

Fwd: Universal Daroff Comparison Data

From : devon allen <[REDACTED]>
Subject : Fwd: Universal Daroff Comparison Data
To : [REDACTED]@philasd.org
Reply To : devon allen <[REDACTED]>

Thu, Apr 15, 2021 04:53 PM
📎 2 attachments

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Reggie,

Good afternoon, it was recommended I include you on this email.

Thanks,

Devon



-----Original Message-----
From: [REDACTED]
To: jdanzy@philasd.org <jdanzy@philasd.org>; lsalley@philasd.org <lsalley@philasd.org>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>; cethompson@philasd.org <cethompson@philasd.org>
Sent: Thu, Apr 15, 2021 4:47 pm
Subject: Universal Daroff Comparison Data

Julia, Lisa, Reggie & Cecelia,

Good afternoon, attached you will find comparison data of Universal Bluford & Universal Daroff in respect to their peer group designed by the Philadelphia School District. I implore you to take a serious look at both charts and grasp the information prior to making a keen decision based upon a recommendation from the Charter Office that has not provided you w/accurate information.

Thank you in advance!

Devon

-  **Bluford Similar Schools Comparison.xlsx**
13 KB
-  **Daroff Similar Schools Comparison 3 years.xlsx**
14 KB

Universal Blufords 3yr Performance Comparison				
Rank	School Name	Total Enrollment	3-Year Performance Average	Admissions Category
1	Universal Bluford Charter School	527	51.3%	Neighborhood
2	Philadelphia Montessori Charter School	179	49.3%	Citywide
3	Independence Charter School West	526	48.3%	Citywide with Criteria
4	Mastery Charter School at Smedley	802	44.3%	Neighborhood
5	Mastery Charter School at Wister	516	30.3%	Neighborhood
6	Inquiry Charter School	245	N/A	Citywide
***Universal Bluford Charter School is outperforming <u>100%</u> of schools within their peer group based on the 3-year performance average.				

Universal Blufords 2018-2019 Overall Performance Comparison				
Rank	School Name	Total Enrollment	2018-2019 Overall Performance	Admissions Category
1	Mastery Charter School at Smedley	802	66%	Neighborhood
2	Philadelphia Montessori Charter School	179	62%	Citywide
3	Universal Bluford Charter School	527	55%	Neighborhood
4	Independence Charter School West	526	45%	Citywide with Criteria
5	Inquiry Charter School	245	43%	Citywide
6	Mastery Charter School at Wister	516	35%	Neighborhood
***Universal Bluford Charter School is outperforming <u>50%</u> of schools within their peer group based on 2018-2019 overall performance.				

Universal Blufords 2018-2019 Overall Enrollment Comparison		
Rank	School Name	Total Enrollment
1	Mastery Charter School at	802
2	Universal Bluford Charter	527
3	Independence Charter School	526
4	Mastery Charter School at	516
5	Inquiry Charter School	245
6	Philadelphia Montessori Charter	179
***Universal Bluford Charter School has a larger student population than <u>66.6%</u> of schools within their peer group.		

Universal Daroffs 2018-2019 Overall Performance Comparison

Rank	School	Total Enrollment	2018-2019 Overall Performance	Admissions Category
1	Keystone Academy Charter School	694	74%	Citywide
2	Universal Alcorn Charter School	597	62%	Neighborhood
3	Thomas Mifflin School	303	61%	Neighborhood
4	Edwin M. Stanton School	305	56%	Neighborhood
5	Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter Scho	482	53%	Citywide with Criteria
6	Mastery Charter School at Harrity	839	51%	Neighborhood
7	Mastery Charter School at Cleveland	736	49%	Neighborhood
8	Andrew Hamilton School	498	43%	Neighborhood
9	Global Leadership Academy at Huey	616	42%	Neighborhood
10	Universal Daroff Charter School	750	39%	Neighborhood
11	Avery D. Harrington School	477	38%	Neighborhood
12	Samuel Pennypacker School	387	36%	Neighborhood
13	General Philip Kearny School	294	32%	Neighborhood
14	Alain Locke School	441	31%	Neighborhood
15	Laura W. Waring School	289	28%	Neighborhood
16	Rudolph Blankenburg School	417	27%	Neighborhood
17	William Dick School	500	25%	Neighborhood
18	Robert Morris School	257	25%	Neighborhood
19	Paul L. Dunbar School	266	23%	Neighborhood
20	Kenderton Elementary School	458	22%	Neighborhood
21	Theodore Roosevelt School	498	20%	Neighborhood
22	E. Washington Rhodes School	498	13%	Neighborhood
23	General George G. Meade School	389	12%	Neighborhood
24	James G. Blaine School	442	11%	Neighborhood
25	Edward Gideon School	257	10%	Neighborhood
26	Delaplaine McDaniel School	380	10%	Neighborhood
27	William D. Kelley School	366	8%	Neighborhood
28	Edward T. Steel School	514	5%	Neighborhood
29	Allen M. Stearne School	521	3%	Neighborhood

***Universal Daroff Charter School is outperforming 65.5% of schools within their peer group based on the 2018-2019 overall performance percentage.

Universal Daroffs 3yr Performance Comparison

Rank	School Name	Total Enrollment	3-Year Performance Average	Admissions Category
1	Keystone Academy Charter School	694	69.7%	Citywide
2	Universal Alcorn Charter School	597	59.7%	Neighborhood
3	Mastery Charter School at Harrity	839	51.3%	Neighborhood
4	Edwin M. Stanton School	305	48.7%	Neighborhood
5	Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter Scho	482	45%	Citywide with Criteria

6	Mastery Charter School at Cleveland	736	45%	Neighborhood
7	Global Leadership Academy at Huey	616	40.3%	Neighborhood
8	Thomas Mifflin School	303	38%	Neighborhood
9	Universal Daroff Charter School	750	35.3%	Neighborhood
10	Paul L. Dunbar School	266	35%	Neighborhood
11	Andrew Hamilton School	498	32.7%	Neighborhood
12	Laura W. Waring School	289	28.7%	Neighborhood
13	Alain Locke School	441	27.7%	Neighborhood
14	General Philip Kearny School	294	27.3%	Neighborhood
15	Kenderton Elementary School	458	25.7%	Neighborhood
16	General George G. Meade School	389	25%	Neighborhood
17	Samuel Pennypacker School	387	23.7%	Neighborhood
18	William Dick School	500	23.3%	Neighborhood
19	Robert Morris School	257	22.3%	Neighborhood
20	James G. Blaine School	442	21.7%	Neighborhood
21	Delaplaine McDaniel School	380	20.3%	Neighborhood
22	Avery D. Harrington School	477	20%	Neighborhood
23	Rudolph Blankenburg School	417	19.3%	Neighborhood
24	Edward Gideon School	257	17%	Neighborhood
25	Allen M. Stearne School	521	16.3%	Neighborhood
26	William D. Kelley School	366	15%	Neighborhood
27	Theodore Roosevelt School	498	14%	Neighborhood
28	Edward T. Steel School	514	12.7%	Neighborhood
29	E. Washington Rhodes School	498	11.7%	Neighborhood

***Universal Daroff Charter School is outperforming 69% of schools within their peer group based on the 3-year performance average.

Universal Daroffs 2018-2019 Overall Enrollment Comparison		
Rank	School Name	Total Enrollment
1	Mastery Charter School at Harrity	839
2	Universal Daroff Charter School	750
3	Mastery Charter School at Cleveland	736
4	Keystone Academy Charter School	694
5	Global Leadership Academy at Huey	616
6	Universal Alcorn Charter School	597
7	Allen M. Stearne School	521
8	Edward T. Steel School	514
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24	Thomas Mifflin School	303
25	General Philip Kearny School	294
26	Laura W. Waring School	289
27	Paul L. Dunbar School	266
28	Robert Morris School	257
29	Edward Gideon School	257
<p>***Universal Daroff Charter School has a larger student population than <u>93%</u> of schools within their peer group.</p>		

Dana Hirdt



April 18, 2021

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am asking you to do the right thing, and vote against the hearing officer's recommendation not to renew Universal Daroff Charter School.

In our current environment of racial discrimination, it does not go without notice that predominantly African American populated/run charter schools are the target of non-renewal recommendations. My students, their families, and our school community deserve better. Universal Daroff Charter School has become a community hub - not only for education, but for information, support, food, clothes, household items, safety (e.g. free smoke alarms), celebrations, and a catalyst for positive community relations with the local police precinct, just to name a few important roles it has played for this community. We are striving to make lives better beyond the classroom and to provide support where it was greatly needed.

As a special educator who came in on day one of Universal Companies taking over Samuel L. Daroff, I will not forget opening up the special education files and finding my students' paperwork – legal paperwork – the paperwork used to protect and guide my students' education – in a state of disarray. Two of my coworkers and I spent countless weeks, and stayed well after the school day ended, to go through page by page, of IEPs, evaluation reports, and miscellaneous paperwork in our students' files, in order to account for everyone. Paperwork was either left by teachers who did not know what they were doing, or who left the paperwork in that state out of spite – either way, it showed a lack of respect and concern for the students whose names were on those pages. That's what Universal walked into. Flash forward to a solid, caring, educated, and loving special education department, which has recently received the accolade of having 100% compliance after being audited by the state. Every one of those pages that we meticulously put into place, has been kept in place for nearly 11 years because we care, we do our jobs with pride, and know that everything we do affects our students. Our most recent special education audit by the state yielded accolades to our special education department, when our paperwork was found to be 100% compliant.

Our school focuses on the whole child, families, and the community. I have so many memories of my nearly 11 years at Universal Daroff Charter School that have increased my students' self esteem, added stability and love to their worlds, and have made my students want to come to school again. Some of our kids (yes, our kids – my kids), come to us with needs far beyond reading and math. Our hugs provide a soft spot to land, our encouraging words feed their souls, and when I get called "Mom", by accident, I know I'm doing something right. We've worked so incredibly hard at Daroff to create that safe space. The space where our kids come every day to get everything they need – everything – from breakfast and lunch and education to inspiration and love. We've worked HARD. It's not a simple task to have children trust you after being in a school with a high turnover, a school that failed them, a school they didn't feel safe in. We changed that. We've given our students adults they can

count on, something to be excited about every day, a place where they feel they can succeed, and all of the wonderful childhood memories they deserve.

Our love, hard work, creativity, passion, and tears have created something special – something that wasn't there before – something that our community craved – we're not letting that be taken away from them. My kids deserve more than the disarray we inherited from the School District of Philadelphia.

In closing, I again ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia's Hearing Officer's recommendation not to renew Universal's operating charter. You don't break up family.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dana Hirdt".

Dana Hirdt, MS.Ed.

Proud Universal Daroff Charter School Special Educator

Julie Friedman
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Board of Education,

I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter.

I would like to take an opportunity to share the positive and wonderful experiences I have had working at Daroff, and being part of the Daroff school community thus far. I have not been at Daroff a long time, as I came to the school this year. Having been teaching for fourteen years, I can confidentially say that Daroff is a school where the staff is caring and very dedicated to the needs of the students.

Not only does the Daroff staff show perseverance, encouragement, and passion when working with the students. The staff has also created a loving and family environment, where the staff builds a relationship with the students as well as the parents and guardians. For example, Daroff reaches out to the families to assist them in many ways; such as, school supplies, coat drives, smoke detectors, and many more contributions.

As an English Language Development teacher, the classes are small and cater to the needs of the students. As a result, this helps build positive relationships that I now have with my students; as well as instruction that the students need in a small group setting.

We ask as the School Board to reject the charter school's recommendation to not renew Daroff, and instead let us have our warm and loving family environment here at Daroff continue.

In closing, I again ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter.

Thank you.
Julie Friedman

Universal Daroff Charter School

From : Allan Snyder <[REDACTED]>

Mon, Apr 19, 2021 09:11 AM

Subject : Universal Daroff Charter School**To :** [REDACTED]**Cc :** schoolboard@philasd.org

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Good Morning,

I am sending this email asking you to vote against the hearing officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School on April 22nd. Below is a short letter of why the school should remain open through my eyes.

I am the Health and PE Teacher at Universal Daroff Charter School and this is my 5th year at Daroff. I have found the Philadelphia School District's decision to not renew Daroff's charter to be very disturbing due to several factors. Not only does the school out perform some of the district schools academically but we also have multiple successful programs that help the community and the scholars, specifically our sports program. Daroff is not just a community school, but a family school. I am in full support of Daroff to continue to be ran by Universal Companies.

Outside of all of the great things Universal Daroff provides to families of the scholars such as having a safe space for families to come and receive clothing, food, and basic household goods. Daroff also provides services such as counseling, health services for both children and adults, adult education classes, parenting classes and our Family and Community Center helps provide services in the city that are normally difficult to navigate such as housing, transportation, and health services. The thing that I will specifically speak about is our sports program. Although we only compete interscholastically in just two sports of track and basketball, I also run an intramural sports program after school. The sports program is part of the 21st Century afterschool program that offers education, clubs, and even dinner up until 6:00 pm. These programs are helping the scholars stay busy and prevent them from getting into trouble and off of the streets. The after school program is for every grade K-8, but, the sports program is for just 5th through 8th grade. I started the sports program during the 2017/18 school year and we participated in a limited amount of sports and still had 76 participants. The following school year we also had 76 participants throughout the 4 grade bands. This past year, 2019/2020, we had a total number of 79 participants and that was only for 75% of the school year. If it was not for COVID-19, with the remaining sports on the list, I anticipate that we would of had about 100 participants to compete in our sports program. I only expect this number to grow as the years continue. We do not just participate in your basic sports, we introduce new sports to the scholars that they may have never heard of or played before. The sports that we have done thus far are flag football, soccer, basketball, track and field, bowling, Ping-Pong, floor hockey, and various basketball competitions (skills challenge, 2-ball, 3v3, 300). I hope to also add more sports to the program as we continue to grow. With all of these sports, I keep track of statistics where we will name Champions and/or MVP's, and a total Athletic MVP. So the scholars are also engaging in some healthy competition. At the end of the year the Champions and MVP's are spotlighted in front of the entire school during a rally where medals and trophies are handed out. I would really hate to see the school not be renewed and have so many scholars out of extra-curricular activities that are so beneficial for these scholars as it truly helps them academically and behaviorally.

I highly recommend the school board, state representatives, and state senator to reject the Charter Schools Office to NON-renew Daroff's Charter and instead renew it for another 5 years, should be more than that even. Renewing is only going to benefit the school, the scholars, and the community. This school is so great that for the past 5 years, I

have been travelling 75 miles one way to come teach at Daroff. If that is not saying something about how good the school, I don't know what will.

Allan Snyder

[REDACTED]

Health and PE Teacher

Universal Daroff

5630 Vine Street

Philidelphia, PA 19139

Home contact:

[REDACTED]

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Universal Daroff Charter School

From : Courtney Zelena <[REDACTED]>

Mon, Apr 19, 2021 11:25 AM

Subject : Universal Daroff Charter School**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am asking you to vote against the hearing officer's recommendation to non-renew the charter for Universal Daroff Charter School. My name is Courtney Zelena, and I have been teaching for thirteen years, all of which have been in self-contained special education classrooms. I have called Universal Daroff Charter School my home for the last six of those thirteen years. At Daroff, the self-contained classes are kept small so that we are better able to help our students reach their goals and maximize their potential. Our students with exceptionalities have been provided with access to monthly trips inside and outside of the local community to experience things they may not have been able to experience otherwise. My students have been to shopping malls, grocery stores, the Herr's factory, farms, and other places well beyond their local community. In addition to field trips, we take monthly trips to the local library where the scholars have the opportunity to interact with people outside of the school and gain independence as they check out books. These opportunities are only possible because the class sizes are kept small. When I have attended Special Olympic events with schools outside of the Universal network, I have seen classes with the same population as mine that have twenty kids and the same number of staff. I cannot imagine how my kids would get the same amount of attention they receive now in a class that size. If our charter is not renewed, I fear that the scholars I have worked with over the last six years will be placed in larger classes and not get the attention and support they need and deserve. I fear their programs will be discontinued and they will be sent to schools outside of their neighborhood. Please reject the hearing officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff's operating charter as all of our children deserve the best education possible.

Sincerely,
Courtney Zelena, M.Ed.
Special Education Teacher
Universal Daroff Charter School
[REDACTED]

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Universal Bluford Charter School**From :** Milon Attaway <[REDACTED]>

Mon, Apr 19, 2021 12:47 PM

Subject : Universal Bluford Charter School**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org

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April 19, 2021

[REDACTED]

My family and I are 100% supportive of Universal Schools and we're begging you to vote against the non-renewing recommendation.

