

INDIANA CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD
FALL 2019
Public Hearings

Date & Location	Board Members	ICSB Staff	Number of attendees	Schools Discussed	Applicant Representative
November 18, 2019 Excel Center – South Bend		James Betley Bridgett Abston Nicole Hornyak	0	Excel Center – South Bend	Cindy Cavanaugh, Justin Zobrosky
November 19, 2019 Excel Center – Noblesville		James Betley Bridgett Abston Nicole Hornyak	1	Excel Center – Noblesville	Anne Davis, Steve Dillon
November 20, 2019 Indianapolis Public Library – Central Branch		James Betley Bridgett Abston Nicole Hornyak	2	Indianapolis STEAM Academy, PLA @ 103, JRPLA High School	Yvonne Bullock, Earl Phalen
November 21, 2019 St. Joseph Public Library - Western Branch	Virginia Calvin	Nicole Hornyak Ryan Preston	11	Purdue Polytechnic High School – South Bend	Scott Bess
November 25, 2019 Emmerich Manual High School		James Betley Bridgett Abston Nicole Hornyak	236	Emma Donnan Elementary and Middle School, Emmerich Manual High School, Thomas Carr Howe Community School	Derek Redelman

**South Bend Community School Corporation
Excel Center – South Bend
November 18, 2019**

Type	Excel Center – South Bend		
	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Public Hearing	0	0	0
Email	3	0	0
Letters	0	0	0
Phone	0	0	0
Total	3	0	0

Email comments

Alyssa Jackson, The Crossing School of Business and Entrepreneurship – SUPPORT

- I wanted to reach out on how much the Excel Center benefits adults in South Bend, Indiana. I am the School Operations Coordinator for The Crossing School of Business and Entrepreneurship in South Bend where we service high school age students 14 to 18 years old. We have had a wonderful relationship with Excel Center. If a student is unable to fit into our program due to age and/or availability we are able to send them to Excel; where we know they will be taken care of by caring and professional staff. Justin Zobrosky, Director, is always communicative and willing to go above and beyond to reach a struggling adult student. They have helped adults get their diplomas and become a contributing member of the South Bend Community. Excel Center is giving back to South Bend in a big way.

Marla Godette, Mentoring Moments, LLC – SUPPORT

- My name is Marla Godette. I am writing in support of the renewal of the Charter for Excel Center - South Bend, IN. This organization has been very beneficial to the clients that I have served in various capacities as well as to other community members that I have heard from. Excel Center - South Bend, IN has continued to demonstrate professionalism along with care and concern for the students they serve as well as their staff and administrators. The students verbalize being respected and able to feel as if they are cared for while learning and the staff verbalize the training and support offered to them has helped to improve their interactions with students as well as with each other. I will continue to refer students to Excel Center - South Bend, IN as well as offer support to this organization in any way that I can personally or professionally. I support this organization continuing with their Charter so they may continue to grow and advance in supporting the adult community of South Bend, IN with continued education.

Lex Dennis, Lifelong Learning – SUPPORT

- My name is Lex Dennis and I'm the Director of Lifelong Learning for the Drucker Institute. We are working in South Bend to help make it into a city of lifelong learning. Through our work, we have found willing partners in Goodwill and its Excel Center here in town. From collaborating on pilot programs, to co-designing strategies to help those facing multiple barriers, to getting boots-on-the-ground insight from

customers, the Excel Center has been an outstanding resource for our work. I am in full support of the renewal of the South Bend Excel Center's charter. I'm hopeful that, through your good judgement, they will be able to continue their important and necessary work within our community.

Kate Lee, South Bend Regional Chamber Talent Engagement Director – SUPPORT

- I am pleased to send this communication in support of The Excel Center – South Bend. As director of talent engagement for the South Bend Regional Chamber, I am regularly engaged in conversations about the workforce challenges facing our employers. We know the skills gap will not be filled just by students in the traditional high school (or even college) graduation pipeline. We must find ways to engage those who have exited out of traditional education – and The Excel Center does just that. The services and support they offer are exactly what these students need. Transportation, childcare, and food are all barriers they knock down. These barrier breakers, combined with life coaches and face-to-face instruction, set these students up for success as they move on to their next steps. The Chamber appreciates the work the coaches put in to instill soft and hard life skills and guide students toward programs and credentials that provide opportunities for individual growth and help meet local workforce needs. This foundation gives students the self-confidence to continue growing and working to achieve their life and career goals. We look forward to The Excel Center's continued growth and appreciate the important role they play in the South Bend Region's education system.

**South Bend Community School Corporation
Excel Center – Noblesville
November 19, 2019**

Type	Excel Center – Noblesville		
	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Public Hearing	1	0	0
Email	0	0	0
Letters	0	0	0
Phone	0	0	0
Total	1	0	0

Public Hearing Comments

Nancy Chance, Good Samaritan Network, Inc. – SUPPORT

- We give out Excel Center program materials every day. We are currently working with Ivy Tech to get a \$5000 grant through them. I hope that we are able to double down, many people lost their job in the 2007 recession. Now some of the kids who are coming out of school don't know how to navigate, and we are trying to simplify and help the students out. Dan and I have a plan for the students here. We know it may take 18-24 months for students to complete. Many have graduated through the Excel Center. We're all out it and all about what you have done here. We help feed, clothe and provide holiday gifts for approximately 3,000 families last year in Hamilton County. We know inch by inch it's coming along, and the Excel Center is a big part.

Indianapolis Public School Corporation
Phalen @ 103
November 20, 2019

Type	Phalen @ 103		
	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Public Hearing	1	0	0
Email	0	1	0
Letters	0	0	0
Phone	0	0	0
Total	1	1	0

Public Hearing comments

Claire Pope, Parent Advocate Phalen Leadership Academies

- I am a parent advocate for PLA. I have been with the school for four and a half years, and I started working as a Teacher Assistant in the classrooms. I'm not sure what to present. Phalen was selected to take over 103, and it was much needed. Both my son and daughter came out of 103. They are both adults now. The first thing I noticed when I came back to the school after Phalen had taken over was the light. My children had gone back and said when they visited there was a darkness over the school. The environment has been changed, and it can have the biggest influence because it affects your attitude and moods. Phalen came in and cleaned up the building, he focused on the culture. Phalen's mission is excellence, character and making an impact on your community. They have worked with scholars, families and the staff. Where are they now? I started working with kids in the 2nd grade, and they are 6th graders now. They are being pushed, despite the test scores, the learning experience of scholars is to be embraced. They have ongoing knowledge of family commitment and we can see the growth with our scholars. I do know that this is a neighborhood school. It is communicated highly within the east side neighborhood. Elementary students can transition to the middle school, so what has been embraced can continue on. The middle school is being filled with IPS employees, and they are working closely together. It is working and they are working with the scholars, families and community to provide a quality education.

