:mark.murphy@doe.k12.de.us)>  
**Subject: Gateway Lab School**

To all it may concern,

Please don't close Gateway Lab School. My coworker commends this school all the time. She tells me about how well her daughter is progressing there. Before she started at Gateway Lab School, she was withdrawn and inverted. Now she socializes with her peers, she's made plenty of friends, and, she tells her mother how comfortable she feels when she's in school. Her daughter's reading and writing skills have improved tremendously since she began attending Gateway Lab School. My coworker was devastated when she heard the school was closing and if she feels that way then I am certain the other parents of children attending Gateway Lab school probably feel the same way. Please take a moment to consider the students involved in this matter.

Thank you in advance,  
Mrs. Tasha Ervin

**From:** [Elaine Buonopane](#)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** GATEWAY CHARTER SCHOOL - PLEA FOR RENEWAL!  
**Date:** Saturday, November 22, 2014 12:47:30 PM

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My daughter is in 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Gateway Lab Charter School and has attended there for three years. I brought her to Gateway to receive instruction with smaller class sizes and extra help from the teachers and paraprofessionals that Gateway offers as well as the art based type of learning they offer. My daughter has been diagnosed with ADHD, Dyslexia and an Auditory Learning Disability. Her former school (Heritage Elementary – a very good Red Clay School) tried to help my child after an IEP was put into place, but large class sizes and one teacher per room made getting her the right type of help nearly impossible. It also made school frustrating each and every day at Heritage. She simply was not learning at Heritage, period.

When she arrived at Gateway my daughter could hardly read at Grade One Level, ***now she is more than meeting fifth grade reading level and she loves to read!*** She loves this school – why? Because she is not feeling that frustration any longer and ***because there is enough QUALIFIED help for those that need the extra time that regular public schools often cannot accommodate.***

At Gateway, my daughter has flourished and this is a HUGE

accomplishment! Catherine Dolan and her staff work very hard for these kids! Gateway was a BIG step in the right direction. Gateway gave the opportunity for her to SUCCEED AND LEARN TO LOVE SCHOOL! I beg you to reconsider the decision to take away the school's charter! Look deeper at how many kids and families will be affected, and how many future students won't have the chance to learn to love school too! These are kids that need a chance to love school and love learning!!

I hope you will truly HEAR the parents on 12/10 and do what is right for the kids of Delaware by keeping this school open!

**Elaine Buonopane**

**From:** [Rebecca Zedan](#)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** Gateway Lab Charter School  
**Date:** Saturday, November 22, 2014 11:59:59 PM

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I don't know where we would be without Gateway. My children were being left behind in their school. My daughter Sierra was getting in trouble a lot, and it wasn't because of behavior. It was because by the end of her lessons on Monday she knew what she was supposed to know. So Tuesday thru Friday she would pull a book out and read or start drawing. She would get in trouble because the other kids would then want to do that as well. The problem was that they had not learned everything that they needed to learn for the week. Sierra was not being challenged at all. I begged and pleaded with the school to help her, to challenge her. Their only option was to put her in "enrichment classes". Enrichment classes were for the advanced students, they met once a week for 30 minutes. How does this change anything? We put her in the enrichment class hoping that they would help even a little while we struggled to figure what else to do. Homeschooling was a definite and very real option for us as it was for many of our friends in the area with the same or similar issues.

Towards the end of Sierra's 2nd grade year I was talking to a close friend (again) about both Sierra and Savanna's issues in public school. She told me about this charter school that had a whole different concept for teaching children. She gave me the info, and my husband and I checked out the school. I'm pretty sure I was in tears by the time I was done reading everything I could find about it. We quickly filled out the application and set up and interview.

Sierra has been at Gateway since the doors opened and Savanna is in her second year. Both of my girls are thriving in Gateway, something I never thought possible before Gateway. I think we were about a month into school in Sierra's first year when I got a phone call from Sierra's teachers. They wanted to start working on 4th through 6th grade work with her because she wasn't being challenged enough. Those were their words, not mine. Someone else saw her potential and knew she needed more.