Universal Bluford is more than just a school, it's a community and a village for our scholars. I am the proud parent of a 2nd grader at Universal Bluford Charter School. My child has been a part of the Universal Bluford family since Kindergarten and we absolutely loves the school, the staff, and the curriculum. As a product of Philadelphia School District, myself, I am jealous that Universal Schools weren't around when I was growing up.

I've never seen a school where the staff are so involved, caring, and supportive of the families. We log into Class Dojo app and we're able to communicate with teachers and the principal quickly and efficiently. There are so many free programs offered (i.e. Food Pantry) that benefit the community. They also have provided a book bag drive and

a toy drive in collaboration with the 19th Police District. The public schools that my teenage son attended never had these options. It's great to see teachers who really care about the children. I've noticed, at Back to School nights, parent-teacher conferences, and graduation, that a lot of other parents feel the same way. We're like a big, happy family with successful children who are destined to be great and who love to be challenged. My son's reading and math levels are drastically higher than they initially were, and his behavior has gotten better also. I always make it a priority to thank Universal Bluford staff for being so transparent and helpful. I've never seen a

school like this before. I just wish that it extended to 12th grade so that my son could stay there the entire time. I can't imagine sending him to any other school and at this point, I refuse to, because I feel that it will slow down his progress.

I sincerely hope that the scholars, parents, community, and staff are being considered in making this decision. It is not in the best interest of my child for Universal Bluford to be discontinued. Children will be extremely disadvantaged. Please do our entire community a gracious favor, keep OUR school open and running under the Universal Charter school system! This is important to us and we hope our scholar's future's will be taken into consideration in making your vote.

Thank you for your time,

Milon Attaway

Sent from my Galaxy

UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL

From : Brenda Lee [REDACTED]

Mon, Apr 19, 2021 04:55 PM

Subject : UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org

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Dear Board of Education,

I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter.

As Philadelphia's only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families. Furthermore, because there have been reports of systemic biases in the school district's processes to renew charter schools, no school should be recommended for non-renewal until this matter is investigated and resolved.

I am writing to beseech the members of the board to reconsider the renewal of the UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL'S charter. Today, I am writing to urge you to reconsider the decision previously made not to renew the charter in light of all the positive things done by this school in the community. Daroff provides academic study & growth for children K-8 through sincere educators & a caring administrative team. It also shines a light in a neighborhood that can be very scary & dark due to the struggles of the inner-city. The Universal Daroff Charter School is a safe haven for all who enter there. The school operates as a family. You can feel the unity, joy, love & benevolence in every hallway, classroom, office & area of its edifice. You can feel those positive things because of the sincerity of each educator's heart as well as the powerful focus upon community service inspired by the leaders of the school. The students, community and parents of Daroff would truly lose a beacon of light and love if this school were to lose the charter and be shut down.

In closing, I again ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter.

Sincerely,

Brenda Lee
[REDACTED]

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UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL

From : Erica Baroudi [REDACTED]
Subject : UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL
To : schoolboard@philasd.org

Mon, Apr 19, 2021 01:48 PM

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Dear Board of Education:

My name is Erica Baroudi I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter. As Philadelphia's only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families. Furthermore, because there have been reports of systemic biases in the school district's processes to renew charter schools, no school should be recommended for non-renewal until this matter is investigated and resolved.

I am proud to say that I have been part of the Universal Daroff family for the past eleven years. My roles have included Learning Support Teacher and Special Education Case Manager for our scholars receiving special education services in the general education setting. I am extremely proud to serve our students and make sure they are getting the supports and services they need to be and feel successful. Over the years, I have worked in all grades from kindergarten through 8th grade and can say that I have been blessed to be part of their elementary school journey from the beginning up until they graduate as 8th graders. The relationships I have with my students and their families are what I cherish the most.

There are many reasons our family supports renewing Universal Daroff Charter School's charter, but the most important reason for us is that Universal Family of Schools does far more than educate our scholars. Our school has grown in every sense of the word. In August 2010, my fellow staff and I arrived at our building prepared to turn around this forgotten school. Daroff was once considered one of the lowest performing and unsafe schools in the city. My special education colleagues and I discovered over 60 files on students were out of compliance including IEPs and evaluations. There were missing documents and files that were just thrown loose into a drawer. We worked tirelessly to fix the file and were able to meet compliance by our December 1st deadline. We strive to meet the academic, cognitive, and social-emotional needs of every scholar. Through hard work, perseverance, and dedication, Universal Daroff Charter School was able to achieve goals such as AYP, academic growth with our scholars, improved scholar attendance and school safety, decreased school suspensions, and 100% compliance in our Special Education cyclical monitoring.

Universal Daroff Charter School not only provides a place for our scholars to learn - we are a place that loves and cares about them and their families. Our school staff has built relationships with our families and provides resources to medical supports, food, clothing, job training, childcare, and other community-based programs through our Family Student Resource Center. These supports are so important for our entire community. Especially now, in these uncertain times, our children and families need stability, high quality instruction, support, and love. I was absolutely shocked and heartbroken with the Philadelphia Charter School Office's recommendation of non-renewal for our school. In closing, I respectfully ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter and instead, renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter for an additional five years.

Sincerely,

Erica Baroudi, M.Ed
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



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Renewal of Charter for Universal Daroff Charter School

From : Marybet Duplessis [REDACTED]
Subject : Renewal of Charter for Universal Daroff Charter School
To : schoolboard@philasd.org

Mon, Apr 19, 2021 03:10 PM

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Marybet Duplessis
Universal Daroff Charter School
[REDACTED]

April 19, 2021

Board of Education Suite 101
440 N. Broad Street Philadelphia, PA 19130

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing this letter to express my concern that the Philadelphia Charter School Office has recommended non-renewal for Universal Daroff Charter School, a school that has been such a major part of my life over the past ten years. I AM ASKING YOU TO VOTE AGAINST THE HEARING OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION TO NON-RENEW UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL.

I was a "change of career" teacher who was looking for a school I could call home. After working as a teacher for several years elsewhere, I joined the Universal team and found the school that I knew was where I belonged and where I could make the most difference.

I am one of the first teachers who joined up to "turn around" a school that was so badly mismanaged, neglected and abandoned by the Philadelphia School District that they had to give Samuel L. Daroff School away to an outside company to give it a fighting chance to survive and educate the students of West Philadelphia. When we first arrived in August of 2010, the school was filthy and in disarray. We pushed up our sleeves and got to work so that when the students came in September, we would be ready to offer them the best education possible. We never looked back!

Over the past ten years, I have taught kindergarten, first and second grades. As a kindergarten teacher, I saw firsthand how the children from the neighborhood come to school without the prerequisite skills needed to be a successful kindergarten student. Students come to us without knowing any letters or their sounds, without being able to recognize their name in print, hold a pencil and a pair of scissors properly, and without being read to enough at home. It takes incredible dedication and patience by the teachers and staff to not only teach these students the prerequisite skills needed but to help them soar. This feat cannot be accomplished without giving your heart and soul to your students; without loving them and pushing them to succeed like you would do to your own children.

Here at Universal Daroff Charter School, not only do we work incredibly hard to educate our students, but we also strive to know them and their families. We build relationship by loving our students, reaching out to them and their families to assist in many ways - school supplies, food, clothing, medical help, parenting classes, to name a few. We teach the younger siblings, cousins, nieces and nephews of our students and become more and more part of the community and their families. We are invested in these families!

Honestly, over the last ten years, I have seen administrators, teachers and staff come and go. It is not an easy job and it is not for the faint of heart. Over the past four years, our administration team of Dr. Ruffin and Ms. Hollenbach have provided the stability needed to attract excellent teachers and staff. More and more of these teachers and staff are feeling supported enough to stay and continue doing their best for the students and families we serve. The students and families of the community deserve better than having to start over and having the last ten years of hard work being in vain.

Based on the reasons stated above, I am asking the School Board to reject the Charter Schools Office recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff's School's charter and instead renew its charter for another five years.


Sincerely,


Marybet Duplessis
First Grade Teacher
Universal Daroff Charter School

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Universal Daroff Charter School

From : Cassondra Taylor 
Subject : Universal Daroff Charter School
To : schoolboard@philasd.org

Mon, Apr 19, 2021 04:14 PM
 2 attachments

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Dear Board of Education,

I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter.

As Philadelphia's only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families. Furthermore, because there have been reports of systemic biases in the school district's processes to renew charter schools, no school should be recommended for non-renewal until this matter is investigated and resolved.

There are many reasons our family supports renewing Universal Daroff Charter School's charter, but the most important reason for us is that Universal Family of Schools does far more than educate our scholars. Please see the attached letter as my testimonial for why I oppose the hearing officer's recommendations.

In closing, I again ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter.

Best regards,

Cassondra Taylor
Reading Specialist, MS.Ed
Universal Daroff Charter School

[REDACTED]

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C.Taylor Letter to PSD.docx

38 KB

CASSONDRA TAYLOR

04/15/2021

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Cassandra Taylor and I am writing to state that I am in opposition of the district officer's decision to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter for the next five years. I am asking that the board votes against the decision of non-renewal for Universal Daroff Charter School and that UDCS stays under management of Universal Companies. Universal Daroff is my place of employment, and I have worked with this charter school for the past 3 years as one of the reading specialists. This school has provided me not only with a much needed job within my field, but also provides many others with positions that would not normally be held within your network. Due to outsourcing of several services, the Philadelphia School District does not provide those such as myself opportunities to work within the district because many of your schools do not have these positions within them because your network has decided to outsource them. This school provided me with employment as well as it continues to support my professional development as a teacher/leader and it also gives us a chance to connect with the community that I have grown to love over the past three years.

If you remove UDCS's charter status, the community surrounding UDCS will also be significantly impacted. UDCS serves as a community hub for many families that the school services, and without it, many of the surrounding community members would lose these services and support that Daroff provides. UDCS provides families with many different programs and services through our Family and Community center, which supplies items to families who may need them such as clothing, food, parenting classes, and various other adult educational courses. UDCS holds several events throughout the year that allows anyone from the community to come and partake in things that they may need including clothing drives, a thanksgiving food drive, and starting this year, UDCS also provided the community with much needed smoke detectors. Our school strives on making sure that the community is helped throughout year and we make sure that all of our families have access to the basic necessities they need, as well as other services which include health and wellness services through GPHA, afterschool programming which runs from 3:30-6 for families who wish to have

a safe place for their child to be when they cannot be home, and UDCS also provides monthly parenting and nutritional/cooking classes throughout the year.

As I have stated, UDCS is so much more than just a school. It is a space that the community in West Philadelphia can come to for support not only for their students' academic needs, but also for their family's needs as well. If you remove the charter status, you are taking away this community center from these families, and you are also causing over 100 staff members of the school to be unemployed. By removing the charter you are removing the place that many of us consider to be "our home away from home". I firmly believe that if the school district takes back our school, it will not be the same place that all of us at UDCS have taken the time to build since Universal Companies has taken over. You will not only be displacing all of our staff, but also you will be displacing so many students and families who rely on the school to provide them the quality education and additional services/support that they deserve. The school district schools in the area show that they are already suffering from overcrowding and other issues, and by taking away 2 charter schools from the area, you will be ultimately causing these students to be shuffled into other schools that are already overcrowded and will be pushing these students into a situation that will have a strong negative impact on them. I employ everyone who reads this letter to please reconsider the non-renewal of UDCS's charter, because without it, so many people will be impacted.

Best regards,

Cassondra M. Taylor

Cassondra Taylor

Reading Specialist

Universal Daroff Charter School

Renewal letter

From : Julie Kim [REDACTED]

Mon, Apr 19, 2021 07:56 PM

Subject : Renewal letter**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org

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April 19, 2021

JooHee Kim

To Whom it may concern,

Sadly I have heard the news that Bluford may be closing. I hope this is not true because my daughter and I have been looking for a school that can provide for my daughter's special needs. My daughter has been born with autism which needs special attention and care. I truly thank Bluford and thier teachers from the bottom of my heart for teaching my child.

Before my daughter was enrolled in Bluford she was not able to connect words and could not speak in full sentences and would only speak single words to communicate. The teachers have provided and helped my child grow and is now able to communicate much better. Universal's management of the school is great, why break something that is not broken. Thier results should be a testament in itself which has provided such a great place for learning.

I am asking the School Board to please renew the charter for Bluford and not close its doors to children who are in need of learning and care. Thank you so much, I hope everything will work out. God bless.

Fwd: Universal Bluford Charter School

From : Ina Diallo [REDACTED]

Mon, Apr 19, 2021 08:25 PM

Subject : Fwd: Universal Bluford Charter School**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
DO NOT CLICK links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and are expecting the email.

Dear School District of Philadelphia,

Our community needs your immediate help! On April 22, the School District of Philadelphia Board of Education will vote on the fate of Universal Bluford Charter School as it will consider its hearing officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Bluford Charter School's charter. We are asking that you contact the Board of Education to ask them to vote against the non-renewal recommendation of Universal Bluford Charter School's charter.

As Philadelphia's only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families. Furthermore, there has been media coverage about the school district's systemic biases in evaluating charter schools for renewal. No charter school should be recommended for non-renewal until the allegations of bias are investigated.

There are many reasons our family supports renewing Universal Bluford Charter School's charter. Still, the most important reason for us is that Universal Family of Schools does far more than educate our scholars. Since my son started school with Universal Bluford he has improved in so many ways. The teachers are always there to help him to grow as an 9 years old needs a good school and stuffs for a better future.

In closing, I again ask that you ask the School District of Philadelphia Board of Education to vote against the non-renew Universal Bluford Charter School's operating charter.

Yours truly,

Aichata Diarra

Universal Daroff Charter School

From : John Relvas 

Subject : Universal Daroff Charter School

To : schoolboard@philasd.org

Mon, Apr 19, 2021 09:36 PM

 2 attachments

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Dear Board of Education,

I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter.

As Philadelphia's only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families. Furthermore, because there have been reports of systemic biases in the school district's processes to renew charter schools, no school should be recommended for non-renewal until this matter is investigated and resolved.

There are many reasons our family supports renewing Universal Daroff Charter School's charter, but the most important reason for us is that Universal Family of Schools does far more than educate our scholars. Please see the attached letter as my testimonial for why I oppose the hearing officer's recommendations.

In closing, I again ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter.

Regards,

John Relvas
Universal Daroff Charter School

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Relvas letter.docx

38 KB

JOHN RELVAS

Address [REDACTED] |

04/19/2021

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is John Relvas and I am writing to state that I am in opposition of the district officer's decision to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter for the next five years. I am asking that the board votes against the decision of non-renewal for Universal Daroff Charter School and that UDCS stays under management of Universal Companies. Universal Daroff is my place of employment, and I have worked with this charter school for several years as a 3rd/4th grade teacher. This school has provided me not only with a much career within my field, but also provides many others with positions that would not normally be held within your network. Universal Daroff Charter School has given me the opportunity as a new teacher to have a chance at a career even though I was a beginning teacher when I was initially hired. They have provided me with a place to hone my skills as a teacher and have provided a great amount of support and knowledge to me as well.

At my time at Daroff, I as well as many teachers have built relationships with many students and families within the community I work within, and I am concerned that if the district continues to deny UDCS its charter renewal, these families will not be able to continue to have the education and support they deserve within their community. I am also concerned that the district will not be able to support the community in the way Universal Companies does, by providing many services/family resources that the district does not include within their schools.

If you remove UDCS's charter status, the community surrounding UDCS will be significantly impacted. UDCS serves as a community hub for many families that the school services, and without it, many of the surrounding community members would lose these services and support that Daroff provides. UDCS provides families with many different programs and services through our Family and Community center, which supplies items to families who may need them such as clothing, food, parenting classes, and various other adult educational

courses. UDCS holds several events throughout the year that allows anyone from the community to come and partake in things that they may need including clothing drives, a thanksgiving food drive, and starting this year, UDCS also provided the community with much needed smoke detectors. Our school strives on making sure that the community is helped throughout year and we make sure that all of our families have access to the basic necessities they need, as well as other services which include health and wellness services through GPHA, afterschool programming which runs from 3:30-6 for families who wish to have a safe place for their child to be when they cannot be home, and UDCS also provides monthly parenting and nutritional/cooking classes throughout the year.