Email comments

Kristin McMurtrey

- Please consider a full stop on approving more school applications at a time when Indiana is not able to fully fund the schools it has. Thank you.

Indianapolis Public School Corporation
JRPLA High School
November 20, 2019

Type	JRPLA High School		
	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Public Hearing	0	0	0
Email	0	1	0
Letters	0	0	0
Phone	0	0	0
Total	0	1	0

Email comments

Kristin McMurtrey

- Please consider a full stop on approving more school applications at a time when Indiana is not able to fully fund the schools it has. Thank you.

Indianapolis Public School Corporation
Indianapolis STEAM Academy
November 20, 2019

Type	Indianapolis STEAM Academy		
	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Public Hearing	0	0	0
Email	24	1	0
Letters	1	0	0
Phone	0	0	0
Total	25	1	0

Email comments

Patricia Dean

- I am in support of Indy STEAM Academy.

Renee Johnson

- I support of Indy STEAM.

Edith Coley

- I am in favor/support Indy STEAM Academy.

Leroy Coley

- I am in favor/support Indy STEAM Academy.

Renee Ordone

- I am in favor and strongly support Indy STEAM Academy in its efforts to provide a charter school that will expose students to career pathways in STEM. Indy STEAM Academy has an innovative approach to learning science, technology, engineering, and math with the arts.

Delores Walker

- I support Indy STEAM Academy.

Mollie Richards

- I am in favor and strongly support Indy STEAM Academy in its efforts to provide a charter school that will expose students to career pathways in STEM. Indy STEAM Academy has an innovative approach to learning science, technology, engineering, and math with the arts.

Kristin McMurtrey

- Please consider a full stop on approving more school applications at a time when Indiana is not able to fully fund the schools it has. Thank you.

William Bullock

- I am in favor/support Indy STEAM Academy.

Rose Lee

- I support the Indy STEAM Charter School. It will be very beneficial to the students and community. Students will have many opportunities to grow academically.

Tanya Peterson

- I am in favor and support Indy STEAM Academy in its efforts to encourage students with an innovative approach to learning math with the arts, science, and technology. Also, this charter school will expose students in early grades to career pathways in STEM. Thank you for your consideration.

Keith Wilson

- I am in favor/support of Indy Steam Academy in its efforts to provide a charter school that will expose students to career pathways in STEM.

Eliana Bujwalo-Nowak

- I am in favor/ support Indy STEAM Academy.

Jeff Worthington

- I am in favor and support the Indy stem academy.

Breana Davis

- I am in favor/support Indy STEAM Academy charter school.

Ramona McNeil

- I am in favor.

Kamilah Gillispie

- I support STEM academy.

Ashaki Lewis

- I am support of Indy STEM academy

Peter Lewis, Jr.

- I am support of Indy STEM academy

Anika Lewis

- I am support of Indy STEM academy

Ninah Lewis

- I am support of Indy STEM academy

Arlenda Murphy

- I am for the INDY STEAM ACADEMY. Thank you

Shelia Boyd

- I am for starting the Indy Steam Academy. I am both a community member and a supporter of this project.

Delsie Boyd

- I am in support of the Indy STEAM Academy.

Melissa McNeil Hammonds

- I am in favor/support Indy STEAM Academy.

Letters

Paul Ardayfio, Indianapolis President, National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Engineers

- This letter is written in favor of and support for Indianapolis (Indy) STEAM Academy. As a neuroscientist and Clinical Advisor at Eli Lilly, adjunct Professor, board member for numerous STEM organizations, consultant and business owner, I understand the need and importance of nurturing and preparing students especially underserved minority students and underrepresented students like girls to acquire careers in the STEM workplace. I am excited about the work that Dr. Bullock is doing to provide a charter school that focuses on helping students develop a deep understanding on STEM content and providing hands-on learning opportunities for student to explore science and create products and new technology that will solve real world problems. I look forward to helping Dr. Bullock acquire STEAM Ambassadors/volunteers from our organization who will serve as mentors, provide job shadowing, assist with career fairs, and help students with their STEAM projects and design challenges. Indy STEAM Academy will provide a unique opportunity for students in the Indianapolis area and hope that this academy will be authorized to help students and their families have a better quality of life and prepare future generations of students for the STEM workforce.

Nan Goggin, Dean, Herron School of Art and Design

- I am writing to let you know that I have been in beginning discussions with Dr. Yvonne Bullock on possible ways that Herron School of Art and Design might collaborate and possibly partner with Indy STEAM Academy. We are particularly interested in how we might work with the visual arts of drawing, painting and sculpture and the potential to teach or work with design thinking strategies.

**South Bend Community School Corporation
Purdue Polytechnic High School – South Bend
November 21, 2019**

Type	Purdue Polytechnic High School – South Bend		
	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Public Hearing	1	3	0
Email	0	5	0
Letters	0	1	0
Phone	0	0	0
Total	1	9	0

Public Hearing Comments

Laurie McGowan

- I am opposed to this application for many reasons. They have an unproven model, no graduates from their Indianapolis school, the situation of the South Bend district, and the proposed referendum upcoming. This seems like adding a risky venture. We are currently scrambling to get our schools the way they are. The model in the application (authentic learning, cognitive concepts) I'm fairly certain is already being applied in our schools. We already have 20 CTE programs in SBCSC. This school could be duplicating or possibly draining resources. I reviewed the application and something that troubles me is the use of marketing speak. The one that gets me is 21st Century skills. We are already 20 years in, this target student population has not existed in any other century. I want more detail and more data. I think this concept is great to talk about, a few years from now when we have data, particularly from the schools already operating in Indy.

Todd Cummings, Superintendent South Bend Community School Corporation

- As South Bend Superintendent, on behalf of the SBCSC Board, I am thrilled to report we are progressing toward a partnership with Purdue Polytechnic. We are hoping this is one of the first Purdue Polytechnic High Schools to enter into a partnership with.

Don Wheeler

- I reviewed the application online and had some concerns. The application didn't show a real understanding of the area stating that all west side students feed into Washington, and that Washington is a deficit. Washington is at a C average and students have choices to pick from. The project based learning programs sound promising, but Riley High School already offers those. Half of the grade is spent online testing, that seems like a lot of computer time. I noticed their curriculum is being handled by Edmentum. If you Google the, the only things that come up are items that they have published. The application written can best be described as an experimental program, the applicant's current school has less than three years of data and a small number of students. There is no way to predicate success here. As a parent of a high school student I feel discomfort about this application. It's already underway in Indianapolis, but without data it is hard to make a good decision.