Savanna is thriving at Gateway as well. She is learning and actually understanding not just memorizing like she was at her other school. She is no longer bullied, no longer comes home from school in tears. Her self esteem has blossomed in Gateway in a way in never would have in her other school.

We are so thankful for Gateway. In fact we love Gateway so much that I recruited our neighborhood. We have our own hub stop and now have 5 families that get on and off at our stop. We have families that can't wait for their children to graduate 2nd grade so that they can get them into Gateway. I honestly never thought that the day would come when I wouldn't have to fight with my kids every morning to get them to go to school. Now that they are at Gateway we get in trouble with the kids if we have to pick them up early!

The teachers take the time to talk to the parents, email the parents, and work with the parents to make sure each child is working to the best of their ability and being challenged. Gateway teaches our kids with art-based learning which makes it fun as well as educational for them. They are always striving for excellence with our kids,

pushing them to be the best that they can be. You would never know that our school is 63% learning disabled children when you walk through it. The kids are all engaged in learning in every classroom. We are thankful beyond words for Gateway, we would be a homeschooling without them! Please take this into consideration before you turn off the light at the end of the tunnel.

This community cannot afford to lose Gateway Lab Charter School. Neither can these children and their families.

Forever Grateful for Gateway,

-Rebecca Zedan



**From:** [cburress25@verizon.net](mailto:cburress25@verizon.net)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** Gateway Lab School Renewal  
**Date:** Sunday, November 23, 2014 7:34:07 PM

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To whom it may concern,

We are writing to you today in regards to the recommendation of the Charter School Accountability Board to close Gateway Lab School. Our son has attended this school since it opened three years ago. Our son is an intelligent, curious individual who also happens to have ADHD. We were very excited for him to attend this school, for he had a very rough time while he attended his previous school. We loved the idea of smaller classroom sizes, individual attention, gym daily and music or art daily at Gateway Lab School. We have not been disappointed in the way Gateway Lab School has provided an education for our son.

During our son's first year he was below standard on the DCAS tests. His teachers developed an individualized education plan, otherwise known as an IEP. This was implemented with my son's best interest in mind. Throughout his 4<sup>th</sup> grade year he continued to show improvement. His spring DCAS testing had him at meets standard. We were of course very happy to see this. At the end of his 5th grade year he was meets standard in everything, except reading, where he was scored at advanced. He was so proud of himself. We were proud of him. Our son's IEP gets smaller every year. We are beginning to believe that one day he may not even need it. We believe that **Gateway** is the reason for this amazing progress.

Some of the most amazing rewards we have seen our son achieve at Gateway are not quantifiable in any exam. They are when our son says "I am smart." "I am good at math." These are things we were never sure we would hear when he began kindergarten, before Gateway Lab School was an option, and had a difficult time. Gateway gives our son a place where he belongs and is accepted. They see our son for who he is and not just as a boy with ADHD. They help him refocus when needed and give him the tools he needs to be successful in class.

He has learned how to play the guitar and the trombone at Gateway Lab School. His trombone education began in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade when he joined band and has happily continued into 6<sup>th</sup> grade, increasing his musical knowledge. He began learning guitar, in guitar club which is after school, when he was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. He now hears certain songs on the radio and states "I think I might be able to play that" He is also in choir. He tells us things like "I am very talented. I can play the trombone, the guitar and sing." He loves to go to school everyday and gets upset if he is late for any reason.

We are proud that our son goes to Gateway Lab School, a school that has an

incredibly dedicated staff. Every single staff member in that school is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of the students. We can see what a difference their hard work has made in the life of our son and in our family. We no longer worry about him struggling in school, academically or with his behavior, as we can see positive improvements in both.