As I have stated, UDCS is so much more than just a school. It is a space that the community in West Philadelphia can come to for support not only for their students' academic needs, but also for their family's needs as well. If you remove the charter status, you are taking away this community center from these families, and you are also causing over 100 staff members of the school to be unemployed. By removing the charter you are removing the place that many of us consider to be "our home away from home". I firmly believe that if the school district takes back our school, it will not be the same place that all of us at UDCS have taken the time to build since Universal Companies has taken over. You will not only be displacing all of our staff, but also you will be displacing so many students and families who rely on the school to provide them the quality education and additional services/support that they deserve. The school district schools in the area show that they are already suffering from overcrowding and other issues, and by taking away 2 charter schools from the area, you will be ultimately causing these students to be shuffled into other schools that are already overcrowded and will be pushing these students into a situation that will have a strong negative impact on them. I employ everyone who reads this letter to please reconsider the non-renewal of UDCS's charter, because without it, so many people will be impacted.

Best regards,

John Relvas

John Relvas

4th grade Math Teacher

Universal Daroff Charter School

Carol Elko
Universal Daroff Charter School

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

December 10, 2020

Board of Education, Suite 101
440 N. Broad Street
Philadelphia, Pa 19130

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter with concern that the Philadelphia Charter School Office as recommended non renewal for Universal Daroff Charter School. This is my second year with Universal Daroff Charter School. For the past two years, I called Universal Daroff my home. From the moment I walked into the building, I was welcomed with open arms. I worked in several other school districts before coming to Universal Daroff and I feel that Universal Daroff is where I belonged and where I fit in.

From the administration team to all my colleagues, I never felt so welcomed and to be in a place that I feel safe. I felt that I could make a difference here. Daroff cares about their staff and scholars. Anytime I need something, they are always willing to lend a helping hand. At Daroff, we all work really hard to educate our scholars especially in the virtual world. We Also have good relationships with our parents and families. We also assist our families in many ways by offering special events, such as clothing drives, smoke detectors giveaways, food, school supplies. We strive to do our best to give our scholars and parents, the best education we can possibly give.

The administration team have provided us with all the necessary tools that we need to be successful. We continue to do our best for the students and our families.

Based on the reasons above, I really hope that Universal Daroff Charter School can be recognized for their successes and for how much of an impact the teachers have had on the scholars growth and development. In closing, I am asking the School Board reject the Charter School's Office recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff's Charter and renew its Charter.

I again ask that you ask the School District of Philadelphia Board of Education to vote against the non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter.

Sincerely
Carol Elko
First Grade Teacher
Universal Daroff Charter School

UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL

From : William Stenger [REDACTED]

Subject : UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL

To : schoolboard@philasd.org

Cc : James Ruffin-Jr [REDACTED], Katie Hollenbach Derr [REDACTED], Michelle Brown [REDACTED]

Tue, Apr 20, 2021 08:28 AM

 1 attachment

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Dear Board of Education,

I am asking you to vote against the hearing officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School

Unlike most of my fellow teachers and staff, I have only been at Universal Daroff School since the beginning of 2020. Consequently, I can only speak to what I see now, and not what came before. That said, I have never seen a more dedicated staff. The students and their families are treated as though they are our family, as though we are all one family. No effort is spared on the part of teachers, co-teachers, and administration to ensure that our scholars receive a good education and that the needs of families are met. Since I have been here I have seen the school put on "resource-drives" to help families who have experienced a loss, food drives and clothing drives, computers delivered to children's homes, just to name a few. We have teachers here who dig into their own pockets to provide technology to students who would not otherwise receive an education because of a lack of a computer or internet access. In one instance I know of, a teacher asked other teachers to help come up with a bed for a child who needed one. What other school do you know of that does this on a daily basis? I certainly don't know of any, though I am sure there are some.

In case any here might think that none of what has been mentioned is relevant to a good education, please reconsider. A good education doesn't occur in a vacuum. A child has to be fed, well rested, and healthy before education can begin; all of our staff know that and put their heart, souls, and pocketbook into ensuring that all of a child's needs are met, not just their academic needs. I say all this because I am having a very difficult time wrapping my head around the idea that a review board that purports to have the best interests of our students, families, and community in mind, would then consider revoking the charter for our school? This makes no sense! How can this possibly serve our students, families and the community they live in, in a positive way? Our students are already facing a multitude of challenges in the form of poverty, political unrest, and Covid 19 since the beginning of the Spring. Revoking Daroff's charter would just contribute more upheaval. Considering all that has taken place in the last year, and how well our students and staff and parents have responded, I feel like we are doing an excellent job and that the review board should acknowledge the progress that has been made until now.

Respectfully,
William Stenger



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School District of Philadelphia
Board of Education
440 N. Broad Street,
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Amanda Keyes and I live at [REDACTED]. I am writing to express my support for the modifications to the KIPP Parkside Charter School. As a parent of 1st and 4th graders at KIPP Philadelphia Elementary Academy, and a KIPP Philadelphia Board Member (Parent Representative), I urge the board to approve the changes to the charter modification.

Not only do I support the name change to KIPP Philadelphia Octavius Catto Charter School, but I also support the location change to 4601 Market Street. I know that many of our KIPP Philadelphia families have to leave their neighborhood to attend a KIPP school and would love to have a KIPP school closer to their home.

KIPP Philadelphia has been exactly what my family needs. The teachers and staff put forth their best effort every day and go above and beyond for the students and their families. KIPP Philadelphia not only teaches my children academically, but they also use a whole child approach that includes my children's social and emotional health and wellness. They treat each child as an individual and work hard to make sure that they have everything they need to succeed. My family and I are grateful that we have been able to be a part of the KIPP family.

I am proud to send my child to a KIPP Philadelphia Public School. KIPP currently educates 2,600 with 8,000 students on its waitlist. Your support helps KIPP continue to create joyful, academically excellent schools that prepare students with the skills and confidence they need to pursue the paths they choose, so they can lead fulfilling lives and build a more just world.

As a parent and community member, I ask the School District of Philadelphia Board of Education to please support the modifications to the KIPP Parkside Charter School. Thanking for your consideration and for your dedication to our students.

Sincerely,

Amanda Keyes

Amanda Keyes

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

School District of Philadelphia
Board of Education
440 N. Broad Street,
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Ayanna Speller and I live at [REDACTED]. I am writing to express my support for the modifications to the KIPP Parkside Charter School. As a parent of a 7th grader at KIPP West Philadelphia Preparatory Charter, I urge the board to approve the changes to the charter modification.

Not only do I support the name change to KIPP Philadelphia Octavius Catto Charter School, but I also support the location change to 4601 Market Street. KIPP has had such a positive impact on my child's life and I hope more students can have access to a neighborhood KIPP School.

The immense diversity of staff in ethnicity, age, and individual educational backgrounds makes KIPP West an ideal learning institute. Learners are being engaged and educated in what the reality of the world and social climate looks like on today. A melting pot of greatness! The teachers of KIPP West are truly excited and well vested not only in teaching academics and gaining good grades but student growth as a whole.

KIPP creates thoughtful methods to develop positive racial and ethnic identity, increase and improve social emotional skills, and address other non-academic student needs to ensure students build upon their character strengths to succeed in school and life. KIPP teachers and staff engage, invest, and inspire students through joy-filled lessons, routines, and traditions that build school pride and a positive learning environment.

I am proud to send my child to a KIPP Philadelphia Public School. KIPP Philadelphia Elementary Academy, is one of the highest performing elementary schools in the city that serves predominantly African American students. It consistently outperforms Philadelphia School District 3rd and 4th graders in ELA, Math, and Science. KIPP alumni graduate from college at four times the rate of the average for students with similar demographics (41% vs. 10%). This rate is also above the national average, regardless of income level.

KIPP currently educates 2,600 with 8,000 students on its waitlist. Your support helps KIPP continue to create joyful, academically excellent schools that prepare students with the skills and confidence they need to pursue the paths they choose, so they can lead fulfilling lives and build a more just world.

As a parent and community member, I ask the School District of Philadelphia Board of Education to please support the modifications to the KIPP Parkside Charter School. Thanking for your consideration and for your dedication to our students.

Sincerely,

Ayanna Speller
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

School District of Philadelphia
Board of Education
440 N. Broad Street,
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Dana Ellis and I live at [REDACTED]. I am writing to express my support for the modifications to the KIPP Parkside Charter School. As a parent of a second grader at KIPP West Philadelphia Elementary Academy, I urge the board to approve the changes to the charter modification.

Not only do I support the name change to KIPP Philadelphia Octavius Catto Charter School, but I also support the location change to 4601 Market Street. KIPP has had such a positive impact on my child's life and I hope more students can have access to a neighborhood KIPP School.

KIPP is an amazing school, filled with a staff (teachers, administrators, etc.) that love their job and improving the lives of children. KIPP is also a school who not only cares about the current grade levels that they provide education for, but they are also interested in the future of the children and families that they serve.

KIPP creates thoughtful methods to develop positive racial and ethnic identity, increase and improve social emotional skills, and address other non-academic student needs to ensure students build upon their character strengths to succeed in school and life. KIPP teachers and staff engage, invest, and inspire students through joy-filled lessons, routines, and traditions that build school pride and a positive learning environment.

I am proud to send my child to a KIPP Philadelphia Public School. KIPP Philadelphia Elementary Academy, is one of the highest performing elementary schools in the city that serves predominantly African American students. It consistently outperforms Philadelphia School District 3rd and 4th graders in ELA, Math, and Science. KIPP alumni graduate from college at four times the rate of the average for students with similar demographics (41% vs. 10%). This rate is also above the national average, regardless of income level.

KIPP currently educates 2,600 with 8,000 students on its waitlist. Your support helps KIPP continue to create joyful, academically excellent schools that prepare students with the skills and confidence they need to pursue the paths they choose, so they can lead fulfilling lives and build a more just world.

As a parent and community member, I ask the School District of Philadelphia Board of Education to please support the modifications to the KIPP Parkside Charter School. Thanking for your consideration and for your dedication to our students.

Sincerely,

Dana Ellis, MSW
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

School District of Philadelphia
Board of Education
440 N. Broad Street,
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Caleila Burrell and I live at [REDACTED]. I am writing to express my support for the modifications to the KIPP Parkside Charter School. As a parent of a 4th grader at KIPP West Philadelphia, I urge the board to approve the changes to the charter modification.

Not only do I support the name change to KIPP Philadelphia Octavius Catto Charter School, but I also support the location change to 4601 Market Street. KIPP has had such a positive impact on my child's life and I hope more students can have access to a neighborhood KIPP School. I love how KIPP focuses on the growth of the students, nurturing them and personalizing each student.

KIPP creates thoughtful methods to develop positive racial and ethnic identity, increase and improve social emotional skills, and address other non-academic student needs to ensure students build upon their character strengths to succeed in school and life. KIPP teachers and staff engage, invest, and inspire students through joy-filled lessons, routines, and traditions that build school pride and a positive learning environment.

I am proud to send my child to a KIPP Philadelphia Public School. KIPP Philadelphia Elementary Academy, is one of the highest performing elementary schools in the city that serves predominantly African American students. It consistently outperforms Philadelphia School District 3rd and 4th graders in ELA, Math, and Science. KIPP alumni graduate from college at four times the rate of the average for students with similar demographics (41% vs. 10%). This rate is also above the national average, regardless of income level. KIPP currently educates 2,600 with 8,000 students on its waitlist.

Your support helps KIPP continue to create joyful, academically excellent schools that prepare students with the skills and confidence they need to pursue the paths they choose, so they can lead fulfilling lives and build a more just world.

As a parent and community member, I ask the School District of Philadelphia Board of Education to please support the modifications to the KIPP Parkside Charter School. Thanking for your consideration and for your dedication to our students.

Sincerely,

Caleila Burrell

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

School District of Philadelphia
Board of Education
440 N. Broad Street,
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Chanel Summers and I live at [REDACTED]. I am writing to express my support for the modifications to the KIPP Parkside Charter School. As a parent of a 2nd grader at KIPP West Phila Education Academy, I urge the board to approve the changes to the charter modification.

Not only do I support the name change to KIPP Philadelphia Octavius Catto Charter School, but I also support the location change to 4601 Market Street. KIPP has had such a positive impact on my child's life and I hope more students can have access to a neighborhood KIPP School. KIPP is dedicated to ensure our children college bound and beyond!

KIPP creates thoughtful methods to develop positive racial and ethnic identity, increase and improve social emotional skills, and address other non-academic student needs to ensure students build upon their character strengths to succeed in school and life. KIPP teachers and staff engage, invest, and inspire students through joy-filled lessons, routines, and traditions that build school pride and a positive learning environment.

I am proud to send my child to a KIPP Philadelphia Public School. KIPP Philadelphia Elementary Academy, is one of the highest performing elementary schools in the city that serves predominantly African American students. It consistently outperforms Philadelphia School District 3rd and 4th graders in ELA, Math, and Science. KIPP alumni graduate from college at four times the rate of the average for students with similar demographics (41% vs. 10%). This rate is also above the national average, regardless of income level.

KIPP currently educates 2,600 with 8,000 students on its waitlist. Your support helps KIPP continue to create joyful, academically excellent schools that prepare students with the skills and confidence they need to pursue the paths they choose, so they can lead fulfilling lives and build a more just world.

As a parent and community member, I ask the School District of Philadelphia Board of Education to please support the modifications to the KIPP Parkside Charter School. Thanking for your consideration and for your dedication to our students.

Sincerely,

Chanel Summers

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

4/20/2021

Dear Board of Education,

I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter.

As Philadelphia's only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families. Furthermore, because

there have been reports of systemic biases in the school district's processes to renew charter schools, no school should be recommended for non-renewal until this matter is investigated and resolved.

There are many reasons our family supports renewing Universal Daroff Charter School's charter, but the most important reason for us is that Universal Family of Schools does far more than educate our scholars. The school itself is a place where my students are looked at as a whole child and not just a number. The community, staff and teachers provide them with the care and compassion that many of the district schools lack. Our teachers build strong relationships with their scholars and in turn that allows them to succeed in many areas that is not seen within district schools. Our staff connects with not only the scholars, but the community itself and UDCS is seen as a pillar of neighborhood involvement and support in our West Philadelphia neighborhood.)

In closing, I again ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter.

Yours truly,

Haley Robinson

Universal Daroff Charter School

From : Chelsey Molineaux [REDACTED]
Subject : Universal Daroff Charter School
To : schoolboard@philasd.org

Mon, Apr 19, 2021 09:42 PM

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Dear Board of Education,

I am asking you to vote against the hearing officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School.

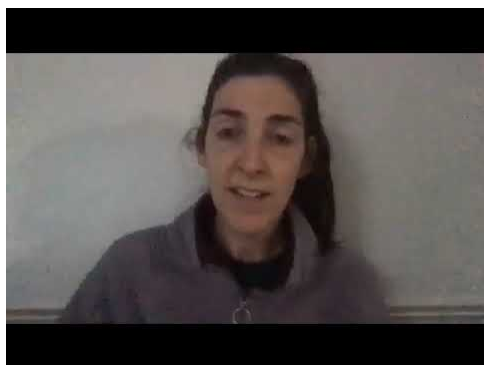
As you can see in the attached video, Daroff is a great place not only for our scholars, but also for our families. Our scholars get to learn in a fun, welcoming environment while learning to be resilient and understanding that putting in the work and effort will allow for them to positively succeed both in the classroom and outside of the classroom. Daroff gives back to the West Philadelphia community by helping our scholars and families obtain items that they may not easily have access to such as smoke detectors, holiday meals, daily breakfast and lunch, coat drives, and much more. Our staff and families are committed to teaching our scholars how to succeed by working hard independently and in groups, never giving up, and always be willing to help others in need. Universal Daroff Charter School is truly one of a kind and a great school for all who step foot in the door, whether that be a student, and/or their family member, the principal, (a) teacher(s), support staff, etc. To not grant charter renewal for Daroff would be completely devastating and detrimental to our community.

Please, I am asking you to reject the hearing officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal's operating charter.

Sincerely,

Chelsey Molineaux

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7saxiNQRh4>




Ms Molineaux Video - Save Universal Daroff Charter School! - YouTube

The School District of Philadelphia is trying to shut down Universal Daroff Charter School despite Universal Companies transitioning the school into a succes...

www.youtube.com

Chelsey Molineaux, M.S.Ed
School Counselor
Universal Daroff Charter School



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From : Mike Johnson [REDACTED]
Subject : <No Subject>
To : schoolboard@philasd.org

Mon, Apr 19, 2021 10:10 PM

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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To whom it may concern I am writing this text in light of the concern of bluford University of company School on behalf that I do not understand why School board of Philadelphia or whoever else is involved do not want to renew the schooling license for bluford to continue teaching I have a daughter that's in a special class he had IEP meetings and from my understanding Sheena moved up from one grade of reading and to three almost to four grades so if you can find in your heart to find a way to keep it open for the all the children that may be suffering like my child I'd appreciate it very much

Universal Daroff Charter Letter

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Katelyn Piening, and I am writing to oppose the decision of non-renewal for our school. I have been working with Universal Daroff Charter School since the 2017-2018 school year. Words cannot describe how much this school means to me, but I will try. This school has transformed me from a first year teacher to someone who considers teaching their life's work and heart. I could not be more thankful to work for such a wonderful, dedicated, and caring school. Each and every staff member goes above and beyond their job descriptions because they know the importance of taking care of our scholars. We have a phenomenal FSRC center that always makes sure our families are taken care of throughout the year. We have seen the power of our distribution team throughout this year with food, laptops, smoke detectors, and winter gear! Daroff is a family and it is imperative that it stays a part of Universal.