Linda Wolfson

- My name is Linda Wolfson. Thank you for the opportunity to comment about the possible impact of the proposed Purdue Polytechnic High School South Bend. The views I will share have been developed by important life experiences. I am the mother of children who were educated within the South Bend Community School Corporation. I am a retired high school teacher. I taught within the South Bend Community School Corporation. Teaching was a second career for me. After completing a B.A. in Biology, I was employed for more than 20 years in medical research laboratories, first at the University of Pittsburgh and then at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C. After the birth of my youngest child, I completed a Teacher Certification Program at Bowie State College in Maryland. Subsequently, we relocated to South Bend and I joined the Science faculty at John Adams High School. Because of my experiences in research laboratories, my Principal at Adams asked me to play a leading role in developing a Tech Prep program at Adams. Tech Prep was a federally funded, inter-disciplinary program designed for students who were underachieving in traditional classes. I used project-based learning and incorporated exciting field trips to work sites applying biological concepts and methods. Those were my most successful years of teaching. I believe that my employment experiences, especially my involvement with the Tech Prep program, give me an important perspective with which to evaluate the program of Purdue Polytechnic High School. When I learned about the possible Purdue Polytechnic High School, I was excited by its possibilities. I thought I might be able to support it, despite the fact that it is a charter school and I am a solid advocate for supporting and improving the SBC SC. I read the application carefully, looking for the answers to two key questions. How will it impact our school corporation and will it offer our students opportunities that we can't provide? Our school corporation lost 700 students last year to charter schools in South Bend, to surrounding school districts, and to private schools benefiting from Indiana's voucher program. That had a significant effect upon the amount of money that the Corporation received from the State of Indiana. How could the loss of up to 100 students to a new charter be good for our Corporation? It would not and therefore I cannot support this application. To be fair, the options provided by policies of the Indiana State Legislature are not the only reason that parents choose other than traditional public-school options for their children. For many years, education activists in South Bend area identified problems that need to be addressed in our local schools. Some problems have been or are being corrected. I believe that others can and will be. My second question, as I reviewed the application, was whether Purdue Polytechnic would provide opportunities for our students that we can't afford to pass up. I don't think so. We currently have a medical magnet at Washington H.S., an engineering magnet at Riley High School, more than 20 CTE (Community and Technical) programs that have the option of earning dual credits at either Ivy Tech or Vincennes University, or earning industry certifications in a technical and STEM-related fields. The application for Purdue Polytechnic promises that it would serve as an "academic feeder system for Purdue University." The expectation expressed is that "Out of our initial class of 150 freshman students, we expect that over two-thirds of them will meet the criteria to be admitted to Purdue University." The application states that "students who meet the minimum targets of the SAT or ACT will receive direct admittance to the Purdue Polytechnic Institute in West Lafayette. Others will be admitted to one of 9 other campuses, one of which is located in South Bend. I believe in high expectations. However, I cannot trust expectations without any supporting evidence. There are currently two Purdue Polytechnic High Schools in Indianapolis. One is very new and, according to news reports, is having difficulty recruiting students. The high school located in the center of the City has not yet had time to graduate its first class. We don't yet know if they have successfully met their promise to serve as an academic feeder system for Purdue. I don't believe in making what could be empty promises, especially to our children. For these reasons, I encourage you to deny the charter application for a Purdue Polytechnic High School in South Bend.

Email comments

Julia Hyde

- South Bend high schools are losing enrollment, they have seat space in their high schools for at least 2000 students. Adding another high school to SB is a waste of money and resources. Also, PU Polytechnic in Indianapolis has not met their projections for enrollment. What's the proof SB would be different?

Laurie McGowan

- Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed PPHS in South Bend. I attended the 11/21 public meeting in South Bend. The 3-minute comment rule was not announced anywhere in advance and some who had prepared remarks were silenced by strict adherence to this rule, even though there were few in attendance and the meeting was quite short. For the sake of open and transparent communication, I would like to suggest that ICSB consider and adopt the following standards for future charter proposals (from the IPS Community Coalition's Recommendations for Innovation Application and Approval Process): Applications due at least 18 months prior to school year school will start as charter. There must be at least 6 months of community meetings with a minimum of 8 meetings before charter application can be approved by the district board. At least 90 days prior to 1st board presentation, all applications must be available in full for review on the district board website. I am opposed to the proposed PPHS charter in South Bend at this time for the following reasons: 1. SBCSC students already have access to over 20 CTE programs that include team and applied workplace learning. There is no analysis that identifies a specific need for this program. It is a marketing effort in order to recruit minority and low-income students into the Purdue Polytechnic Institute. 2. Neither of the existing Purdue Polytechnic High Schools in Indianapolis has produced a graduating class. There is not sufficient evidence that this model is effective or efficient. SBCSC is already coping with fiscal shortfalls. It is imprudent to add an unproven model to a system that is already stretched thin by budget constraints. 3. "Like many cities, an unacceptably small number of South Bend's students of color and students navigating poverty have the opportunity to succeed in today's workforce or pursue higher education. Despite their skills and potential, many of these students attended high schools that currently do not provide programs that support their success." This kind of rhetoric is not the substance one would expect to see in an application. PPHS wishes to justify its entry here based on a faulty premise that SB high schools "do not provide programs that support their success". PPHS in South Bend is at this time unneeded and unwanted. "PPHS South Bend will adopt a blending of secondary and post-secondary education with an infusion of industry leadership and participation. PPHS South Bend will utilize a rigorous STEM design-based curriculum delivered in career-focused learning environment." This is capricious marketing-speak. The program overview is intriguing but peer-reviewed studies that accurately describe and document successful outcomes from the proposed model would be in order before taking action. 5. The narrative implies that there is no project-based learning going on in SBCSC. Several of the CTE programs employ this type of learning so the claim is inaccurate. Further, both project-based- and problem-based-learning are commonly taught instructional methods in today's Schools of Education. Some teachers are regularly applying these methods, though not in formal or publicized programs. 6. PPHS in Indianapolis has had difficulty in meeting enrollment goals. (<https://www.wfyi.org/news/articles/purdue-polytechnic-high-school-north-posts-low-enrollment-data-asks-community-partners-for-help>) This gives the appearance that expansion into South Bend is an attempt to make up for the deficit in Indianapolis. Unfortunate remarks by Mitch Daniels recently went viral in the Twitterverse. Aside from the perceived racism, they further lead one to believe that PPHS is a well-funded marketing effort to recruit Pell Grant students to some Purdue programs. Commitment to the well-being of the students and their successful educational outcomes is not

evident. Further, Daniels is already pivoting toward adult workforce education in his remarks. As a South Bend community member, I am concerned that PPHS is just another short-term revenue stream that would benefit stealth investors more than it would enhance the educational experience of any potential South Bend students. The local business supporters of the application were few and very limited in representation of local industry. The application infers that there will be agreements with additional Purdue schools but these are not yet concrete. Similarly, there are no definite agreements with local industry for on-site learning and/or internships. Indiana took a large hit (over \$40 million) due to the failure of the Indiana Virtual Academy. This, combined with other recent charter school failures, indicates a greater need for stewardship of our scarce educational resources. It is difficult to imagine that anyone with fiduciary or other stewardship responsibility for public funds would agree to this charter in its current unsubstantiated state. Certainly the stakeholders in South Bend are not interested in offering their students' valuable secondary educational years for an unproven experiment. 7. The PPHS proposal ignores the NAACP's moratorium on charter school expansion. Thank you in advance for your careful consideration of these issues.