Sincerely,

Craig and Maggie Burress

**From:** [Marlo](#)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** Gateway Lab  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 25, 2014 11:02:30 AM

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To whom it may concern,  
Gateway Lab School has been hugely beneficial in our child's academic life. He started as a third grader behind in reading and writing by at least 1 grade level, and disliked school very much. The teachers and staff at Gateway has used new and emergent curriculum, along with compassion and encouragement to challenge our son and boost his self-esteem. Our son is now on the honor roll, reading at grade level and is equipped with empathy and compassion for those who may also be struggling with a learning difference.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Louise Butler](#)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** Gateway  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 25, 2014 11:46:06 AM

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Hello. I'm writing to you to show support of keeping the Gateway Lab School open for all the children in this community that are benefiting so greatly. It's no surprise that test scores from Gateway would be lower, considering many of the learning challenges these children are facing. But, what we often forget is test taking usually only demonstrates 2-3% of a child's aptitude, which is why many universities are considering doing away with test taking & entrance exams all together.

I hope that the decision on Gateway can be reconsidered.

My thanks.

Louise Butler

**From:** [jennifer.nagourney@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:jennifer.nagourney@doe.k12.de.us)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** New response for survey "Renewal Public Comment"  
**Date:** Saturday, November 22, 2014 2:18:33 PM

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## GENERAL RESPONSE INFORMATION

Response Start Time: 11/22/2014 2:14:10 PM

Response End Time: 11/22/2014 2:18:22 PM

IP Address: 105.227.75.142

Completed Survey: Yes

Respondent: Anonymous

## SURVEY RESPONSES

SCORE: 0

1. Full Name

Richard PT Ots

2. E-Mail Address

richard.ots@gmail.com

3. Which charter school renewal application do you wish to comment upon?

Gateway Lab School

4. Comment:

I know a Delaware family who would be devastated by the loss of the Gateway Lab School. I support renewing their charter

**From:** [jennifer.nagourney@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:jennifer.nagourney@doe.k12.de.us)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** New response for survey "Renewal Public Comment"  
**Date:** Friday, November 21, 2014 9:03:10 PM

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## GENERAL RESPONSE INFORMATION

Response Start Time: 11/21/2014 8:58:15 PM

Response End Time: 11/21/2014 9:03:00 PM

IP Address: 108.16.203.231

Completed Survey: Yes

Respondent: Anonymous

## SURVEY RESPONSES

SCORE: 0

1. Full Name

Bernice Swann Bragg

2. E-Mail Address

B.swann@yahoo.com

3. Which charter school renewal application do you wish to comment upon?

Gateway Lab School

4. Comment:

I know a Delaware family who would be devastated by the loss of the Gateway Lab School. I support renewing their charter. Their son is autistic and is thriving in the Gateway Lab School. Mainstreaming would set him back emotionally and academically. He deserves to succeed. Please keep the school open for him and his classmates. Your consideration is sincerely appreciated.

**From:** [jennifer.nagourney@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:jennifer.nagourney@doe.k12.de.us)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** New response for survey "Renewal Public Comment"  
**Date:** Saturday, November 22, 2014 6:23:27 AM

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## GENERAL RESPONSE INFORMATION

Response Start Time: 11/22/2014 6:17:15 AM

Response End Time: 11/22/2014 6:23:17 AM

IP Address: 74.109.4.40

Completed Survey: Yes

Respondent: Anonymous

## SURVEY RESPONSES

SCORE: 0

1. Full Name  
John Stocker

2. E-Mail Address  
Stocker@udel.edu

3. Which charter school renewal application do you wish to comment upon?  
Gateway Lab School

4. Comment:  
This school serves an important role in the community, helps numerous families in Delaware, and should be kept open. At the end of the day this school gives the kids that attend their best chance at success.