Universal Daroff works diligently to set extremely strong academic goals and is constantly exceeding them. We have updated curriculums and adapted so well to the virtual world this year, and I have been completely blown away by our success. This has been because of our extremely supportive and strong administration. Dr. Ruffin, along with his leadership team, have become cyber-leaders and have led their staff to success throughout this pandemic. Our school has so much more to give, and it would be a tragedy to our staff, scholars, and community to take away our charter.

In closing, I again ask that you ask the School District of Philadelphia Board of Education to vote against the non-renewal of Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter because of the negative impact it will have on the community surrounding Universal Daroff. This school is so much more than just another charter school. Daroff is the backbone of its community, and families rely on us for academics, childcare, and support. Please keep our family together!

-Katelyn Piening

UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL

From : Lanier Edwena [REDACTED]

Tue, Apr 20, 2021 09:30 AM

Subject : UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org**Cc :** Fatima Brinkley [REDACTED], James Ruffin-Jr [REDACTED]

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Dear Board of Education,

I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter.

As Philadelphia's only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families. Furthermore, because there have been reports of systemic biases in the school district's processes to renew charter schools, no school should be recommended for non-renewal until this matter is investigated and resolved.

There are many reasons our family supports renewing Universal Daroff Charter School's charter, but the most important reason for us is that Universal Family of Schools does far more than educate our scholars. (My name is Fatima Brinkley. I am a PCA worker at Daroff Charter School. This is my second year working at Daroff. I am writing this letter because it is my understanding that we failed the charter renewal. I'm deeply concerned that if our school closes, we'll not just be failing our community, we'll be failing our scholars as well. Our scholars look up to us, and they look forward into seeing us every day. Closing the school can't be the answer.

We may have failed the renewal, but I can name a million things we succeed in. As a PCA worker at Daroff, I succeed in teaching my scholars how to read, write, be kind to one another, how to respect their peers, and how to be themselves. Our scholars look up to us not only because we teach them every day, but also because they see themselves in us. When they turn on the computer every day, they see role models, and when we look at our scholars every day, we see our future.

The last thing we need is to have our scholars feel like we failed them and failing them would be closing our school. Having our scholars start over at a different school could make them feel uncomfortable and shutting our school down could make them feel unwanted. I don't know anyone who would want to do that to kindergarten, first, and second grade scholars that don't really understand what's going on. We have to look in our scholars' faces and tell them in the next year or two that we won't be here teaching them at Daroff anymore. I have scholars in my classroom that's going through some really tough times. I have one scholar whose parent has stage 4 cancer, and everyday this scholar is on Zoom doing his work at the hospital. There are times where I have to drop off supplies at this scholar's home because his mom can't get out of bed to go get him school supplies. I have another scholar who just recently lost everything because of a fire, and the school came together last year to make sure while they in were in a shelter that they have everything they need so they can be comfortable. These children that we teach everyday are not just kids, these are scholars that when they go through stuff, we as concerned parents and teachers don't sleep at night because we are worrying about them. We are family. We are home away from home.

Closing our school down can't be the answer, making us feel like we failed our scholars as if we haven't been doing our job, and I know for a fact the teachers and staff I work with do their job and more. Not only do our scholars look at us as teachers, but they look at us as their parents, and as a parent I don't want to fail any of my children - not my children at home or my children that are my home away from home.

Fatima Brinkley
PCA Daroff Charter

In closing, I again ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter.

Yours truly,

Mrs. Fatima Brinkley

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UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL

From : Jermaine Young [REDACTED]

Tue, Apr 20, 2021 09:38 AM

Subject : UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
DO NOT CLICK links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and are expecting the email.

Dear Board of Education,

I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter.

As Philadelphia's only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families. Furthermore, because there have been reports of systemic biases in the school district's processes to renew charter schools, no school should be recommended for non-renewal until this matter is investigated and resolved.

There are many reasons our family supports renewing Universal Daroff Charter School's charter. Still, the most important reason for us is that Universal Family of Schools does far more than educate our scholars. Universal Daroff continues to be an integral education and supportive learning resource in the West Philadelphia community. It's leadership under Principal, Dr. James J. Ruffin, Jr. and his team has been vital in promoting and sustaining academic growth across all grades. We look forward to your assistance on April 22, 2021.

In closing, I again ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter.

Yours truly,

Mr. Jermaine Young, MS, BC-HSP

[REDACTED]

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UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL**From :** DaLana Lee [REDACTED]

Tue, Apr 20, 2021 09:39 AM

Subject : UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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To Whom It May Concern:

I currently teach fourth grade at Universal Daroff. I have found the Philadelphia School District's decision to not renew their school charter to be very upsetting. This school is a very vital part of this community in West Philadelphia. I am in full support of Daroff to continue to be ran by the Universal Family of Schools.

As a second-year teacher at Universal I was pleased to see how much Universal does for this community. For instance, I noticed a scholar in my class uniforms that weren't washed. I went to the office to inquire about where to get uniforms from and they explained to me they could provide that scholar with brand new uniforms. This is only one example, Universal has provided many services to families of their scholars including having a safe space for families to come and receive goods and items such as clothing, food and other basic household goods. They also provide many services for families including counseling, health services for both children and adults, adult education classes, parenting classes and their Family and Community Center coordinator acts as a liaison to provide us with services in the city that are normally difficult to navigate such as housing, transportation and health services. The school itself is a place where scholars are included in the community and we, the staff and teachers provide them with the care and compassion that many of the district schools lack. I know as a teacher I have built strong relationships with the scholars and their parents. And I'm pretty sure the school district will not be able what Universal Daroff has done in this community.

I don't have any scholars who attend Daroff, but as a teacher I have fallen in love with all of the scholars I meet. I have spoken to parents who have said that they have sent their children to different schools in the Philadelphia school district who have not taken the time to identify their children's learning style which Daroff has. A lot of my scholars, parents, that I work with are very pleased with the education their children are receiving here at Daroff. They see growth in their learning here at Daroff. It just does not seem right to take this school from Universal when they are working hard to be change agents in the community. Where these children come from, they need a school like Universal Daroff.

As a teacher at UDCS, I am writing to ask the School District of Philadelphia Board of Education to vote against the non-renew of Universal Daroff Charter School. Please vote to renew. As Philadelphia's only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families. Universal Daroff is a school that I feel is the best place for scholars to receive the education they deserve within our community. **RENEW FOR FIVE MORE YEARS.**

Thank you for your consideration,
Miss DaLana Lee

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April 16, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Alphonso Waller, I am the Assistant Dean of Students here at Universal Daroff Charter School. I am deeply saddened to learn that there is a possibility of our charter not being renewed.

Universal Daroff isn't only a school that provides a great education for our community, but also provides resources, a safe positive uplifting environment for the children in the community to come and call a home. Our community is suffering and Universal Daroff Charter School is the only light of hope for some of our families within the community.

Under the leadership of Principle Dr. James J. Ruffin Jr. we have a resource center that is led by Miss Courtney Brown in which we always are providing food, Clothes, job information, Computers, House hold items, etc. Also I am asking if you should be so kind to make the right decision by allowing the school to renew its charter for the next 3 years.

Lastly, I AM ASKING YOU TO VOTE AGAINST THE HEARING OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION TO NON-RENEW UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL.

Yours truly,

Alphonso Waller

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL

From : Ellen O'Brien [REDACTED]

Tue, Apr 20, 2021 10:33 AM

Subject : UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Dear Board of Education,

I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter.

As Philadelphia's only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families. Furthermore, because there have been reports of systemic biases in the school district's processes to renew charter schools, no school should be recommended for non-renewal until this matter is investigated and resolved.

There are many reasons our family supports renewing Universal Daroff Charter School's charter, but the most important reason for us is that Universal Family of Schools does far more than educate our scholars.

My name is Ellen Hemingway O'Brien. I am a lifelong resident of West Philadelphia. I am also a teacher at Universal Daroff Charter School. For as long as I can remember, it has been my goal to give back to my community in a meaningful way. It wasn't until I began working at Daroff, that I was to make progress in reaching this goal

My first year teaching, fresh out of graduate school, I began teaching at a turnaround School within the School District of Philadelphia. turnaround schools are meant to remedy the School District's blatant failures; yet the avenues through which they hope to "turn a school around" only perpetuate their countless failures to the most vulnerable of our students. The lack of leadership was felt throughout the school from administrators, teachers and staff, all the way down to our students. There was no accountability, and it showed. Attendance was not consistent, behavioral problems were rampant, and there was no community involvement or engagement. I had 32 kids in a class, no support staff, and the overall morale was very low among staff members. We were all drained. When I was 9 months pregnant, a student threw a rock at me. Because I no longer felt safe in my school, I left. I think about these kids all the time. What happened to them, are they okay, how challenging was it to have lost a principal, coaching staff, and a teacher? Indeed, I felt guilty. I entered into this profession to give back to my community, and it seemed impossible.

I worked for another charter school in Philadelphia, and while I was struck by the vast differences in leadership at this school, I felt like something was missing. I kept yearning for a school that valued the whole student, the mind, body, and soul. I felt that in order to give back in a most meaningful way, I needed to find a school that loved.

When I was offered a job at Daroff, I was thrilled to be within walking distance from my house. At the end of the first day, I knew I was home. Although we are virtual right now, I can already tell the stark difference in leadership at Daroff. The compassion is contagious at the school. The support the staff feels for each other is palpable; praying for one another, offering encouraging words, congratulating each other's accomplishments, and offering unending assistance, are what make Daroff such a great place to work. The support and climate staff make it so that teachers can feel safe to teach. That's the biggest thing for me. I feel safe. I feel safe because I know that there is accountability, and I know that in that accountability there is humanity and love. As a result, this compassion trickles down and the students feel safe and loved and valued. We bring this humanity and compassion to the community, and our families feel safe and loved and valued. I feel safer in my own community knowing that Daroff is open because of the hub of humanity it represents.

Closing Daroff would be detrimental to the community. It would rip the proverbial rug of consistency right out from under the feet of a community that desperately needs it. Having worked at a turnaround school, I know what Daroff would become if the charter were to be revoked. This community has come so far. It has been able to because of the humanity and love that Universal Daroff Charter School represents. Have some compassion. Have some heart and love for our community, and please save Universal Daroff Charter School.

In closing, I again ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter.

Yours truly,

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Dear Board of Education,

I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter.

As Philadelphia's only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families and community. Furthermore, because there have been reports of systemic biases in the school district's processes to renew charter schools, no school should be recommended for non-renewal until this matter is investigated and resolved.

There are many reasons to support the renewal of Universal Daroff Charter School's charter, but the most important reason is that Universal Family of Schools does far more than educate our scholars. Here at Universal Daroff Charter School we cater to our community, not only by providing our scholars with an education, but we also have food drives for our families; we have given winter outerwear to adolescents in the community of all ages; we've held laptop distribution drives on many occasions to ensure that all of our scholars have access to the technology needed to perform well on our virtual platform; and we've held an open closet event where staff donated lightly used and brand new clothing for the families that we serve. Universal Daroff Charter School is a pillar of the community and we stand firm in our commitment to educate the juvenile population of West Philadelphia while also supporting our families.

I am not only writing this letter as a teacher at Universal Daroff Charter School, but also as a community member. I am no stranger to the environment that our scholars come from and that is why I am asking that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Tyjanae Thomas

7th Grade Math Teacher

Universal Daroff Charter School

Dear, State Senator Hughes, State Rep. Amen Brown

Hello my name is Byron Long, currently I work as a PCA at Universal Daroff Charter School located in West Philadelphia. I have had the pleasure of being a part of a grand organization for the last 4 years. In my tenure at Daroff the organization has treated me and my coworkers like family and we have become the Daroff family. Through my time at Daroff, we have made drastic improvements in the culture, climate and academics of the school. Students continue to grow academically and as young adults with the help and guidance of the teachers and staff here at Daroff. Test scores are rising continuously and student's grades are also improving. The Daroff family has created a culture and climate where the students that attend can thrive and be proud of their school. Students are behaving better and treating each other appropriately. Our Daroff family takes pride in giving back to the students and families in the community with countless events such as coat drives, supply giveaways, movie nights and so much more. Daroff charter also provides the children of this West Philadelphia community with a safe place outside of home. Where the staff takes responsibility over our scholars to ensure they feel the love and security needed to excel in and out of school. As a African American male who not only works in this community but I myself am from here. I know how important it is to have people I can look up to and that genuinely care about me away from home. Too many of our scholars we are big brothers, sister, aunts, uncles, father and mother figures to them. With that being said, we Universal Daroff Charter are more than a school we are a staple in this community and removing our charter would directly impact the success of the students that attend. Students would be left without the place that makes them feel the most comfortable when they are not at home. The students would lose the people who care about their successes in school. The students would lose the place where they built so much community and achievement. The community would lose a place that is constantly attempting to make the community a better place. The community would lose a resource that is desperately needed to continue to uplift their community. Losing Daroff means many people would suffer. I am convinced that Daroff does better for its students and community than it does harm. The students love this school and so does the community. In closing I ask you to ask the School District of Philadelphia Board of Education to vote against the non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter.

Yours truly,

Byron Long

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Bluford Charter School

From : Carmela Truell [REDACTED]

Tue, Apr 20, 2021 11:03 AM

Subject : Bluford Charter School**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Hello and Good Morning,

I'm a Bluford Charter School parent. My Scholars name is Yasir Turner and Bluford Charter has a very huge impact on my Scholar. Yasir has been going to Bluford since Kindergarten and is doing well. He is on Honor Roll and likes all the wonderful friends he has meet. I myself and a host of other parents and Scholars would love for you to keep the school in the community.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Ms. Carmela Truell

April 20, 2021

Dear Members of the School Board,

This has been an unprecedented year. In May 2020, I was laid off from my job of eight years. My family and friends shared words of encouragement stating better things were coming my way and everything happens for a reason. In fact, it was true. In August 2020, I began working at Universal Bluford Charter School as an MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) Coordinator. Today, I could not be happier with my current school and position. I continue to be impressed. In the heart of West Philadelphia, this charter holds extraordinary, dedicated teachers who work tirelessly to support our disadvantaged students academically, behaviorally, socially, and in every way imaginable. There are a multitude of additional, exceptional staff members who also share the responsibility and honor of serving our students. Professional Development began weeks before the first day of school and has not stopped. Literacy is taught holistically. Data is used to drive instruction; differentiation is a priority. Relationships are built. Students are supported, cared for, and thriving. We are making a difference in the community.

As an MTSS Coordinator, I support teachers in analyzing student assessment data to further drive instruction. I assist with forming strategic small groups and planning purposeful instruction. In attending an i-Ready training on understanding and using data, I am happy to report that Bluford was already doing everything that was suggested and much more. Teachers use best practices and see results. Among having a school-wide data tracker, there is progress monitoring forms for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. Teachers hold data chats with students as they make obtainable learning goals. As students' progress, small groups continue to reflect this. In preparing to write this letter, I thought of several school strengths that I could include. One thing that I admire most and that is unique to Bluford is that there is a 90-minute MTSS block that students participate in daily! 90-minutes! This is unheard of in my previous schools and overwhelmingly necessary for student success. During this time, teachers pull students for targeted Reading and Math instruction. When students are not being pulled, they are working on their individual learning paths on i-Ready. I am amazed to see how the teachers support our students in bridging their learning gaps. This is how to close the achievement gap!

As educators, we strive to do what is best for our students. I understand that often that means making changes. Bluford is more than willing to put in the work to serve our students in the best way possible. After all, that is our main goal! Aside from the phenomenal academic routines and structures we have in place, our students need stability and consistency that many are lacking at home. Bluford is a school that students love to attend and a place where teachers love to teach. It is safe, nurturing, as well as, a second home. I have heard countless examples of how Bluford is precisely a community school. Stories of parents and children cooking and eating dinner together during an after-school program, police officers visiting school to build positive relationships with our youth and future, and staff uniting to support families through traumatic life events. In the future, I hope to partake and experience more of this first-hand. There are many superior things happening at Bluford. It would be a great disservice to our students and community to close. Please, do NOT close our school!