Don Wheeler

- I am a 28 year resident of South Bend and the father of a Junior at John Adams High School. I served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for children for about seven years. I have also volunteered as a mentor in the South Bend Community School Corporation. As my daughter approached school age I began to look deeply into public education and attendant issues nationwide. I am also quite familiar with the operations of our local schools and have written quite a bit about that. I am currently a member of the Finance Committee of the recently formed west side Empowerment Zone. South Bend had the first Indiana Charter School – Veritas Academy. It and the later Xavier Academy both were ultimately unsuccessful. There is one K-12 Charter company in operation currently – seemingly ignored in the application you are considering. The applicant indicates its need for being is to help a “target student population” of “underrepresented minority students” - particularly west side residents. It goes on to say that this group is fed on to Washington High School and implies (without detail) that Washington is in some way defective. In South Bend, any High School student can choose to attend any of the four High Schools with provided transportation. And as the applicant acknowledges, Washington's most recent state grade was a C. Average. I do know from my time as a CASA and having lived here 28 years, students in this group often suffer from deficits in reading and writing skills. Without rectifying those issues, any learning will be difficult. The application offers no awareness of this problem, let alone any strategy to address it. The part of their approach they spend the most time explaining sounds pretty similar to Project Based learning programs which failed at the short-lived New Tech High School here. It is now the focus of a magnet program at Jackson Middle School, where perhaps it will do better. That component also includes working in a local business. While I don't dispute that these internships (as they refer to them) would have value, they would also seem likely to be a handful to manage – given the necessarily small staff of a school of 100 students per grade level. Recruiting worthy businesses and monitoring these situations for each student would seem to require a significant investment in time. The other 50% of students' grades come from online testing via Edmentum. The implication is that students will spend half of their time “e-learning”. Online K-12 education has a dubious record generally. And the problem with researching Edmentum on a Google search is that they wrote almost everything that appears in the results. Most of that is about how much money they raise or make. Not helpful. And if this program is aimed at a group with struggling readers, what is the likely efficacy of online self-education for a student with poor reading/comprehension skills? That isn't explained. Perplexingly, the program they offer also requires students to make a lifetime career decision in the 10th grade, with scheduled reaffirmations. How many people do you know who felt capable of making that decision at age 15? And of that group, for how many did that

actually work out? Reviewing the course list, one discovers very narrow offerings. No team sports. No arts instruction of any kind. No dance, theater, visual arts, vocal music, instrumental music – in fact, nothing inviting individual creativity at all. Public education aspires to help our children grow into informed, productive, and at least reasonably comfortable citizens. Programs such as these are designed to produce workers for a specific industry, and nothing more. In fact, they reveal that their long term objective is to create a nation-wide network of “Charter Schools that will serve as an academic feeder system to Purdue University” But even if you think all that is OK, the application is written as though the applicant has decades of experience, fabulous test scores to tout, hundreds of graduates, and alums with high paying, rewarding careers. The reality is that it has had less than three years of experience, no graduates, and only one testing experience involving a very small number of students. It has had difficulty with the same enrollment goals in a much bigger city than South Bend. At this point, it can best be described as an experimental program. I’ll confess to some discomfort with placing our children in the position of guinea pigs in this experiment. The experiment is already under way in Indianapolis. I think that we should allow enough time to evaluate the results before endorsing an expansion. It’s hard to make good decisions without good data.

Cathy Fuentes – Rohwer

- I have deep concerns about expanding Purdue Poly to South Bend when they clearly have not fulfilled their enrollment or promise in Indy. The responsible thing to do would be to see that the school in Indy has fulfilled its promises first before further expansion. We also really should consider what opening another school via a charter--and thus spreading even thinner the limited resources for South Bend public schools--- would do to those public schools that are already struggling. Please vote 'no' on Purdue Poly. Thanks for your consideration.

Kristin McMurtrey

- Please consider a full stop on approving more school applications at a time when Indiana is not able to fully fund the schools it has. Thank you.

Dakota Hundelson

- I ask that you vote against allowing Purdue Poly to South Bend. It hasn’t fulfilled its enrollment promise in Indianapolis. Furthermore, the expansion of charter schools into any community destabilizes the local public schools, and the impact can be substantial.

Deborah Myerson

- I also have deep concerns about expanding Purdue Poly to South Bend. They clearly have not fulfilled their enrollment or promise in Indy. The responsible thing to do would be to see that the school in Indy has fulfilled its promises first before further expansion. We also really should consider how opening another school via a charter in South Bend--and thus spreading even thinner the limited resources for South Bend public schools- --would impact those public schools that are already struggling. Please vote 'no' on Purdue Poly.

Letters

Dalila Huerta

- I am writing to you today to express my disapproval of the proposed Purdue Polytechnic High School South Bend (PPHS South Bend). I am appalled that our local district superintendent, Dr. Todd Cummings, is in full support of this charter school, and urge you to consider why you should NOT approve the PPHS South Bend’s presence in our community. To begin, I question the application’s insistence that there exists a need for a STEM-based charter school in our community (p. 2), particularly to recruit our West side students. Perhaps the charter applicants are unaware and/or have failed to conduct appropriate community research, but the South Bend Community School Corporation already