**From:** [jennifer.nagourney@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:jennifer.nagourney@doe.k12.de.us)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** New response for survey "Renewal Public Comment"  
**Date:** Saturday, November 22, 2014 6:40:27 AM

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## GENERAL RESPONSE INFORMATION

Response Start Time: 11/22/2014 6:39:32 AM

Response End Time: 11/22/2014 6:40:16 AM

IP Address: 78.102.207.76

Completed Survey: Yes

Respondent: Anonymous

## SURVEY RESPONSES

SCORE: 0

1. Full Name  
Aleksandra Ristic

2. E-Mail Address  
sasa\_mala@yahoo.com

3. Which charter school renewal application do you wish to comment upon?  
Gateway Lab School

4. Comment:  
I know a Delaware family who would be devastated by the loss of the Gateway Lab School. I support renewing their charter.



From: [Anthony Spadaccini](#)  
To: [infocso](#)  
Subject: Renewal of Gateway Lab School's Charter  
Date: Saturday, November 22, 2014 9:57:13 PM

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Delaware Department of Education  
The Townsend Building  
401 Federal Street, Suite 2  
Dover, DE 19901  
Attn: Mr. Mark Murphy  
Secretary of Education

Sub: Renewal of Gateway Lab School's Charter

Dear Mr. Murphy:

I am the legal guardian of my 10 year old grandson who has been diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome including additional autistic characteristics. **I would like to state that our Delaware traditional public schools did not work for my grandson.**

#### **2009: THE TRADITIONAL FEEDER PATTERN SCHOOL**

My grandson just turned 5 years old when he entered the feeder pattern for Kindergarten. His biological grandmother (my wife) died a few weeks before he entered kindergarten. The school was informed of the tragic death however, **THE SCHOOL PROVIDED HIM WITH NO SERVICES OR HELP FOR HIM TO GET OVER THE LOSS.** How **UNPROFESSIONAL.**

A few weeks after he started Kindergarten, an interventionist called our home and left a lengthy message commenting that Joe was not listening to instructions. The tone of the interventionist was stern and non-compassionate. This phone message made me realize that my autistic grandson was going to be treated like a bad boy and the school was only concerned that he did not rock the boat. **THE SCHOOL DID NOT UNDERSTAND HOW AUTISM MADE HIM OVER FOCUS AND CAUSE HIM NOT HEAR HIS TEACHER'S COMMANDS. HOW UNPROFESSIONAL.**

During the school year, I attended a meeting concerning a 504 plan. The 504 meeting included comments by the School Psychologist who visually observed my grandson while in the classroom. One of her observational comments were: "**my grandson slithered along the floor like a snake**". **A SNAKE! HOW UNPROFESSIONAL!** I took exception to the school's psychologist comparing my grandson to a **SNAKE** and I filed a complaint with the Superintendent of the School District. The Superintendent and I met to review my complaint and the Superintendent agreed with me. He made an executive decision which allowed my grandson to be choice to another school.

#### **2010: ONTO THE NEW CHOICE SCHOOL**

My grandson was set with a 504 plan with limited accommodations. I presented the new school with letters from a Psychiatrist MD and a Psychologist PHD who

recommended that my grandson have an IEP. **THE NEW SCHOOL REFUSED TO GIVE HIM AN IEP.** At a meeting, the school psychologist stated **“WE DON’T TELL DOCTOR’S HOW TO WRITE A PRESCRIPTION AND THEY DON’T TELL US HOW TO EDUCATE”**. How **RUDE!** How **INCOMPASSIONATE!** How **UNPROFESSIONAL!**

### **2013: EXIT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND ENTER THE GATEWAY HOPE**

In 2013, we enrolled my grandson into Gateway Lab School. While my grandson is very smart he did poorly in the Fall 2013 DCAS test by scoring 1s on both Reading & Math. My wife & I were very concerned and we talked to his Gateway 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher. She assured us not to worry and that he would do better in the Spring DCAS testing.

His teacher worked with him. My wife and I also worked with our grandson on how to take a test using a computer. The results of the Spring DCAS scores were outstanding. He scored 4s on both his Math & Reading DCAS test. It was his Gateway teacher’s patience and hard work and our work which allowed him to achieve the highest possible DCAS score. His previous schools did not have the patience or expertise to allow my grandson to succeed.