Sincerely,

Ashley Post

[Redacted Signature]

4/22 BOE Meeting: written comments

From : Teresa Ko

Subject : 4/22 BOE Meeting: written comments

To : schoolboard@philasd.org

Tue, Apr 20, 2021 11:23 AM

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Dear Members of the Board of Education,

Thank you for your dedication to the school district and the education of Philadelphia's children.
I write about two issues: the Fall semester and support for AAPI students and families.

1. Fall:
I kindly urge SDP and BOE to do everything in their power to offer the option of full in-person education for our students in the Fall (as long as it is recommended by the CDC). If both remote and in-person options will be offered, **PLEASE offer a system in which families can opt 100% in-person (or 100% remote)** rather than the hybrid model. My children have not experienced the hybrid model yet and they are excited to go back even for a few weeks. But teachers and parents who have already returned say that the hybrid model puts undue pressures and burdens on everyone, especially teachers who have to address the needs of all students. Given that the CDC has reduced their physical distance requirement to 3ft., that teachers have received vaccines, and that other safety measures have been ensured, **we need a system that prioritizes in-person education for those who need it.**

Additionally, I would like to ask the SDP to please include students, families, and teachers in the decision-making about the Fall semester. Over the past year, families were given **one single survey** which was subsequently completely ignored. All decisions thereafter happened without input from students and families, and communicated top-down after the fact.


2. Support for AAPI students and families:

Given the rise of anti-Asian racism and hate crimes, I ask SDP and BOE to offer increased and active support and resources for AAPI students and families, to understand their needs, and find ways for schools, teachers, and families to help.

Thank you for your attention to these issues.

Best regards,
Teresa Ko

Universal Daroff Charter School

From : Pamela Thompson 
Subject : Universal Daroff Charter School
To : schoolboard@philasd.org

Tue, Apr 20, 2021 11:39 AM

 1 attachment

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Dear Board of Education,

I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter.

As Philadelphia's only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families. Furthermore, because there have been reports of systemic biases in the school district's processes to renew charter schools, no school should be recommended for non-renewal until this matter is investigated and resolved.

There are many reasons our family supports renewing Universal Daroff Charter School's charter, but the most important reason for us is that Universal Family of Schools does far more than educate our scholars. Please read my attached letter that I believe why Universal Daroff Charter School should be renewed.

In closing, I again ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter.

Yours truly,

Pamela Thompson

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**PThompson-Daroff Charter School.docx**129 KB

April 20, 2021

Pamela Thompson

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Good Afternoon,

My name is Pamela Thompson and I have been a certified secondary (7-12) mathematics teacher for approximately 30 years. I joined the Universal Daroff Charter School family in March 2016. I have the opportunity to teach my current 8th grade scholars, math, since they were in 5th grade. This looping opportunity has afforded me the privilege to experience the tremendous growth of my scholars academically.

Looping with my current scholars for four years, I have seen an academic growth mindset. My scholars have acknowledged their failures and created goals to improve themselves. For example, I am a data driven educator. I believe that scholars should know what their weaknesses are and what they can do collectively or individually to improve their scores. So as a whole group, we devised an action plan. This action plan held all three stakeholders, which included: the scholar, parent, and teacher accountable. Each scholar met with me, individually, to look at his/her PSSA scores to determine which skill(s) that they need to improve on.

Through the use of data charts, scholars have been taking more accountable for their schoolwork. Students have made connections between the daily lessons, units, benchmarks and PSSAs. Due to looping over the past few years, students have been able to communicate with each other and myself more effectively. This has created a strong bond between all stakeholders. Parents also became more active in their scholar(s)' progress by joining class dojo and utilizing PowerSchool.

After reviewing each scholar's data with the data coordinator, the instructional math coach and myself, we came up with targeted strategies to improve their overall math scores on school, district benchmark, and state exams. These various strategies included MTSS small groups, computerized math programs to work on target skills, after school tutoring sessions, Saturday School and becoming a more active participant in the classroom. We also targeted high frequency skills, various problem solving strategies, the incorporation of writing

across the curriculum, and small groups. With the commitment of all the three stakeholders, the scholars' PSSA scores have improved.

As a teacher, I took this opportunity to incorporate more accountable talk and became more of the facilitator than a lecturer. My weekly lesson plans were an affirmation on what I must do, as a facilitator, to assist my scholars to reach their goals. I used strategies that address their deficient from previous year's PSSA scores (eMetric reports) but from quarterly district benchmarks, and the Eureka Math Program. My Do Now activities differentiated small groups and scaffold instruction helped address areas of weaknesses.

This will be my last year teaching my scholars, as they will be moving into high school next school year. I have not only seen them grown academically, but as future leaders of tomorrow. They are dedicated to not only holding themselves accountable for their own academic success, but each other. They know what it takes to be responsible and productive students for the 21st Century.

In closing, I again ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's operating charter.

Yours Truly,

Pamela Thompson

“Fight for things you care about but do it in a way that will lead others to join you”
Ruth Badar Ginsberg

April 20, 2021

Dear Philadelphia School Board,

Educational institutions in our society are of considerable importance because they shape the mind, the behaviors, and the attitudes of scholars while preparing them to be useful members of society. In every community, there should exist a school that positively impacts the development of scholars, supports families, and enhances the community. In West Philadelphia, Universal Daroff is the diamond in the ruff and the safe haven for the community it serves.

My name is Michelle Brown and ***I ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer’s recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School’s operating charter.*** I am currently the Director of Academics at Universal Daroff and a life-time resident of the 19139 West Philadelphia area. Although, I didn’t attend Daroff as a child, I have memories. As a Philadelphia managed school Daroff had many challenges. In comparison to other schools within West Philadelphia area, Daroff’s performance index was low. Relationships with the community were either non-existent or low and families were underserved. Many families had to fend for themselves.

As Philadelphia’s only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families. Furthermore, because there have been reports of systemic biases in the school district’s processes to renew charter schools, no school should be recommended for non-renewal until this matter is investigated and resolved.

There are many reasons why I support renewing Universal Daroff Charter School’s charter, but the most important reason for me is that Universal Family of Schools does far more than educate our scholars. I’ve seen a high level of commitment and dedication from the staff towards the families and the scholars. As overwhelming as the pandemic is, there have been countless drives and giveaways to meet the needs of the families we serve. The drives include but are not limited to clothes, toiletries, food, smoke detectors, books, and technology. Everything was done decently and in order. The scholars are educated by teachers who are well trained and professionally developed. The school prides itself on educating the whole child; academically, socially, and emotionally. Arguably, the staff is there to make a difference and impact lives.

I am saddened by the School District of Philadelphia’s decision not to renew the charter. It will be a travesty for the scholars and their families. Children learn best when they are in a caring and loving environment and parents are at peace. Again, I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer’s recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School’s charter. Thank you for your time and consideration.

To whom it may concern,

I am asking you to vote against the hearing officers' recommendation to non-renewal of Universal Daroff Charter School. Daroff is a school that shows an interest in all scholars and is a pillar in the community. Daroff is active in the community by providing resources for families such as turkeys' coats, gloves, smoke detectors, among others.

I am a PCA at Daroff who works with the Special Education population. I have observed how hard and diligent our teachers are at Daroff. They are patient and caring to our scholars. They create partnerships with families and have gone above and beyond to provide additional supports during this unprecedented time.

In addition, Dr. Ruffin, Principal of Universal Daroff Charter School along with Ms. Hollenbach, Assistant Principal goes above and beyond to support teachers, staff, and the community. They do a great job with communication to staff and families about upcoming events, resources, and supports.

Lastly, we need to keep Daroff because we have teachers who care about our students and families. My four sons and I have gone to schools in the community. My oldest son is a retired Security Manager for 36 years. My second son works at Children's Hospital for 32 years and is a Comedian in the City of Philadelphia. My third son is a Para-legal in Washington, DC and my youngest son is a Principal in Chester, PA.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jacqueline Jones

PCA Worker, Universal Daroff Charter School

April 18, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I am asking you to vote against the hearing officer's recommendation to non-renew the operating charter for Universal Daroff Charter School. My name is Louis D'Alonzo. I joined the staff at Daroff in 2016 as a special education teacher. Prior to my employment by Universal Companies, I was employed by the School District of Philadelphia for 34 years. Working for the District as a special education teacher was generally a positive and rewarding experience. While a District employee, I worked under five superintendents and many versions of how to organize the structure of the School District. While a District employee, I witnessed the challenges of the neighborhood schools, the development of additional magnet schools, the formation of the School Reform Commission, and the Charter School movement. While a District employee, I was impacted by the decisions made by the District. Over these 34 years, the District made many sound decisions to improve the schools. Over this time, the District made poor decisions as well, that negatively impacted schools, students and their families. I firmly believe that the decision to non-renew the operating charter for Universal Daroff Charter School would be a poor decision by the School District.

Universal Companies has provided the means, support, and directive to impact the academic progress, social development, and emotional growth of the Daroff students. The leadership of Universal Companies has allowed the Daroff administration to lead a diverse group of teachers and support staff in the total team approach to develop the potential in every one of our students. The growth and strides made at Universal Daroff is an achievement for the students, families and community. The work and progress made at Daroff should not come to an end. Today, we often hear so much being made of the role of analytics in the world of sports. What do the analytics say about Daroff? The numbers certainly do not indicate that Daroff should not receive its charter renewal. There are District schools as well as other charter schools that could only hope to show the academic progress that Universal Daroff continues to make with our students.

In closing, as I reflect on my time with the School District and all the various reorganization, restructuring, and closing of schools that took place, I do not believe that Universal Daroff in its current state would be a school for one of those options. Please reject the hearing officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff's operating charter.

Sincerely,

Louis D'Alonzo
Special Education Teacher

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL

From : Aisha Johnson [REDACTED]

Tue, Apr 20, 2021 12:09 PM

Subject : UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org

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DO NOT CLICK links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and are expecting the email.

Aisha Johnson



I'm asking that you vote against the School District Of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's Charter.

As Philadelphia's only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understand our community and has done an excellent job serving our families.

Furthermore because there have been reports of systemic biases in the school Districts' processes to renew charter schools, no school should be recommended for Non-renewal until this matter is investigated and resolved.

There are many resources our family supports renewing Universal Daroff Charter School's charter, but the most important reason for us is that Universal Family of Schools does far more than educate our scholars. Universal Daroff Charter has been a long time pillar of our community and has educated many of our families and children that are staff members working for the betterment of our scholars. However it is also wise to remember that the probability for Daroff to withstand is left to us to fight the good for the continuing education of our students.

In closing, I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Daroff Charter School's charter.

Yours truly,
Aisha Johnson

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The Reopening of Bluford Universal

From : Danielle Rogers [REDACTED]

Subject : The Reopening of Bluford Universal

To : schoolboard@philasd.org

Cc : Danielle Rogers [REDACTED]

Tue, Apr 20, 2021 12:12 PM

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Hello, I am the parent of a scholar that attends Bluford Universal charter school. My daughter has went there since kindergarten. She has bond with the awesome staff and each teacher. The teacher are brilliant at finding creative ways to help the scholars learn. They do so by making sure everyone is included. I understand the numbers at the school academically are pluming due to the children being home from COVID. But look at how far the school has come. Give our scholars the opportunity to over come the setback of being home and comfort. Something they are not use to and turning it against them by trying to close the school. I would greatly appreciate my daughter school being opened and funded for our children to have every opportunity as other schools in different county's.

Sent from my iPhone

Universal Daroff Charter Renewal

From : Regina Laurie [REDACTED]

Tue, Apr 20, 2021 12:22 PM

Subject : Universal Daroff Charter Renewal

To : schoolboard@philasd.org

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April 20, 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Regina Laurie. I have been working at Universal Daroff Charter School since September of 2018. I currently teach Kindergarten, after teaching over twenty-five years in and around the Philadelphia area.

I have witnessed the needs of children at Universal Daroff Charter School. Most of the children that enter Kindergarten have very little time in preschool if any. The children enter, unaware of what a school is or the role they are about to take on, at the tender age of five years old.

We have children that are from single parent households. Some children I have encountered are homeless. Other children have serious medical conditions that require hospitalizations. Most of the children are impoverished. All children have specific needs that must be met. Universal Daroff Charter School has arisen and met their needs in all circumstances. The Universal Company has donated: food, clothing, medical advice and partnered with many businesses and community leaders in West Philadelphia.

Academically, Universal Daroff Charter School is rising from the previous ashes of the School District of Philadelphia. My students have shown growth in Reading and Math over the academic year. I encourage my students to problem solve and to think for themselves. My first year with the children showed one hundred one Lexia Computer Education Certificates gained for twenty- four students. I have students that perform science experiments, work on STEM activities and compose Haiku Poems. I have been able to instill in them a love for reading.

- - Universal Daroff Charter School has gained the trust of the West Philadelphia Community. It has taken time to generate such relationships. We have made a true impact in the community and have been the subject of many positive news stories in local media. “I AM ASKING YOU TO VOTE AGAINST THE HEARING OFFICER’S RECOMMENDATION TO NON-RENEW UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL.”

Sincerely,
Regina Laurie M.Ed.

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

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Please leave bluford as it is thank you

From : Bridgeanna Crawford [REDACTED]

Tue, Apr 20, 2021 01:39 PM

Subject : Please leave bluford as it is thank you

To : schoolboard@philasd.org

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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I am writing you because I have a six year old son that goes to bluford charter school and I would really appreciate if you leave the school as bluford because I know 1st hand my son would be lost and honestly I don't know what other school to put him in and he would be going to the 1st grade and it so many schools that's being torn down and that is very heartbreaking for a six year old children to see there only school the know not there any more please can you leave bluford around for our family and there future thank you so much

Sent from my iPhone

4/20/2021

To whom it may concern:

I AM ASKING YOU TO VOTE AGAINST THE HEARING OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION TO NON-RENEW UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL.

My name is Brittany Scheidegg and I am writing to state my oppositions to the decision of non-renewal of Universal Daroff Charter School. I am a Kindergarten teacher at Daroff and am in my third year there. During my time there I have grown as an educator due to the professional development requirements from administration and the high standards we are held to during routine observations by coaches and administration. I have also built amazing relationships with my coworkers and scholars. Daroff has become my family and it would be a great loss to the community to see it turned over.

Daroff puts a strong emphasis on team building and encourages grade group collaboration and planning which has helped me grow as a teacher. We work together sharing ideas and strategies to be the best we can for our student's. I look forward to seeing them at school everyday because we support one another through it all. I also genuinely believe that my scholars have helped me grow as well. Being a teacher is far from an easy job, but we take each day as a new opportunity to learn and grow together.

Being a virtual teacher has made me see even more clearly how I would feel if Daroff was no longer opened. I have missed going to our building and seeing my scholars and coworkers. I look forward to seeing them over zoom, but it isn't the same. It would be heartbreaking if we never get to go back to our home and be together again.

Therefore, I ask that you please reconsider your decision of non-renewal of Universal Daroff Charter School's charter.

Best regards,
Brittany Scheidegg
Kindergarten Teacher
Universal Daroff Charter School

Shanya Perkins

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

April 20, 2021

School Board of Philadelphia

cc. State Representative Amen Brown

cc. State Senator Vincent Hughes

Dear School Board Of Philadelphia:

It was brought to my attention that Daroff Charter School is at risk of closing. I AM ASKING YOU TO VOTE AGAINST THE HEARING OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION TO NON-RENEW UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL. There are several reasons that the school should remain open to include but not limited to statistical evidence, environmental, social and emotional well being of the students and community and the staff's commitment to the community.

The first piece of statistical evidence that I would like to reference is the fact that Daroff has the 2nd highest rate of enrollment compared to similar schools. I know that it may seem like this is due to location or that another company would get the same results but I would like to say I don't think the school board would get the same results. I believe the enrollment rates are due to the community ties. Community ties that include: hiring community members, hiring a higher number emotional and social well being staff then seen in most public school settings, and caring for the students whole family to include recognition of religious observations, food drives, MTSS period and working with local groups to have reach into the community.

The second statistic I would like to present is that our overall performance compared to similar schools has us ranked and number 10 out of 29 schools. This is yet another statistic I am sure the school board would not be able to produce in this area. Why, you may ask. Unlike other areas in Philadelphia where school have been taken back by the school board and kept similar numbers to that of the charter, the neighborhood around Daroff is NOT being gentrified. To give you a clearer picture McDonalds and Save-A-Lot are in walking distance and Starbucks is not. While I love to bring my morning cup of Starbucks in, I also recognize that my cup of coffee is often discussed and talked about as a status symbol amongst my students and their caregivers. Those comments are something that others and myself as staff members know how to handle. Why is this important to performance? This is important because the staff members are a balance of professionals with degrees coming in from other areas and those who are from the community. We have formed a family environment that engulfs the total student. Staff members at Daroff build a rapport with the community. The staff has called each and every absent scholar during the pandemic, the staff works with parents experiencing socio-economic hardships and the community trust us with their personal issues, knowing their religious affiliations and most of all they trust us with their children. This is what makes our students perform at such a high level as well as what reiterates itself with our enrollment statistics.