offers Project Lead the Way (PLTW), Career and Technical Education (CTE), and Medical and Engineering Magnet programs throughout its district. While the Southeast neighborhood Riley High School is the dedicated STEM-focused school, ALL students from our district are eligible to apply. Therefore, West side students already have access to a high-quality STEM program, making PPHS South Bend a redundant effort. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, I reject the application's claim that PPHS South Bend will be well equipped to provide an adequate education for its target population of "underrepresented minority students" as it never lists ANY evidence of cultural competency training in its proposal. The Evidence of Capacity for the School Governance (p. 8) lists experience in the areas of school leadership and administration governance; curriculum, instruction, and assessment; financial business HR; performance management; parent and community engagement; facilities management; and legal compliance only—no mention of cultural competency, educational equity, or implicit bias training present. The listed qualifications for the future school principal (p. 10) likewise neglect to include cultural competency training as a basic requirement. Furthermore, while the application mentions that "[p]rior to charter authorization, the school leader will work closely with community organizations" (pp. 42–43), no such evidence of collaboration is found in the application outside of recruiting efforts. How will this school be equipped to oversee culturally responsive education for our students given this lacking set of skills and priorities and nonexistent community connections? Additionally, mentions of being a "restorative" school (p. 40) are undermined by the pitiful list of professional development opportunities offered before and AFTER the school opens. Any worthwhile education professional would be insulted by the meager one-time training in Restorative Practices, Trauma-Informed care, and Mental Health First Aid that the proposed schedule offers (pp. 52–53). These are not things you can learn in a single workshop or even a full day, but the careless treatment of crucial educational competencies belies the fact that these leaders are not and will not be well equipped to equitably meet the needs of our students. Educational equity is NOT attained by simply modeling "diversity" and "respect," or only through "positive interactions," or merely understanding cultural differences as the application implies on pages 28–29—a fact made glaringly obvious by the authors' misappropriated use of the culturally and religiously significant term "Dojo" throughout the application. Is this the type of school our community should trust? Where are the extensive trainings on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), implicit bias, anti-racism, and cultural competency? As a Restorative Justice Circle keeper and trainer, cultural educator, and parent, I am horrified that anyone would be asked to entrust their child to the care and "mentoring" of educators who have not received adequate training, or to leaders who deem these skills and competencies to be unimportant and unnecessary. The fact the PPHS South Bend students would earn admittance to Purdue University only furthers my concern and amplifies the harmful environment to which we would subject our students. Recruiting students for the sake of "diversity" does not lead to equitable outcomes, but only exposes our students to further racial violence and stress. I do not wish for our South Bend students to be treated as "rare creatures"¹ in this charter school or in the future at Purdue University, and I sincerely hope that you use your power to ensure that our students are not mistreated at the hands of ill-equipped educators and leaders. These highlighted issues are certainly issues that can be addressed and even perhaps rectified with dedicated time and effort, but I would never trust an organization who does not prioritize the cultural wellbeing of its students and community from the beginning to be able to carry out the immense work of educational equity. Please do not allow PPHS South Bend to cause further harm to our students and please oppose the opening of a new ill-equipped charter school in our community.

Indianapolis Public School Corporation
ReThink Forward Schools
November 25, 2019

Type	ReThink Forward Schools		
	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Public Hearing	52	0	0
Email	9	21	1
Letters	6	1	1
Phone	0	0	0
Total	67	22	2

Public Hearing Comments

Paige Pittman, Thomas Carr Howe Principal

- I support T.C. Howe applying for a charter. I went to a large school growing up and was fortunate to receive a top notch education. Children should be able to look to the future and follow their dreams, regardless of their zip code. After I graduated college I worked in a small school and a traditional public school. I am the Principal at T.C. Howe and I love the neighborhood. It is my 5th year at Howe, and now as Principal. The years at Howe have been transformational for me and the students. Mia hated coming to school, then turned into a girl who would smile every morning. She went on to tutor other students. Riley transferred to Howe because he was being bullied, and now he is in the JROTC. Isaah formed amazing relationships with his teachers, and now is at IU and wants to become a teacher. I am so proud of all the students. The point of the matter is that at Howe you have a committed school full of caring adults. Howe is more than a school, it is a family. We have students who want to be lawyers, athletes and teachers. I would like to submit a petition of 1001 signatures.

Dr. Susan Fries, Emma Donnan Principal

- Emma Donnan empowers students to become lifelong learners and critical thinkers. We hold them to high academic expectations, all of us, Parents, Staff, and CSUSA. Emma is now off of the failing list, and has received an A grade the past two years. We personalize, we focus on data and student centered instruction. Emma Donnan is the highest performing in IPS, and moving forward has to be with CSUSA. Our extra curriculars help students, we call them BEAR clubs. We have an afterschool program filled with active learning and life skills. We have active clubs, adventure clubs, and sports. I impress on you, there have been numerous times when parents have told me they are so thankful for a school where they know their child will succeed. In order for Emma Donnan to continue to flourish is it crucial to continue the positive work with CSUSA.

Mike Wingert, Emmerich Manual Principal

- I would like to submit 1,388 signatures of support. At Emmerich Manual we have 620 enrolled students who want to graduate from Manual. As you will hear, both staff and students approve our application. At Manual we prep students for after school by college pathways, Cambridge courses and partnering with Ivy Tech. This gives them a chance to go down their preferred path. Manual serves all students. Manual advances students and supports students. We graduate students. We offer fine arts, athletics and clubs, many of which are student created. We invite

anyone to come walk the halls. You will see that our students exude success. Whether it's because they are in proper uniforms, showing new students around or helping other students. This is our 3rd year of a C grade. Given the proper timeframe and support we will rise to the occasion. We have the ability to offer scholarships to students. Following me, you'll hear from students, alumni and staff. Don't allow this [non chartering] to happen. Please approve the application.

Major Bill Wells

- I am here on behalf of those in ROTC program who are making life what they should be. We have three keys to success; stay in school, stay fit and. What is the importance of ROTC to cadets? We started in 2012. The programs in Manual and Howe report directly to the 7th brigade, stationed out of Fort Knox. They have ability to be flexible in their training and with their curriculum. They have a chance to contribute and that helps create self-confidence, builds discipline, leadership, citizenship, it instills accountability. What would be the impact if the schools closed? It eliminates programs from these schools. Students can't go to other school and join ROTC, the funds aren't there, it eliminates a grad pathway for students who struggle with ISTEP. This could cause them to revert back to who they were. They have built a camaraderie with those on daily basis.

Angela Good, Teacher, Emma Donnan

- I've been a teacher at Emma Donnan since the beginning. I would like to address some concerns I have with IPS. Firstly, that the change in leadership has affected growth. Dr. Fries has spearheaded data driven instruction. She holds us accountable in leadership positions. Look at the test results for proof. She changed the discipline and culture at the school. Our Instructional Aides are the highest paid. As a teacher, I have always had all the supplies I've needed. Every student has their own iPad for use. In summary, don't let a board who can't govern their own schools take over.

Gordon Gordell

- I graduated 66 years ago. I spent one semester in this building. My wife graduated from Howe. I went to Army in Korea, then came back and went to business and law school. I ask sincerely that the Manual application be approved to become a charter school. The events when IPS lost the school were sad. They took pictures, paintings. The yearbooks were taken away from the kids. Now we provide them. The attitudes and academics here are at a state and national level. We have the JROTC here at Manual. It used to be you would walk the halls and see police breaking up fights, now you just see kids walking to class. Why should IPS get these schools back?

Alice Glover, President, Emmerich Manual Alumni President

- Well, Gordon said my speech. Emmerich Manual has been large part of south side since 1895. Many have benefitted from the education they received here. Many students came back as teachers. Manual does have one largest alumni organization. We provide scholarships for students. We just fixed signs, concession stand and the press box. Manual was abused by IPS. Under CSUSA they have improved, and students are getting a good education. Please approve so students can continue to succeed. I don't trust IPS to keep Manual open. They could shut it down in a heartbeat.

