

# Campus Community School

Campus Community High School  
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Monday, November 7, 2011

## **Public Statement re: Prospective Closing of Campus Community High School**

The Board of Campus Community School (CCS) expects to vote Wednesday, November 16, 2011, on a finance committee proposal, to close Campus Community High School (CCHS) effective June 8, 2012.

Subsequent to an affirmative vote, CCS will become a K-8 program in 2012-13, with the addition of a Kindergarten class to the elementary program, a long-standing goal.

Provision will be made for rising 12<sup>th</sup> graders to complete academic studies via CCHS in the 2012-13 school year. Required courses will be supplemented with internships, dual enrollment in college coursework (at Wesley, DSU and DTCC), and related educational experiences. As a result, that means only current 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders will be required to make decisions to transfer to other high schools.

“Closing of Campus Community High School after this year has become inevitable,” said Board President Marc Cote’. “Not only has it never achieved financial self-sufficiency, instead requiring a subsidy from the elementary and middle school revenues and operations, but growing competition from other charter schools truncate its ability to grow and thrive as a self-sustaining high school.”

“Our stakeholders and friends should know this is not an action we want to take, we’ve searched for alternatives, but, in the end, regretfully, this really is the only path open to us.”

“Having said that, I want to provide the highest level of accolades to our faculty and staff at CCHS who have accomplished so much with so little, marshalling great results from very limited resources and working in a newer charter school environment,” he added.

The prospective closing is the result of discussions that have taken place over the last 2 years at the Board level, and with senior administrators, Mr. Cote’ added. Formal vote to close CCHS is expected at the Board’s next regular meeting on Wednesday, November 16th. A special strategic planning meeting of the Board on November 14th will review and consider critical issues connected to the closing.

“Each and every one of us is pained by this decision,” said Patricia “Trish” Hermance, CCS administrator. “CCHS has been the object of our hopes and dreams, and many who have graduated have gone on to be very successful members of their communities. The small size of the school, and the level of personal attention we’ve provided, has allowed many to achieve in a way that has exceeded expectations.”

“This closing has become inevitable frankly because, without capital funds for a building, we cannot find the way to provide the facilities and the instructional resources to successfully meet the needs of our 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students,” she said. CCS’ revenue

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constraints have been exacerbated by a series of other developments outside the CCS community, among them...

The removal of CCS elementary and middle school programs from the campus of Wesley College, where they had effectively enjoyed a subsidy equal to \$300,000 for the capital value of the annual space usage;

The announced plans of Delaware State University to open a Kent County STEM (Science, Technology and Mathematics) charter school in the 2013-14 school year that will compete for similar students as CCHS.

The announced plans of a Kent County group headed by a veteran to open a Kent County military charter high school similar to the very successful Delaware Military Academy charter high school in New Castle County.

"Delaware's public charter schools get no capital funding from the State of Delaware, unlike other public schools, despite the success of charter school education in the First State," said Lisa McMasters, a Board member who has helped lead the initiative to study the future of CCHS. "Effectively, to meet our capital needs, we have to reallocate funds from operations which other Delaware public schools are able to use to pay for educational staff, administration and operations," she added.

CCS opened for the 1998-99 school year with grades 1-8 on the campus of Wesley College, where some educational faculty joined with leading Kent County parents to launch the school. Today, CCS is home to approximately 375 students in grades 1-8, although the 8<sup>th</sup> grade has been integrated with the high school grades since the CCHS' opening in the 2002-03 school year. Approximately 205 students attend the high school's grades 9-12, while most Delaware high schools enrollments range between 750-2000 students.

Ms. Hermance said that with the closing of the Wesley College facilities for CCS next June, CCS' estimates that 415 students grades K-8 will be moved to the Pear Street facility that has been home to the high school. The Pear Street facility, which formerly was the home to ILC and Playtex operations, will undergo modest renovations to accommodate its new elementary population.

"CCS was fortunate to receive a generous offer of short-term space at the Dover AFB, but, given both the short term nature as well as the financial and market-focused issues, acting on that offer would only postpone the inevitable," said Robert Elder, a Board member and former bank president who now works for Santora CPA Group, a leading Delaware public accounting firm.

"Many of us have watched with concern the fragile situation regarding funding and operations of Delaware charter schools," Mr. Elder added. "This Board did not want to add to the 'casualty list' that exists principally for the capital reasons outlined by Ms.

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McMasters, but rather we felt the highest obligation to act ethically, prudently and with foresight to serve the interests of our students and parents, as well as taxpayers.”

“This Board, and our Administration, is committed to a successful transition over the next 9-12 months,” said Andrew Lloyd, Board Vice President who also is a professor at Delaware State University and the father two CCHS alumni. “The reason for the timing and promptness of our action is to allow our CCHS students who wish to transfer to other schools for the next school year to have sufficient notice to make an informed decision through school visits, interviews and related activities. We will do whatever we can do to help them.”

Some job losses may occur, but given the opportunity to reassign some faculty and staff, plus the addition of the Kindergarten program, we hope to minimize the losses. “With the guidance of CCS’ attorney, we’re presently working to develop that process for faculty and staff rationalization to accommodate the reduced personnel need,” added Board member John Leone, a former senior administrator and interim superintendent at the Capital School District.

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