Lastly I would like to state the in comparison with similar schools we ranked number 9 of 29 in our overall 3 year performance statistics. This shows that our student's growth is not a phenomenon, this growth is happening gradually and continually. I would also argue that snatching students out of the hands they trust would stunt such growth. The school board taking control of Daroff at this point would be devastating to the community. This devastation can only be compared to taking a child away from it natural parents (environment) at birth, traumatizing the child (such as the school was traumatized when Universal Schools came in), giving the child back to it's natural parents and watching the child flourish just to snatch the child back. Just to make it clear. Universal Charters provides that natural environment that our students and community need to flourish. Taking the students out of this environment just doesn't benefit the students or the community.

In conclusion, I know the staff and environment formed at Daroff cannot be duplicated nor replaced. I think it should also be considered that as Philadelphia's only Black Charter organization we are in fact providing a natural environment that our students are flourishing in as well as a learning environment that they trust. The evidence and performance of our students has continued during a pandemic and social unrest because of our total care system of education. I would like to thank those who read my letter. Again, as a proud Philadelphian both living and working in this community, I AM ASKING YOU TO VOTE AGAINST THE HEARING OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION TO NON-RENEW UNIVERSAL DAROFF CHARTER SCHOOL.

Sincerely,

Shanya Perkins

Ms K. McKnight, BSW

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

20th April 2021

School District of Philadelphia

Education Center, Suite 101
440 N. Broad St. Philadelphia, PA 19130

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you to express concern that there has been a recommendation of nonrenewal at Universal Bluford Charter School. The students and families in this community need Bluford; they are more than just a building that takes up a block. They are the living, breathing, and bleeding block that goes into the lungs and body of scholars that have academically advanced and flourished under Universal's management. I am in full support of the school renewing its Charter.

After moving to this neighborhood in 2015, I enrolled my daughter into kindergarten at Universal Bluford Charter School. At that time, it was a challenge for me for one I had never lived in West Philadelphia and the staff was able to guide me to resources I needed at that time as though I was so unfamiliar with my surroundings and two I had no idea what kind of school I enrolled my only child into; I just thought oh how conveniently close the school is located. However, I'm so glad I did because from day one the Principal and her staff made me feel more than welcome like we had known one another for years. They were more than warm and inviting it made my transition here more comfortable and made me feel they were trustworthy with the welfare of my daughter.

Our experience here at Bluford has been nothing but positive and here's why; the well established staff was able to recognize my daughter's individualized educational needs early on and have been successful at targeting them. They have worked tirelessly to go beyond the standard and took time to implement a plan that is needed and required to attain the goal(s) for my child. But here's the thing, she is just one of many children

there are a potpourri of differences and needs for each child and yet they accommodate and focus on all of them with an impeccable outcome.

There are a plethora of other attributes that Bluford holds that make all the difference why it was and still the optimal choice not for just any child but a parent as well. Bluford offers so much more than a regular school. Bluford has an Family Student Resource Center that works along with food pantries to help families and the community that are in need of food and seek out resources during their hardships.

Bluford gives parents a chance to volunteer giving a rise to a stronger familial base among families. There is an afterschool program that bridges students together and offers programs to engage the children in academics, hobbies, sports and arts just to name a few. This wonderful accent keeps our children off the streets afterschool thus keeping them safe and giving hard working parents a peace of mind. Bluford also has a bookbag and supply giveaway at the beginning of every school year, a fall harvest, they give out coats for the winter, turkeys for Thanksgiving and have given toy donations to many of the less fortunate families at Christmas.

If you ask me, the Bluford staff extends themselves not just for a student but the family as a whole. They go above and beyond by providing workshops for parents on resume writing, showing families how to cook on a budget, taste tests, credit repair, and first time home buyers seminar. They also have staff members who act as mentors showing our young men and ladies how to maintain good behavior, express the importance of school and hygiene; there is even a staff member who takes time out to give our young men haircuts and another who helps our young ladies look like ladies. Taking that special interest in a student means a lot and gives them a strong sense of decorum. To me, that is a school that cares and dedicates themselves above what a standard school has to offer.

In closing, as a parent, I want you to think about what we know about taking time to aid and support a family, and how it supports and secures the future of a child. The success rate is much higher. So I ask you, why take away Universal Bluford the cornerstone of this community, a place that is stronger than its bricks and mortar. I strongly recommend that you renew Universal Bluford Charter School's charter; it is critical for the future of our children.

Respectfully,

Ms. K. McKnight, BSW

Reopening universal Bluford chapter school

From : Treana Graham [REDACTED]

Subject : Reopening universal Bluford chapter school

To : schoolboard@philasd.org

Tue, Apr 20, 2021 08:56 PM

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Hello my name is Treana Graham and I a mother of two as we all know this pandemic has mental and physically stress everyone out I have a 2nd grader who attends mastery Bluford chapter how has special needs and when I say this has been a nightmare please find it in your heart to let Bluford stay to our community Bluford has school many of my pierce now my children please reopen Bluford to our babies there is nothing but trouble on the streets and our babies need their education

Sent from my iPhone



April 20, 2021

Board of Education
Suite 101
440 N. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Dear Members of the School Board:

I am asking you to vote against the Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Bluford Charter School. My name is Claire P. Chappelle, I am in my second year as the proud 5th Grade ELA teacher at Universal Bluford Charter School. I am also a former School District of Philadelphia, ELA teacher with 22 years experience.

As a seasoned, professional educator, I have to question the validity of the recommendation. What is the impetus for the action? Why would the Office recommend to non renew the contract of a safe, secure, efficiently run school, that shows academic growth and great potential, led by passionate, dynamic administrators? The answers to my questions lie in a more devastating inquiry. Why did the SDP turn their Bluford Elementary over to Universal? I was SDP employed during the time of abandonment of some SDP schools. The "We can't do anything with them," attitude prevailed throughout the District. Universal, the African-American management company, recognized the worth of the students and the community at large, and worked relentlessly in their pursuit to create a model learning environment that proves successful and also strengthens the neighborhood.

Universal Bluford provides a safe, stimulating learning environment, and also acts as a stronghold, a hub, the heart of the neighborhood. The school operates as a strong, loving supported family. Our family trusts and depends on Principal Gary-Nelson, Assistant Principals Ms. Bellamy and Dr. Williams, and the leadership team for constant guidance and collaboration as we teach our children and prepare them for greatness in the future.

Principal Gary-Nelson, Assistant Principals Ms. Bellamy and Dr. Williams, along with the leadership team have solid systems in place that address:

- **Student growth and achievement:** the latest PVAAS data attests that our school achieved the PA Standard for growth in some grades/subjects; and also shows significant and moderate gains in other grades/subjects;
- **Professional qualifications for staff:** growth plans for certification and advanced degrees are agreed upon and supported;
- **High rate of student and staff attendance:** daily attendance rates remain in the high 90s;
- **Compliance of Special Needs and ELL students:** the determination to meet our students' needs has not been diminished in our virtual school;
- **Communication with parents and families:** meetings, mass phone calls, emails, letters, student handbook, newspaper articles, ClassDojo, and calendars, keep parents abreast of all that is Bluford.
- **19th Police District:** visits our school to participate in fun activities because they like and care for our children and staff, as opposed to being called upon for weapons and drugs, in which there were incidents as such, prior to Universal managing Bluford.

Universal Bluford is an integral part of a vibrant West Philadelphia community. Though, COVID-19 has changed the way some of the community programs happen, the community still benefits by having a stable institution that cares about its surroundings. The school strengthens the community by offering the following programs as well as a host of others:

- **Chrome books for virtual learning**
- **Thanksgiving turkey distribution**
- **Winter coats distribution**
- **Providing for the needs of our homeless students**
- **The Food Pantry program**

Universal Bluford is a member of the African-American Charter Schools Coalition. This Coalition operates 19% of the city's charter schools, though the charters of these schools are non-renewed at the alarming rate of 87%. The question I pose to the Charter Schools Offices is: What is the justification for the non-renewal at such a significant rate? Throughout my teaching career in both SDP and charter schools, I have witnessed first-hand the biases towards some institutions, and have worked on teams in which we had to justify ourselves differently. These differences were attributed to racial, financial, and location factors.

Universal Bluford is recognized as a point of neighborhood pride by Pastor Jefferson who is a prominent member of our community at large. Pastor Jefferson has witnessed first-hand the positive contributions and changes that Universal Bluford provides as a neighborhood stronghold that is future bound.

Universal Bluford's strong, caring administration, and loving staff work as a cohesive unit for the betterment of our school family and surrounding community. The solid systems that were paramount during the transition from our physical building to a virtual environment on Friday, March 13, 2020, ensured our students had their lessons, materials, and access to their teachers on the following Monday. Shortly thereafter, the entire staff was trained on Zoom, and chrome books and textbooks were distributed to our students. Within a few weeks, students were in virtual school full day and learning new material. The smooth transition proved successful because our supportive administrators and ambitious staff worked towards a common goal, teaching and taking care of our children. The systems in place are even stronger today because Team Blue doesn't settle for less, we are a non-stoppable force to be reckoned with when our children, our school, and our community is at stake.

It is my opinion that the gains of the solid educational experience provided by Universal Bluford helps to solidify and strengthen all stakeholders. These gains will be greatly diminished and the results will have devastating consequences, if Universal Bluford Charter School's charter is not renewed. Therefore, I am asking you to reject the Hearing Officer's recommendation to non renew Universal's operating charter and grant Universal Bluford Charter School another five-year contract.

Sincerely,

Claire P. Chappelle, M.Ed

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Signature]

Universal bluford charter school

From : Amari McClain [REDACTED]

Subject : Universal bluford charter school

To : schoolboard@philasd.org

Wed, Apr 21, 2021 08:56 AM

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Dear Board of Education,

I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer’s recommendation to non-renew Universal Bluford Charter School’s charter.

As Philadelphia’s only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families. Furthermore, because there have been reports of systemic biases in the school district’s processes to renew charter schools, no school should be recommended for non-renewal until this matter is investigated and resolved.

There are many reasons our family supports renewing Universal Bluford Charter School’s charter, but the most important reason for us is that Universal Family of Schools does far more than educate our scholars. They are my village and they always say it takes a village to raise a child well I have 5 and they help my household in so many ways you couldn’t imagine. if you take Bluford away you’ll be taking away the heart of our neighborhood we had enough changes and heartache since covid 19 started please don’t add more to the pain.

In closing, I again ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer’s recommendation to non-renew Universal Bluford Charter School’s operating charter.

Yours truly,

Marissa Jefferson

Sent from my iPhone

Board Comments

From : Maureen Skaates [REDACTED]

Wed, Apr 21, 2021 09:44 AM

Subject : Board Comments**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Maureen Skaates, MS, CCC-SLP
[REDACTED]

Good afternoon. My name is Maureen Skaates, and I am a speech-language pathologist with the Philadelphia school district. I primarily serve students at Grover Washington Middle school, and I assist with the caseload at Anna B Day elementary school.

I am here to ask the district to increase the number of speech language pathologist positions.. I am also advocating for a workload-based model of service delivery for SLPs. The current caseload guidelines promote a "one size fits all" approach, which is not ideal for our diverse caseloads.

I have the privilege of serving students in 7 self-contained special education classrooms. My students have a variety of communication impairments. Some have difficulty producing sounds, and others may struggle to understand them. Some have complex communication needs and require the use of assistive technology to express their thoughts and ideas. Some have a diagnosis of autism or intellectual disability, and they need extra visual support and structure to effectively understand and express language.

If I had a more manageable workload, I would be able to spend more time in our self-contained classrooms, giving me the opportunity to see and hopefully prevent communication breakdown in real-time. I could better train staff how to use assistive technology and communication devices. I would have the time to engage in meaningful collaboration with teachers and other related service providers to ensure each student's needs are met.

I have been an SLP for 17 years. My colleagues in this district are some of the most knowledgeable, creative, passionate professionals I have encountered. Unmanageable workloads result in talented therapists leaving this district. High turnover and the use of expensive independent contractors weakens the bond between students and therapists. This results in slower progress for our students. Please allocate more SLP positions into the budget. With more highly trained professionals available, we will be better able to serve our most vulnerable students. Their voices deserve to be heard.

December 8, 2020

Elijah Washington
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Universal Bluford Charter School. I am the parent of Elijah, Kenya, and Nathaniel Washington. All of my children have or are currently attending Universal Bluford and I would like to say that this school has made a valuable impact on my family. Despite my hectic work schedule, I have noticed a difference in my children's academics and social emotional development throughout the years. My children have been an integral part of the Bluford family since Kindergarten until sixth grade and I have to really commend Bluford for the hard work and dedication they gave to each of my children.

This school has found ways to bring out the best in my children. For example, if it wasn't for the PAL after school program, my oldest son Elijah Jr. would not have gained his sense of independence to explore sports like basketball and football outside of the school setting. Also, they encouraged my daughter, Kenya, to step outside of her comfort zone and join the dance team. It is the little things that make a difference to a child. I also have to give credit to the school for the family atmosphere it provides. The staff is very diligent in making a point to get to know each student as an individual. They try their best to cater to the whole family and not just the children. For this reason, we are truly grateful. Bluford is a staple to the community and they work hard. Whenever hardships or unique circumstances plague the community, we can count on Universal Bluford to come through. The Family Student Resource Center is a godsend. I appreciate everything they have accomplished thus far. When I was applying for employment, they helped me on my journey by hosting workshops with the EarnCenter and Career Wardrobe. They also helped me with mock interviews and gave me the encouragement needed.

As you can see, not only has Universal Bluford been a beacon of light for not just my children but for me also. Non-renewal of their contract would not be a good idea. Where else can we receive these services so close to home and for little to no cost? Bluford has taught me many things and one of them is gratitude. I am so thankful for this school and I am certain that my community feels the same. Please consider my family's letter when you make your decision. Place yourself in our shoes and see how devastating it would be if you took away all of the opportunities mentioned above.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Mr. Washington

REOPENING UNIVERSAL BLUFORD CHARTER

From : felicia benjamin [REDACTED]

Wed, Apr 21, 2021 12:08 PM

Subject : REOPENING UNIVERSAL BLUFORD CHARTER**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org**Cc :** [REDACTED]

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To whom this may concern

My name is Felicia Benjamin im 30 years old single mother who also was a bluford student back in the days I remeber when they said the school was call Hanna I was determine my children attend to this school due to teachers and staff caring for the students. I have three children whom attend universal bluford charter school, curtis Wallace my 5th grader chaya Wallace my 3rd grander also chloe Johnson my kindergarten baby. Let's start with my son who have been in bluford since he was in kindergarten he was all a's and b's until virtual learning he has been falling off his grades drop to the point he is losing faith in himself he was accepted into the stem program before online classes now he just dont care anymore I would never want my child to ever feel this way about himself. As for my daughter who also been with bluford since kindergarten she really wasn't a fan of school but she was getting there being around the bluford family who motivated her every day and made her feel like she could do anything if she work hard at it read levels and all.now chloe her first year as a kindergarten student she has to do it online she tell me mom I didn't want to do school like this I want to go in just the excitement of being greeted everyday with smile to boost your energy walking in school knowing this is where is start to become a lawyer or doctor this is where your future start. Me as there mother my job is to build them not break them and I do that but with the school being close is breaking my children I can't speak for anyone else but I know whats going on in my house hold being a single mother your children see that you no longer in school trying to reach your goal cause you have to focus on them and make sure they doing okay to good enough to pass and still have to work to keep a roof over their head no male figure in the home it was already a struggle being a parent in school working still having to help them and when a teacher told me my son need to be more responsible I could of lost it why? Because when I was 11 there is no such thing as responsibility you go to school and do what your suppose not wake yourself up feed your self and get your sister up and make them food and make sure they are in class while mom is at work no not possible I really dont feel that this is fear to everyone families, teacher ect. I could go on and on about why school is better for my child but as I right this im currently at work while teachers call me that my children are not in school due to me being at work. I would like for everyone to take the time out and think all families don't have support the help that is needed in homes school to kids is the only job they have to worry about until they graduate from the 12 grade and some college I would like for anyone reading this to put on our shoes of our daily life you have parents who are build for this and some who can't handle this mental we need that break from 8am to 330 sometimes 6 if they in after school some of us is breaking mentally thanks for your time I hope this letter open a lot of eyes.