Martin Guys, Music Teacher, Emma Donnan

- I've been a part of Emma Donnan since 2016 and the program was not the same. Our first semester we had 8 working instruments. In three years, the music class has grown in number and resources. And our resources are improving. The excellence of the students and the achievement of the school has been supported by the administration and the community. I'm proud to be a teacher here both academically and musically, and I plan to continue to do so.

Steve Minton, Emmerich Manual Alumni

- My final vote is what is best for the students. When Manual became part of CSUSA I joined in, and I believed in the same practice. I implore you to accept the application. I don't trust IPS. Working on the board of IPS, they were not getting many things done. Kids now are dealing with more than we ever did. The approval of this is a stability factor. The neighborhood values go up, it's generational. There is huge community involvement, the football field, Garfield Park, financial classes. It would be a travesty for these kids if the applications are not approved.

Brittany Yanasak, Reading Specialist, Emmerich Manual

- I have been a teacher for 4 years here. This evening I have two students here who have agreed to let me tell their stories. Ashley came in and had crippling self-doubt, but she came here and had a support system and helped keep her focused. I taught Tyron in 8th grad, and his behaviors and grades were difficult. He was in my class for the next two years and I watched him find his voice as he continued through high school. I wish we could take credit, I work alongside the best staff. We come together every day because they are our kids. Your decision will affect us all, you have the power to change lives. Please approve the charters.

Sarah Hopkins, Math Teacher, Emmerich Manual

- I support Manual. I am a math instructor and it is my fourth year here. I have taught every math course here. I came to manual from a transition to teaching model. I chose manual for my placement. After 2 years, I wouldn't want to go anywhere else. The staff and administration see students and as people. They do not see student as test, they see each as unique. They decide what is best for themselves what would be the best start after high. Not all want to go to college, and for some it's the best choice. We are for dual credit choices in the degree of their choice. Right now they can earn college credit while in high they can take introduction to biology health and welding. Every student is push to do better and do more when they walk into our door.

Tony McGraw

- I was a 1977 Manual graduate. I was also air on staff for 5 years. Now I am a sub. I am here today to support chartering. I had a teacher growing up who let me stay with her for 4 years she bought me lunch and a chocolate bar every day. The connection between black and white didn't exist. I went into a career in education because of her. I urge the board the history of Manuel is creating relationship, and I still hold her dear today.

Reed Warren, Teacher, Emmerich Manual

- I taught social studies, but now I am the Department chair. I support Manual in their chartering, not for job security but what is happening here. Our students teach and challenge us as much as we teach them. Their true measure of worth is buried under test scores. We know that hot cocoa on a cold morning can change a student's whole day. They use economics in their everyday life, they teach me about food insecurity. Emmerich has the potential to be what the educational model should be.

Rob Roman, Football Coach, Emmerich Manual

- I have been here for 3 years. We have outstanding teachers who teach kids how to be their best. When I think about our students I get emotional. Students here go through so much that many adults would be scared of. Emmerich is the village that it takes to raise these children. The staff talks about success story, if we are not chartered those stories and. Our goal is to graduate the student. To do that Emmerich needs to have a charter. We have an outstanding staff who care and love these kids.

Carolyn McHugh, Senior Student, Emmerich Manual

- In May 2020 I will be walking across the stage with an honors diploma. My experience is not what I expected from here. I expected a big school and lots of students, but now with support and guidance it seems small. I was struggling with applications in credit the teachers and staff

are the ones here who have help. I now have 40 credits. If we were not chartered then what would happen to these students? Having a manual diploma it shows how much I have tried and learn. I am thankful for the staff and custodian and the student. If not for the teachers, I would not be up here today.

Antonio Christentery, Staff, Emmerich Manual

- We've been here the past 4 years as part of CSUSA both me and my wife. Since CSUSA students have been provided great education and support. Our daughter graduated manual and she is now at IU. I support the charters because they are doing good things at the school. I am proud to be a parent and a staff member.

Jessie Christentery, Staff, Emma Donnan

- I have been here before, during and after the takeover. Prior we were in F school for 6 years. It was scary here. Since the takeover, involvement has increased. Now the elementary school feeds into the middle school. As staff we have put time and love into this. Please accept the charter application.

Natalia Guzman, Parent

- I support the charter. I have 5 children at Emma. Emma is useful for more than education. My children came from IPS to Emma. Before the transfers, my son had behavior problems. Now he has received an award for the most improved. Two of my girls are on the cheerleading squad. Over the years I have only had positives with the school. I drive 15 miles a day, 75 miles a week to take them here because the teachers here work with me

Korina Morales, Student

- I was in IPS from kindergarten through fourth grade. I was behind in many things. my teachers here supported me even when I would put myself down. They put my education first. I'm not perfect, but I had teachers to help me get through things. If things were going on they were there to help. Even if I have an attitude my teachers still help me.

Carol Bratcher, Emmerich Manual Alumni

- I created and oversee the alumni program who help these kids. When we found out that the kids didn't have a essentials, I set up a go fund me then a Facebook page. Within 10 days we had met our goal. The community has wrapped around these kids. We have a fund raising yard sale year. Every time I go into the school the kids have always been polite to me. I have never felt unsafe. If they go back to IPS they will fail these kids. IPS shouldn't have an option to get back schools that they have failed. The decision needs to be what is best for these kids. Community parents and staff are all fighting for what's best for the kids. There is a large base that wants to keep it open for the kids.

Debi Williamson Shank, Vice-President, T.C. Howe Alumni Association

- I graduated from how in 1975 I am the vice president of the alumni Association of Irvington community. How was built for Irvington. I am here tonight for 3 reasons the kids, the staff and the community. How is like a second home for these kids it is where they feel most comfortable and most loved. You look at the staff that have been there and they have been there. The community is going back into the school. Students volunteer, the school opens the auditorium for movie night. My belief is to continue education I don't want these students to lose the love from the staff here.

Kama Carter, President, T.C. Howe Alumni Association

- I am president of our alumni Association. It is not in the school every day but we have people who has set up donation. We recognize those kids who are doing great things at this. I have been president for 5 years, we have raised money for scholarship for student with a GPA over

3.0. We have a celebration and handout envelope with money. We love our school and want it to continue, the community recognizes our association. They period

Joe Zwiebel, Teacher, Thomas Carr Howe

- I am an English teacher here at T.C. Howe. I am not native of Indiana, but I call myself a Hoosier because of Howe. I have been here for hours. You can see that the staff and teachers care about the students. What makes Howe special is the teachers here, they strive for greater things. I have been here for five years, and it has made me who I am. The teachers at Howe have pushed me. There have been days when I may have given up or shut down, but they supported me. Good days or bad, they have stuck by my side. The teachers who are here are better than my own parents. When students know home is not safe, I can go to Howe. They look at Howe as a home.