While the road for my autistic grandson will not be easy, Gateway Lab School has done everything in their power to help him. My grandson loves going to Gateway Lab School however, I hope and pray that there is a Gateway Lab School for him to go to in 2015.

If Gateway Lab School closes, we do not wish to have my grandson return to the traditional Delaware school system. We have tried they have **FAILED** to understand and educate my grandson. I am sure a lot of Gateway families will have difficulty sending their child back to a school system which does not have the staff and experience to work with children with disabilities.

As a guardian of an autistic child, I would hope that the DOE evaluates Gateway Lab School based on the big picture - the relationship between the school & students & parents and not have some bean counters evaluate the school based on a bar chart of a DCAS test which has been discontinued.

Sincerely,  
Anthony Spadaccini  
(Grandfather & legal guardian  
of a Gateway 4<sup>th</sup> grade Student)  
Address: 2412 Lanside Drive  
Wilmington DE 19810

**From:** [Hughes Heather](#)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Gateway Charter School  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 25, 2014 12:13:40 PM

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To Whom It May Concern:

Gateway Lab School has been so beneficial to countless students' academic life here in Delaware. I have taught several students who ended up attending Gateway and have performed so well there. The teachers and staff at Gateway use new and emergent curriculum, along with compassion and encouragement to challenge students and boost their self-esteem.

I am a public school teacher and I understand that standardized test scores is used to see where student grow, but it should not be the only piece to the puzzle. Have you met with teachers & parents to ask them if their son with ADHD or daughter who is on the spectrum succeeded since they started at Gateway? Please reach out to the families & faculty to find out what is going on every day in their classroom before basing your decision on test scores. Thank you for your time and consideration for keeping Gateway Open!

Heather Hughes  
Heritage Elementary School

**From:** [Bernice Bragg](#)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Gateway Lab School  
**Date:** Saturday, November 22, 2014 10:38:20 PM

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**To Whom It May Concern:**

I know a Delaware family who would be devastated by the loss of the Gateway Lab School. I support renewing their charter. Their son is autistic and is thriving in the Gateway Lab School. Mainstreaming would set him back both emotionally and academically. He deserves to succeed. Please keep the school open for him and his classmates.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Bernice Bragg

**From:** [Nicole Grebloskie](#)  
**To:** [infocso](#)  
**Cc:** [Angela Hale \(angelahale75@gmail.com\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Gateway Lab School  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 25, 2014 1:42:15 PM

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To whom it may concern,

I was very disappointed to hear that the Delaware Dept. of Education has announced that they will revoke the Charter title from Gateway Lab school.

As you know this school is an independent Charter that specializes in helping children with learning disabilities. 60% of the students have an IEP or 504, which means they require certain accommodations in the classroom. Many of the students have ADHD and or Autism. I understand that this decision was made using DCAS Scores. It concerns me that you are using these scores as one of your decision tools when they are no longer using DCAS tests to assess our children.

I can tell you on a personal level that I know 3 children who attend this school. The Gateway Lab School has been hugely beneficial in this children's academic life. Prior to their attendance, these children were struggling in school which would then affect their personal lives. These children are now reading and writing at their appropriate grade level- and they actually enjoy learning. Isn't that what we are trying to install in our children- the joy of learning and helping them retain this knowledge so they can become well rounded and educated individuals who can enter the work force or college? The teachers and staff at Gateway have used new and emergent curriculum, along with compassion and encouragement to challenge these children and boost their self-esteem. Please continue to support this school so we don't leave these kids behind.

Sincerely,

*Nicole*

Nicole C. Grebloskie, CIC, CISR  
Personal Lines Vice President

Arthur Hall Insurance  
Phone: 610-696-2394  
Fax: 610-696-5519  
[www.arthurhall.com](http://www.arthurhall.com)



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