December 4, 2020

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

To Board of Education,

I am writing this letter in support of our school's opposition to the charter school's office recommendation to vote non-renewal of Universal Bluford Charter School's Chapter. Bluford's students have excelled in all areas of academics due to Universal's management and commitment to their students and the community

Bluford was founded by an African American Education management organization with a core understanding of the valid issues and challenges faced in our community. Under the management of Universal, it has exhibited a commitment to the community through our family and scholar resource center. It ensures family, school, and community stay connected and includes assistance with food needs. While under the School District of Philadelphia, none of these resources were available to Bluford's students and their families. My child and I along with many other families will greatly suffer from the loss of these resources. Being a single mom, I don't know if I would have survived without the afterschool program and the resources that it provides. They helped me to stay on top of my daughter's homework and school work and with that assistance, my daughter has maintained Honor Roll for the past three years. The afterschool program has helped my child connect to the community. Even though I work long hours, my child does not feel alone. Smaller classroom sizes has allowed my child along with the other students to receive special attention as needed.

If we were to return under the direction of the School District of Philadelphia, I fear that we would lose all of these resources and benefits. I am asking the Board to please reject the recommendation of the Charter School office to non-renew our school's charter and to grant another 5 year contract.

Respectfully,

Nicole C. Marshall

December 7, 2020

Tiyonna Amey



Dear Sir or Madam,

It has been brought to my attention that our school, Universal Bluford Charter School, has been nominated for non renewal. As a parent of a former student and two current students, Kenya and Nathaniel Washington, 2nd and 5th graders, I strongly object to this decision on the sole purposes of what Universal Bluford has done for my family and our community. We chose Universal Bluford for its reputation of being an awesome school since it was acquired by the Universal Family, the way it personally impacted my families' life and what it does for the community.

As a part of the Universal Family, I have seen Bluford exceed many great feats to become the best school that it can be in terms of improving test scores to finding ways to get the whole family involved and to help make sure the students are mentally prepared and ready to conquer the State tests and Benchmarks through pep rallies, and various incentives to get the families more involved. My children are not test savvy and the way the teachers and staff turned everyday songs into PSSA fight songs made a difference.

My daughter, Kenya Washington, is a shy individual at times. I would like to applaud the staff for making my daughter achieve greatness by inviting her to join the dance team and nurture that creative side of her. She had the opportunity to overcome her shyness by performing at the First Universal Art showcase. I am proud of all of the staff because they are constantly encouraging the children to be the best versions of themselves while reminding them of the core values that the school represents. She was also a member of the Girl Scouts and learned some valuable life skills about helping out the community and making a difference.

When it comes to the community, Bluford goes above and beyond for that. They make sure that the students are learning to the best of their abilities and they try to help you exhaust all opportunities. An example of this is when that Devastating fire occurred and affected a great part of our school population, they stepped up and made sure the families were taken care of. They went above and beyond to protect the school population when certain health concerns arose like bed bugs, lice, etc. They followed protocols and ensured the safety of the students upon entering the building.

In conclusion, Universal Bluford school is amazing and it will have devastating effects if we are not considered for Non Renewal for five more years. I don't even want to entertain those thoughts. Please take our words to heart and place yourself in this situation. Bluford caters to each student and makes them feel welcome and safe at all times. Despite the times we are in, Our children know that Universal Bluford will always be a safe haven. Please do not take that lovely opportunity away. Bluford has been a staple in this community since it got acquired by Universal Family. Please do not take it away. Many great memories were created here, please let that continue. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. We really love our school and just want the best for our children.

Thank You

Tiyonna Amey

Written testimony

From : Cheryl Micheau [REDACTED]

Wed, Apr 21, 2021 10:12 AM

Subject : Written testimony**To :** Horger, Tracy [REDACTED]@philasd.org>**Cc :** karel kilimnik [REDACTED]

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Hi, Tracy: This is my written testimony for the Thursday Action Meeting.
Thanks for including it in the record. Thanks for your help.

Board of Education Action Meeting, 4/22/21
Dr. Cheri Micheau, Ph.D., Educational Linguistics
Community Member, Retired TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages)
Professor

I would like to comment on Action Item #1, the extension of funding for the William Penn Foundation's program for English Learners entitled "Together is Better." My concern is not with the extension of funding, since with the intervention/interruption of virtual learning since spring of 2020, this program has not been able to be implemented. My concern is, rather, about the program itself.

First, I am concerned about outside entities' setting policy for the SDP in exchange for funding. I understand that William Penn offered the "Together is Better" grant— implemented in several K-8 schools in the Northeast—with the stipulation that the SDP actually adopt a specific language instructional policy for those affected schools: That ESOL would be delivered through push-in instruction or "co-teaching." In other words, it seems that William Penn is now dictating language policy for the District as a condition for receiving funding. To my knowledge, there are no second language experts at William Penn who are qualified to claim credibly that this model for delivering language instruction is effective, and sadly, when this program was proposed, leadership in the OMCP was also not qualified—or even sufficiently engaged—to make such decisions.

Second, I am concerned about the research foundation for this instructional model. There is no significant research in the field of second language acquisition and instruction that supports this instructional model AS A LANGUAGE TEACHING MODEL. In fact, it is very difficult to design research to "prove" that a certain instructional model is more or less effective. Variables such as teacher proficiency, classroom climate, linguistic and cultural background of the students, and level of professional training can all affect the quality of instruction through ANY instructional model, and it would therefore not be feasible to compare results across classrooms and instructional models.

However, second language research strongly and unequivocally supports **explicit** language instruction as key to language acquisition. No second language acquisition expert claims that students can simply "pick up" or "absorb" all the necessary features of a second language while

focusing on learning math or science or social studies, for example. Second-language students/English Learners need opportunities to:

- practice reading, writing, vocabulary and structures sufficiently — -repeatedly, over time— -so that these linguistic features and skills are retained and so that they develop fluency in using them;
- explore the sounds in English (especially those that are not part of their native language), key for developing phonemic awareness;
- acquire sufficient cultural and academic background knowledge to read and listen competently;
- receive feedback on their oral and written products;
- practice in a supportive setting in which they feel comfortable and not “under the microscope” of native speaker peers;
- focus on language learning without the distraction of also addressing content skills simultaneously.

That ESOL teachers can supply this necessary explicit language instruction “on the fly,” in the course of a rapidly proceeding content-area lesson is unrealistic. In push-in classrooms ESOL teachers often end up being nothing more than classroom aides. Of even more concern, students in push-in classrooms, in many cases, are being denied their federally-mandated right to second language instruction. It is an ill-advised use of ESOL teachers’ skills and training.

One group that is especially harmed by this program is the group of newcomers who arrive at their schools with zero English. That these students can simply “follow along” in a content lesson with ESOL teachers’ limited help, and that teachers can accommodate their content-area lessons for such low-proficiency students seem very unrealistic expectations based on inaccurate assumptions about how language is learned and how language acquisition proceeds. In addition, it is not uncommon for newcomers to have been exposed to very little education in their home countries; we have students arriving in Philadelphia with no literacy skills in any language and no exposure to even very basic math. Can we honestly claim that these students can succeed with such limited support?

To be clear, it is desirable that content-area lessons be adjusted and accommodated to the needs of English Learners at various levels of proficiency. It is also desirable that ESOL lessons be attuned to the linguistic challenges faced by students in content-area lessons. There is no problem with additional adults’ assisting English Learners—or other students with specific needs — - during content-area lessons. There is also no problem with content and ESOL teachers’ planning together. There is no question that content and ESOL teachers can learn from each other while planning and delivering lessons. But the specific work of providing second language learners with the necessary LANGUAGE practice, explanation, and feedback cannot be done by an ESOL teacher’s drifting around the room during science or math or literacy, whispering suggestions into ELs’ ears.

Clearly, William Penn’s assumptions behind this program— -that content-area and ESOL teachers can work together to plan and deliver lessons, that they can, in the process instruct each other on best practices for teaching their subject matter, and that closely connecting language instruction to the specific challenges and requirements in the “regular” classroom can foster greater competence in academic language— -are all sound. What is missing is, as noted, the provision of **explicit** language instruction. Another model— -the adjunct model— -calls for a co-teaching model for the content lessons, with ESOL and content teacher working together to plan and deliver that lesson, but for an additional linked daily **language** lesson in which English

Learners are given explicit language instruction and practice opportunities on the language needed to successfully process each content lesson. This model has been implemented only rarely in the SDP, for reasons outlined below.

Third and finally, the William Penn Foundation program is limited and not implementable throughout the city. “Together is Better” is offered in only two K-8 schools in the Northeast. Grant funding is provided so that content and ESOL teachers can be released for co-planning time; sufficient, additional staff is provided, so that ESOL and content teachers can co-teach content lessons; professional development is also provided through this funding. Indeed, in order for a co-teaching program to work on any level, there must be time for co-planning and sufficient time for the ESOL and content teachers to deliver lessons together. In most schools, however, there is no opportunity for teachers to co-plan; ESOL teachers across the city are stretched very thin, often supporting multiple classrooms in each grade, thus preventing them from co-teaching where needed. Professional development on all the aspects of co-teaching has not been widely available beyond the two “Together is Better” schools. Yet the OMCP decided that push-in instruction/co-teaching should be the instructional model in certain grades throughout the city. In other words, the policy dictated by William Penn became the policy across the District.

This ill-advised program is yet one more example of the lack of attention to and informed decision making about instruction for English Learners in the School District of Philadelphia. I urge you to invite representatives from OMCP (Office of Multilingual Curriculum and Programs) to present to the Board on EL programs and initiatives, so that you may ensure that the rights and needs of this group of students are not being ignored.



OLNEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A School District of Philadelphia School

5301 N. Water Street Philadelphia, PA 19120
Telephone: (215)-400-3790, Fax: (215)-456-5566

Mr. Michael Roth, *Principal*
Ms. Anieca Suber, *Assistant Principal*
Dr. Martin Woodside, **Assistant Principal**

Dr. William Hite, *Superintendent*

Dear Dr. Nunez and Ms. Klein-Davila,

I am writing on behalf of the Olney School community to support the district's funding of online adaptive programs. These programs are used by our staff and our students to help address specific student learning needs. Our staff also uses the data from these programs to support our in-person intensive interventions or at times, enrichment work. These programs are important because it is another way for us to approach learning with our students. Our school community is hopeful that these will be funded centrally by the school district next year. We also hope that we will have options around which adaptive program to use with our students.

Sincerely,

Mr. Michael Roth
Principal, Olney Elementary School



George W. Childs School

Gordon Laurie, Principal

April 20, 2021

Dear Members of the School Board,

The way students learn today seems worlds apart from how children were taught, even one generation ago. Technology commands the playroom and the classroom, and even preschoolers are adept at using smartphones and tablets. Yet through the ages and despite all of the technological advancements, educators continue to face a timeless and universal dilemma. How to inspire our students to read. At the elementary grade level, an online reading intervention program is an excellent tool for assessing and engaging young readers.

Recent events have proven just how vitally important it is for schools and educators to have immediate access to online learning programs that can provide educational excellence while keeping students focused and engaged. With little to no notice, Teachers and students have had to adapt to an entirely remote classroom setting with 100% of lessons presented digitally. Elementary reading intervention programs have proven to be invaluable tools for the teachers of George W. Childs navigating this relatively uncharted new online classroom scenario.

Reading intervention programs for elementary students are based on a three-tiered model of learning. The Response To Intervention (RTI) program begins with all students in the classroom taking part in the same research-based, teacher-led instruction. As the lessons progress, the teacher assesses each student's individual needs and abilities. Students requiring extra support will progress to the second tier level where they will work in a small group setting with other students and the instructor. Finally, those students who do not respond to Tier 2 instruction will progress to Tier 3 for one-on-one intervention and assistance targeted to address their specific learning needs.

Children in the digital age have literally grown up with a device in hand. From watching cartoons and singing along to videos to playing games and searching for Pokemon®, electronics play a key role in how children are entertained and can be instrumental learning tools as well. The teachers at George W. Childs have been using reading intervention programs to help students engage in online reading and set the course for scholastic and personal success.

Yours Sincerely,



Gordon Laurie
Principal

Date: April 20, 2021

To: The School District of Philadelphia School Board

From: Tamara Edwards, T.K. Finletter Principal

Subject: Adaptive Learning Programs

Adaptive Learning Programs (ALP) have continuously proven to be beneficial in a variety of ways. When implemented with fidelity, Adaptive Learning Programs support schools with providing differentiated learning opportunities for all students as well as supporting school administrators and teachers with the ability to quickly analyze data that can be used to drive instructional outcomes.

ALPs consist of learning modules tailored around meeting the specific needs of students at each achievement tier inclusive of helping to provide opportunities for enrichment and to address learning difficulties through a differentiated process. Additionally, they provide customized learning paths to engage all learners, and have proven to be especially beneficial to English Language Learners. Instead of implementing a broad-based approach that does not cater to the needs of all students, educators use these research-based Adaptive Learning Programs to inform instructional planning and meet the needs of the diverse learners within their classroom.

Some of the other benefits from implementing Adaptive Learning Programs include the ability for students to receive individualized instruction, receive immediate feedback, and to provide teachers with the ability to access student needs, informing which topics and skills they should focus on during lessons and to spend more time engaging students in the learning process.



ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
430 E. Washington Lane
Philadelphia, Pa 19144

Matthew C. Hayes
Principal

Kristen Heifet
Assistant Principal

April 20, 2021

Mr. Conley,

I am writing in support of Adaptive Learning Programs in hopes that the School District of Philadelphia will allow for ALP's to be purchased and used in schools. Adaptive Learning Programs have been helpful to student development and progress over the years and are even more important now as we engage in virtual and hybrid learning.

Adaptive Learning Programs vary in the areas that they support students but are impactful in a few ways:

1. They allow an intentional focus on the student which allows a building of rapport and getting to know student personalities, interests, and abilities.
2. They support the development and setting of educational goals. This is especially critical at the Middle Years level as students work towards High School selection and choosing schools that are educationally aligned to their college and career goals.
3. They support a more individualized focus that also allows student to learn in a variety of methods as well as locations. Students and staff are more easily able to connect even when not in a traditional school setting which can support more attention and push the boundaries of the traditional 8-3 school day.

While I understand the decisions of this nature and magnitude are complex and require time and thoughtful consideration, I do hope that the District will support ALP's for the benefit of students.

Sincerely,

Matthew C Hayes

Matthew C Hayes
Principal
Roosevelt Elementary School

Testimony for April 22, 2021 Action Meeting

From : Diane Payne [REDACTED]

Wed, Apr 21, 2021 02:25 PM

Subject : Testimony for April 22, 2021 Action Meeting **To :** schoolboard@philasd.org

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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My attempted topic for publicly speaking at this April 22nd meeting is Action Item 20 and Action Item 4. However, before I address those topics, I am asking again...don't shut us out. The continued speaker suppression foisted on the public by the Board's change to speaker policy follows a troubling nationwide path. Watching the growing voter suppression and protestor suppression cropping up around the country makes the Board's decision to shut people out even more troubling. Why would you want to alienate the public even further unless your actual goal was simply to be the boss and control the narrative?

Two APPS members attended the most recent "conversation" organized by the Parent and Community Advisory Committee and noted it is a nice venue for just that – a conversation. It in no way equates with the public "business" of the Board. Seeing this message - *Registration for the April 22, 2021 Action Meeting is full. This form is not accepting responses at this time* - is the antithesis of community engagement. Please, recognize the distress this is causing to a community already under stress from so many forces. Rescind the speaker changes!

Action Item 20 - Change Orders. I spoke on this topic last month and it should be noted that once again it is a generic description of changes totaling \$1,259,050 for just this month. That brings the total for 2021 to \$4,285,376. Neither you nor the public knows why these change orders were necessitated nor does anyone know who generated them. It is impossible to monitor whether these orders are in line with industry standards or something to be concerned about. This is another example of a discussion going nowhere.

Action Item 4 – KIPP amendment proposal. This item should be withdrawn until all of the confusion and misinformation around KIPP's addresses, grade configurations, and charter contract dates are consistent across District platforms. The many confusing and inconsistent pieces of the KIPP cohort were spelled out in the APPS letter sent to the Board this week. https://appsphilly.net/the-board-should-withdraw-action-item-4-kipp-amendment-proposal/?preview_id=14303&preview_nonce=7825ad081b&preview=true

I would like to add one more significant concern. There should absolutely be no Charter expansion until all Philadelphia public schools are made whole. The Charter school budget item drain on District finances is no secret. Until this problem is resolved, no expansion requests in any form should be entertained. Not even from a school in the *Model* categories of Achievement, Operation, and Finance – which KIPP is not.