Abigail Bouwma, Special Education Teacher, Thomas Carr Howe

- This is my third year at how and now I work in special education. My English teacher used to ask us what is our 'why'. I do that with our students, and it reminds them why they still come to school each day. Some students responses have been, "Because my mom has been a single parent and I don't want that, In 4th grade I was told I was never going to be anything, I want to succeed to make my parents proud, I want to be able to take care of my parents when they're old, I want to be a physicist and black activist." I can think of no better place to continue educating and loving these students than T.C. Howe.

Kiva Parker, Senior Student, Emmerich Manual

- I support the approval for a charter. I am on track to graduate 3rd in my class. I have been at Manual for 3 ½ years, and have many positives. I have made many friends and connections. Ms. Hopkins and Ms. Sneed go out of their way to help students and raise money for students. Ms. Oliver helps me as well, just by listening and being considerate. Lastly, Mrs. Brown because she is no nonsense. Expectations for students from low income are bare, simply turn in your work and don't act up. Here they challenge you and you have to work.

Larry Whitmore

- I graduated Howe in 1970. This year is our class' 50th year reunion. I was the first in my family to go to college and get a Masters degree. I have been a part of the alumni board the past 3 years. We serve after school nutrition, and provide money through the alumni scholarship committee. It is nice to see the appreciation from students. We are helping prep students for advanced classes. Over the past 5 years I have attended sporting events. At Howe there is a great supportive atmosphere. It created a great environment for learning, and I am grateful for the staff at Howe and how much alumni are appreciated.

Duranda Watson, Instructional Assistant, Emmerich Manual

- I completed all 4 years of high school here I found a job on line for a receptionist. I am now an instructional assistant instead. I have seen this school change drastically. Students used to skip class and smoke in the bathroom, and few staff members returned each year. All of the staff here have pushed me and impacted my life in some way. We went from an F school to a C school in 3 years. I am proud to have gone here as a student, and now I am proud to be a staff member. This school is a second home to me.

Dylan Stewart, Student, Emmerich Manual (Read by Nora Evans)

- Before coming to manual I was bullied at my old school. Manual was the first school that made me feel like I belong. I felt a sense of community with the staff. Without them I would not be proud to walk around with my head held high.

Susan Seet, Reading Coach, Emma Donnan

- This is my sixth year at Emma I am currently a reading coach. The mission of Emma is written by many of the staff, our mission is to ensure student growth and success. We are proactive to ensure the growth of students. From the 16 to 18 SYs Emma's ELA growth is 23%.

Comparatively, IPS had a decline of 3.6% and the state had an average decline of 2%. Math growth increased 23%, while IPS had a 2% decline. The data demonstrate that the mission is working, we are walking the talk. We want to strengthen the community in which these children learn.

Bethany Stewart, Teacher, Emma Donnan

- This is my second year teaching. I taught at Noblesville and was rated highly affective now I teach at Emma Donnan. I have taught both elementary and middle school at Emma. I have seen many students improve, many made progress that passes other school. This gives me hope they will continue the growth, and continue the success. I am passionate for the work I do in students I teach. We are data driven and that helps move students. We have individual coaching and learning community. Teachers are able to grow in their teaching. Students conduct themselves in the classroom knowing it is safe to take risks and to try and fail. Emma serves parents, students and the community in deeply impactful ways.

Kara Hazelwood

- I handle the student data at Emma Donnan. We use the data to instruct students on an individual level. We have been able to focus on areas that students have struggled in, and get them the help they need.

Dara Groves, Student Emmerich Manual

- I transferred here from Shortridge. I used to have panic attacks before school. I always wanted to go to college but I had no idea how, especially without money. Recently I was excepted to my top ranked college, IU. Manual serves low income students just like me, we are not ghetto kids, so please do not give up on us.

Melissa Sheriff, Teacher, Thomas Carr Howe

- I have been here 7 years as a teacher. I spent the last year as our English as a second language teacher, over the past year our ESL population triple. They choose to come here because we advocate for them, we provide a sense of community. We tell these students we love them on a daily basis. The past year, two of our students graduated from the WIDA program, and all four have received a high school diploma. Two of those students graduated in the top 10 of their class. Only at T.C. Howe can this happen.

Willie and Tanya Clark, Parents

- We have three children, and two of them have gone through Lawrence and Washington Township. We brought our third child here because of the smaller classes, environment, teacher involvement, and after hours program. The biggest takeaway is we have a 30 minute commute from the North side to get him to school. I can tell my son loves this school because he has had to wake me up sometimes to make sure he gets there.

Nqun Hnem Iang, Senior Student, Emmerich Manual

- I am a senior at Emmerich Manual, I transferred as a freshman. Both of my sisters graduated from here and now are doing well in college. Manual is a welcoming place the school has always been there to help you out. We have the opportunity to take college courses to succeed. It is a smaller school than I thought for a high school, and I immediately felt welcomed here.

José Huerta, Senior Student, Emmerich Manual

- This is my fourth year here at manual, it has been very beneficial to me. I will graduate with 9 college credits. These courses have amazing teachers. I am the 8th in my class in have been accepted to colleges. The teachers here make sure I'm doing well in school and in life. If not for Manual I would not have had those opportunities.

Cheryl Walker Evens

- I graduated manual high school in 1971. I am here about the future. We harm the community when we close a school and knock the legs out. If you read the chart beat article 5 things happen when schools close, especially in minority communities. The community itself suffers when the school closes.

Jeff Breeding, Parent

- I graduated in 1987, but more importantly 2 of my sons have gone here. One has already graduated, but when he started IPS still had the school his freshman year. My wife wouldn't come to the school because there were fights in the hallway. CSUSA has made a difference in the school and culture. Now anyone can come in and walk the halls, they won't have things thrown at them. CSUSA turned their attitudes around. I don't know why there's discussion they have improved the schools grade. Township and other public schools are failing, give them a chance to finish what they started.

Wayne Harmon

- I am a Howe graduate, after high school I joined the Marine Corps. At that time there were only 2 choices parochial or public. I support charters in the community.

Al Stille, Editor, SouthSide Newspaper

- The early 1960s at Manual were the school's glory days. Several years ago Manuel was an F school, and during the takeover I visited many times. The sign in the main office says to expect excellence. There have been improvements at Manual, they went from a failing school to a C school. I covered the football game between Martinsville and Manual. The headline said "Unity - 1". The students I have met at the school always give me a handshake and say yes or no sir. ICSB it is your duty to approve these applications. We do not want the school to return to chaos.