Thank you, Diane Payne [REDACTED]

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony Submission (FLC Special Ed)

From : Louis Fantini [REDACTED]

Wed, Apr 21, 2021 03:00 PM

Subject : Testimony Submission (FLC Special Ed)

To : schoolboard@philasd.org

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Dear BoE members,

Below, please find an open letter from the FLC community regarding the elimination of one of our special ed positions, which we believe to be in error. I had hoped to sign up to testify at the action meeting, but registration was full. Please include the letter below in the official record for the meeting.

Best,
Louis Fantini
English and Social Studies Teacher, FLC

We, the undersigned members of the Franklin Learning Center community, are concerned that what seems to be a miscalculation at the OSS is threatening to displace a crucial, valued member of our school staff, and leave some of our most vulnerable students underserved.

For years, FLC has had two special ed coordinators. These dedicated educators work incredibly hard to ensure our students with IEPs have every support they need to succeed. They push into classes, facilitate accommodations, host tutoring every day, and build deep and lasting relationships with students and their families. They do all of this while managing mountains of paperwork, often putting in long hours outside of the school day to keep the system afloat and ensure our students get every opportunity to do their best.

This is a herculean task for two people, but for reasons unknown, the School District has decided to cut one of FLC's two special ed positions in next year's budget.

Despite our numerous appeals, the rationale for this decision has never been made clear to us. 14 members of the graduating Class of 2021 have IEPs, but 21 members of the incoming freshman class have IEPs, and these numbers don't account for the approximately three to five students with IEPs who typically transfer into FLC from Charter or out-of-district schools. All told, our total IEP numbers will be *increasing* next year to *at least* 59 students, and the district has decided to meet this increased need by cutting one of our two special ed positions. The legal limit for special ed caseload set by the State of Pennsylvania is a maximum of 50 students, meaning the District's current budget will have FLC legally non-compliant for the start of the upcoming school year.

Rather than addressing this issue directly and proactively, the District seems to be intent on erroneously eliminating Ms. Dietrick's position, leaving FLC students undersupported for the first month or more of the school year. This would force Ms. Dietrick to find and apply for a different position, start the school year at a new school with new students, and then force her to decide if she wants to exercise her right of return to come back to FLC during leveling in October (which would leave the students at her potential new school with a lapse in support).

The District's inaction on this issue is ironic given the recently expressed concern for student Social-Emotional Learning. No teacher can be capriciously moved between schools without severe consequences for our communities, but this is most true for a special education teacher, who is a critical line of support for many of our most vulnerable students. This is especially indefensible when the sole impetus for this decision seems to be a miscalculation.

This miscalculation has already done damage, causing an incredibly emotionally difficult time for Ms. Dietrick and her students. Some of those students were moved to write out their messages of support to keep Ms. Dietrick at FLC. Please, read the words of these students and review our numbers to see that we need both of our amazing special ed coordinators. Please, make this right and preserve Ms. Dietrick's position.

Ms. Dietrick has supported me and has helped me with my algebra classes, which I consider to be my most difficult class. She has motivated me to try harder and ever since, my grades have went up because her and her support she helps me when I'm confused. She has helped me excel forward. She is also one of the very few teachers I trust and that I can talk to when I'm confused on work or having a hard time. It would be a great shame to not see her and for her not to help me for the rest of my time in FLC saying this I hope u reconsider and let her stay she is honestly one of the best teachers I have had the pleasure of working with. I truly believe Ms. Dietrick can help me and many other kids succeed and grow.

-FLC Sophomore

Dear School District Of Philadelphia:

I was informed that one of my favorites at my school is being replaced by another teacher. I strongly believe that Ms.Dietrick should continue to teach at my school. Being as though I've only known her for two years, I believe that Ms.Dietrick is an excellent teacher and I believe that she enjoys teaching at Franklin Learning Center. She has helped me with many assignments besides math and English. She has taken her time to help me and guide me with assignments besides my school work. During this pandemic, I joined a writing contest to enhance my skill and passion for writing. Ms.Dietrick was the first person that I talked to, for guidance and advice. Even though my story wasn't a school assignment, she took her time out of her day to edit and give feedback on my story. For her kindness and patience Ms, Dietrick's helped my story receive the most votes and I happily won that month's writing contest. Ms.Dietrick also helped me get recognition and acknowledgment for an AP class next year. Without Ms. Dietrick's help I wouldn't in a million years would I feel smart enough or even confident enough to be accepted into an advanced class for English. With all the inconsistent things that going on in my life Ms. Dietrick is the one person that I can rely on and I believe my classmates can agree.

-FLC Sophomore

Signed:

- Louis Fantini, English & Social Studies Teacher
- Clare Luebbert, Social Studies Teacher
- Kimberly Musallam, Social Studies Teacher
- Colin Sharp, Instrumental Music Teacher
- Kayti Arthur, Science Teacher
- James Arleth, Roster Chair & CS Teacher
- Damon Bennett, English/ESL Teacher
- HeeYoung Yim, Art Teacher
- Fevian Awad, Science Teacher
- Christine Garvey, English Teacher
- Brian Kelly, Health and Physical Education Teacher
- Renée Roettenbacher, Spanish Teacher

- Constance Baker, Health and Physical Education
- Dana Williams, Dance Program and Social Studies Teacher
- Donna Bassler - Hart, Teacher of English
- Lisa Croddy, English/ESL Teacher
- Erin Flynn-Klepczynski, Medical Assistant Teacher
- Amy Garcia, French Teacher
- Cathy Fox, Math teacher
- Megan Condit-Shaw, Counselor
- Andres Gonzalez, Graphic Design, Photography, & Web Design Teacher
- Cristian Sulea, Math teacher
- Matt Socci, Special Education Teacher
- Danbi Yi, English & Social Studies Teacher
- Colin Chrestay, English & Social Studies Teacher
- Heidi Kern, English & Spanish Heritage Teacher
- Xiaojuan ke, math teacher
- Jessica Way, CTE Teacher
- Thomas Magliaro, Social Studies Teacher
- Michael Gardner, Business Administration Teacher
- Jennifer Basham, English Teacher
- Frances Peagler, Biology/AP Biology
- Theole Feuillet, Chemistry & Sheltered Biology Teacher
- Honey Polis-Bodine, CTE Teacher
- Victoria.R.Saganti, Math Teacher
- Amy Lee, Social Studies Teacher
- Hung Phan, Math Teacher
- Asmaro Gist, School Counselor
- Thomas Bailey, Chemistry Teacher
- Julia McComie-ESOL Program Coordinator/Teacher
- Anna Hatzianeou-English Teacher
- Robin Vann Lynch, History Teacher
- Lidia Udowenko, Bilingual Counselor
- Christina Xiao Whitt, Art Teacher

Re: Public comment- Universal Bluford Charter School

From : Joann Montgomery [REDACTED]

Wed, Apr 21, 2021 03:50 PM

Subject : Re: Public comment- Universal Bluford Charter School**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Members of the School Board

I am an employee of Universal Bluford Charter School. I am sending this letter to express my concerns for the Non-Renewal of

Universal Bluford Charter School. I work in Autistic Support as Classroom Assistant. There is so much we do as educator for

our scholars such as: teach, empathize, encourage and nourish their minds and ideas for growth and enforce our scholars to receive the best education at Bluford.

Our parents depend on us as educators to comply to the needs and well being of their children. I work with Autistic Support for 10 years and

enjoy so much of it. My greatest joy is when our scholars return home to Bluford to thank us for the guidance and support that came with

love and open arms. Bluford have so much to provide for our scholars and the community. Our Pal program which my grandsons continue

to volunteer and be a part of. Pal gives our scholars the opportunity to grow and become young men, respecting themselves and those

in authority. Pal interacts with our scholars in the building and outside monitoring the schoolyard at dismissal and keeping our community safe.

The After school program reflects the arts and academic giving our scholars a chance to express their talents and capabilities. Throughout

the years I have observed the growth of our school and scholars. During this pandemic Bluford as a family, we all had to step up to the

plate to work harder and smarter. Bluford and the families of our children have a strong relationship, we all come together to do what

Is necessary to strive forward. It would be devastating to the community to loose for what we have accomplish over the years at Bluford.

As an educator I am asking the School Board to reject the Charter School office recommendation and grant Universal Bluford Charter

School renewal under Universal Management. Thank you

Disclaimer

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Written testimony for Occupational Therapy Staffing & Workload

From : Bevin Journey [REDACTED]

Wed, Apr 21, 2021 03:54 PM

Subject : Written testimony for Occupational Therapy Staffing & Workload 1 attachment**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
DO NOT CLICK links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and are expecting the email.

Dear Board Members,

Attached, please find the written testimony for the 4/22/2021 BOE meeting, submitted by the Occupational Therapists.

Additionally, we welcome questions about school occupational therapy from Members of the Board - the following therapists specifically volunteered to answer any questions you may have:

Kira Horning: [REDACTED]

Bevin Journey: [REDACTED]

Sharon Krause: [REDACTED]

Jenny Nguyen-Madera: [REDACTED]

Tammy Schneider: [REDACTED]

Thank you for your time,

Bevin Journey, MS, OTR/L

 **3_16 BOE letter (1).pdf**
459 KB

3/16/2021

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

We are writing to you today as the district's practicing, school-based occupational therapists (OTs), to again ask that the board lend its support in our ongoing fight for adequate OT staffing; by ensuring that this is reflected in the upcoming budget.

The model of occupational therapy utilized in this district is outdated, inefficient, and unjust. There are currently 33 therapists serving the thousands and thousands of students who require specialized services; and while some new therapists have been hired recently; most are replacing contractors, retirees, and therapists who moved out of school-based practice. The number of therapists providing services has remained relatively stagnant for as long as our most senior members can recall. A stagnant number of providers in the face of ever increasing demands means that our ability to provide quality, individualized services has been severely limited, as well.

To say that the same model of occupational therapy that worked in 1991 still works in 2021 is irresponsible. As the Board of Education - it is your duty to ensure that students are educated in an equitable manner. OTs provide therapy to support student access to their curriculum: we modify and adapt materials, build hand and eye skills, help students build the sensory and emotional regulation skills to face their day. Occupational therapists are like the glasses that stand between a student's eyes and their book - if a child does not have the proper tools to access their learning, how can we expect them to achieve?

The number of students requiring OT service and the amount of work related to those services, have increased year after year. Occupational therapists have been advocating for a "workload" model to be written into our upcoming union contract that would create true equity by taking into consideration individualized student needs- but the first step to creating a just model would be to simply **hire more therapists**.

Attached with this letter are graphics outlining the vast disparity between Philadelphia and other comparable districts. As you can see - even other nearby, urban school districts provide a *vastly* better student:therapist ratio; OTs in SDP carry double to triple the number of students as other districts - which in practice means that none of our students get the equitable services they deserve. Additionally, in support of the Boards Goals & Guardrails, we've outlined ways OT can support student achievement in all of these areas.

Finally, there is no way to explain all the benefits of School Occupational Therapy in this letter or 2 minute spoken testimony, so I implore you to reach out to talk to the practicing OTs to schedule time to hear about the services we provide to our students and communities first hand. You will find therapists' contact info along with this email.

Sincerely,

School District of Philadelphia Occupational Therapists:

Josie Bachman, OTD/OTR/L

Tiffany Cooper, MS, OTR/L

Amy Gaines, MS, OTR/L

Angela Hankins, MS, OTR/L

Sharon Krause, MS, OTR/L

Cecelia Manser, OTR/L

Nicole Perez MOT, OTR/L

Tzvi Schwartz, MS, OTR/L

Jenna Szoke, MS,OTR/L,DIR-FCD

Beth Wilbert, MS, OTR/L

Kathryn Carlin, MS, OTR/L

Melvin Daniels, MOT, OTR/L

Kira Horning , MS, OTR/L

Paulette Johnson, OTR/L

Monica Lancit, MS, OTR/L

Nicole Minnett, MS, OTR/L

Leora Robinson OTR/L

Tenesha Shaw Mason, OTD/OTR/L

Catalina Tobin, OTD, OTR/L

Abigael Clarkson, MOT, OTR/L

Karrienne Fuller MS, OTR/L

Roger Gerstl MSOT/L

Bevin Journey, MS, OTR/L

Mary Ludwig, MS, OTR/L

Jenny Nguyen-Madera, MS, OTR/L

Tammy Schneider, MOTR/L

Bettina M Specia, MEd, OTR/L

Stephanie Tosso, MOT, OTR/L

A Comparison: The Occupational Therapist Student Caseload

Philadelphia School District
1 occupational therapist can
hold a caseload of **65-85**
students.

Baltimore City
OT caseload 35-45 students

Baltimore County
OT caseload 35-40 students

Prince George's County
OT caseload 35-45 students

Camden City Schools
OT caseload 30-40 students



Occupational therapists in the Philadelphia School District can see nearly
189% more students compared to OTs in other districts.

Board Goals & Guardrails: How OTs can Support Success

Reading & Math Goal OT Can:

- Help students build fine motor, visual-motor, & sensory processing skills to: hold a pencil, write letters and numbers, turn pages of a book, align math problems, use manipulatives, etc. - ***OTs are specialists in motor skills***
- Build a sensory routine to foster attention to instruction through multi-sensory classroom activities and learning experiences - ***OTs are specialists in sensory processing skills***
- Identify & support students who require accommodations to succeed with state ELA & Math work & assessments - ***OTs are specialists in accommodations, modifications, and assistive technology***

College & Career Goal OT Can:

- Help students with disabilities explore postsecondary programs, supports, and accommodations as part of their transition plan - ***OTs are a critical member of a transition team***
- Develop a program tailored to student's individual strengths and skills; adapt tasks, incorporate technology, and modify the environment to enable participation - ***OTs are highly skilled task analyzers***
- Work with teams to address & build the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial skills needed for post-high school success

Welcoming & Supportive Schools Guardrail OT Can:

- Adapt environments to ensure access and inclusion for all students, regardless of disability.
- Work with schools to create sensory-friendly learning environments
- Fulfill mental health practitioner roles and promote mental health at the district, school, and individual student levels

Enriching & Well-Rounded School Experiences Guardrail OT Can:

- Ensure inclusion of students with disabilities in co-curricular opportunities - ***OTs are experts in promoting meaningful experiences***
- Support students in identifying and accessing extracurricular programs that align with their strengths and interests

Partnering with Parents/Family Members Guardrail OT Can:

- Collaborate with parents and caregivers on strategies to facilitate carryover of skills learned at school, especially those related to movement, feeding, dressing skills - ***OTs are specialists in activities of daily living***
- Ensure families can participate in developing and addressing meaningful student goals

Addressing Racist Practices Guardrail OT Can:

- Provide appropriate OT services to all students who are eligible and demonstrate the need for these services - ***OTs provide a federally mandated service that ALL students, regardless of race, should have access to***
- Provide OT services at a frequency/intensity that is based on evidence and that is sufficient to meet the student's educational needs (not based on staffing/therapist availability)
- Complete work within specified timeframes as defined by the law to ensure timely access to services for all students

THE CASE FOR ADEQUATE OT STAFFING

Occupational therapists have a broad scope of practice that allows us to support all of the Board's Goals & Guardrails. However, with inadequate staffing, our role has been limited to addressing only the most basic student needs, for the most severely impacted students only.

UNIVERSAL BLUFORD CHARTER SCHOOL

From : [REDACTED]

Wed, Apr 21, 2021 04:06 PM

Subject : UNIVERSAL BLUFORD CHARTER SCHOOL**To :** schoolboard@philasd.org**Reply To :** [REDACTED]

WARNING: This message originated from outside the School District of Philadelphia.
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Dear Board of Education,

I am asking that you vote against the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Bluford Charter School's Charter.

As Philadelphia's only Black charter management organization, Universal Family of Schools understands our community and has done an excellent job serving our families. Furthermore, because there have been reports of systemic biases in the school district's processes to renew charter schools, no school should be recommended for non-renewal until this matter is investigated and resolved.

There are many reasons our family supports renewing Universal Bluford Charter School's charter, but the most important reason is that Universal Family of Schools does far than educate our scholars. They teach our scholars the importance of good character and integrity. That community and family are building blocks for a successful future. It's what makes our nation strong.

My name is John E. Chappelle, Sr. I can be reached at [REDACTED]. My email address is [REDACTED]

In closing, I again ask that you do not support the School District of Philadelphia Hearing Officer's recommendation to non-renew Universal Bluford Charter School's operating charter.

Yours truly,

John E. Chappelle, Sr