MaKayla Imriem, Cambridge Teacher, Thomas Carr Howe

- The teachers, staff and students here at Howe are family. We show up everyday. Not everyday is perfect, but no family is. Howe is the second home for some of the students. Tonight I am here in favor of approving the charter applications.

Jake Medlock, Board Member, ReThink Forward, Inc.

- I believe all 3 schools should be given a charter. I am a resident of Irvington and live a block from manual. I am an assistant pastor. I worked here since 2008, and I was here when 50% of the teachers were taken out and saw the school taken away. I was scared and skeptical but continued to show up. What I have seen since are people who care. The people here are deeply committed to this place. I am part of the board to oversee in NEI. These are community members. I saw a student once in the ER and he commented about a teacher here who he loved and cared for. A lot of these students experience trauma. Like a big gear, it is hard to get going, but eventually it gets easier. If we can continue with this momentum, we can continue forward.

Kim Hamilton, Parent

- I have been at Howe since 2005 and have seen it change. My daughter now gets excited to go to school. We have seen the culture of the school change, and the staff cares about the students.

Greg Sparks, Spanish Teacher, Thomas Carr Howe

- I am the advisor for student council. Through student council, our students are transforming what people think about our schools. Now our students are building legacies themselves that will carry on past school and onto the world.

Maria Mērito, Student, Thomas Carr Howe

- I am on student council, which helps connect students and teachers. Having relationships with teachers is very special, we are able to get extra help throughout the day. One teacher especially has helped by pushing me out of my comfort zone. She is very supportive and helps me continue to grow everyday. Please let Howe be a charter school.

Keauna Christie, Sophomore Student, Thomas Carr Howe

- I am a sophomore at TC how. I have been in the Cambridge program while here. There are hardworking and caring staff and students at Howe. I had to come to Howe, and I was unsure well I would like it, but I have come to love it. Today I am a student council representative and am on the softball team. By attending Howe, regardless of who you are or where you come from, you are achieving amazing heights. This school is very important and loving, and it is a part of the community.

Michael Isidoro, Sophomore Student, Thomas Carr Howe

- I am a Sophomore at T.C. Howe and I support the application for a charter. The teachers here are amazing at what they do. They support students, even if we just need someone to talk to. I want to graduate because my brother graduated. I want to make my teachers proud of me.

Keiveion Anderson, Student, Thomas Carr Howe

- I am the Vice-President of student council and I support Howe getting a charter. They have my back at the end of the day. When I'm at Howe, I feel like I am at home. I appreciate all of my teachers and all the work they put in for us. They have their offices open every day, and we have morning meetings together. I really love my school.

Alexis Jankevills, Student, Thomas Carr Howe

- I am the student council secretary and I have no idea where to start. If the school closes, I don't know where I would go. The teachers here made me feel so loved, they all know me by my name. I want to support a charter for Howe because I love this school. I also support Manual.

Eugene Parsely

- I am a 1977 graduate. both my brother and sister also graduated. IPS back then is not the same as it is now. IP S was failing in using the buildings, athletics and offering extras for students. IPS wanted to close Manual years ago. They have said if they get the schools back they will close them. I don't think they care, they will just take the students and put them where they have a spot. CSUSA has raised not only the grades, but this social levels of the student. Students are now proud to say they go to Manual. The alumni association is more involved. After IPS raided the equipment room, they tried to steal and sell paintings and other items that belonged to the alumni association. The association successfully sued to get all the items back. The alumni association raised money to fix and repair parts of the building.

Alaina Inyub, Junior Student, Thomas Carr Howe

- I am a junior at how, and have been here for 2 years. I am in support of a charter. I am the PR director of student council and part of the job is to know this and teacher. Because of this, I have gotten to know how and the students better and we have started to become a family. This is not a community or a school but a family. I have seen my brother struggle in school, but want to see him graduate as well. The Cambridge program has helped broaden my horizon and challenges me. I would be happy to see Howe continue.

Tiffany Evans, Assistant Principal, Thomas Carr Howe

- I wanted to speak about the impact the students have had on the adults. You help us grow and give us courage through your tenacity and grit. I support being chartered to continue to make an impact and have students make their impact.

Email comments

Kristin Jones, Councilor-Elect

- I Good morning. I am Kristin Jones, Councilor-Elect for City-County Council District 16. I am writing today to show my support for keeping Manual High School open and reiterate some key points with which I stand with the community on regarding Manual High. First, the community is in full support of keeping the school open and accountable to the community. Accordingly, I agree with their assessment that should the Indiana Charter School Board issue a charter, community oversight and local accountability be at the forefront of any such agreement. Secondly, I am opposed to Charter Schools USA being allowed to gain control of the public real estate under the \$1 law or any other similar arrangement as this long-held public asset rightfully belongs to the community and not any private entity. I appreciate considering my input and I look forward to representing the neighborhoods that support by both Emma Donnan Elementary and Middle School and relating their concerns to all parties.

Carol Ring

- My K-12 public schools should be the major concern of all people in this state. On Nov. 19th, teachers told legislators that they's had 'enough' of how they are being treated. It is a fact that charter schools DO NOT perform better than public schools, and in many ways are doing a worse job. No public school should be sold to a charter organization for the measly price of \$1.00. As a Hoosier taxpayer, I am appalled at the brazen politics that is destroying our public schools. Charter schools often are scams to take taxpayer money and give it to the CEO's who make huge profits on their bloated salaries. Too often charter schools close and leave students hanging in mid year...finally returning to their nearest pubic school. Too often charter schools pay teachers even worse salaries than those given to public school teachers. Money towards charter schools is taking money from public schools. This should not be acceptable. If our legislators knew exactly what was happening in the charter empire, they would be outlawed in this state. There should be no such thing as a 'failing Indianapolis Public School". Poverty level children are coming to school way behind their peers in the middle or upper class. They are not given the rich resources to learn that their wealthier peers enjoy. Being poor means that these children are facing obstacles that actually change their bodies. It is similar to trying to learn in a war zone. A few can to it but most can't. Try living in fear of not having a home, having parents who are on drugs or are ill and get no healthcare, have little to no food in the house and not knowing where their next meal is coming from. DO NOT ALLOW THE PURCHASE OF INDIANAPOLIS PUBIC SCHOOLS TO BE TAKEN BY ANY CHARTER SCHOOL NETWORK. THIS GOES AGAINST PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT. I am a retired public school teacher and I am angry at the lack of caring that is being shown towards our public schools.

Katie Carlson

- I cannot attend the meeting tonight at Manuel, but the public schools in our near south side community have been neglected. Young people in our area deserve to have great schools that are nearby. I am requesting the following: - Both schools to remain open. - IPS provide an alternative path for both schools (they have already formerly done this for Donnan with a IPS Board vote this past Thursday). - Should the Indiana Charter School Board issues charters, we want enhanced accountability to the community and vigilant oversight. - Prohibit CSUSA from accessing the real estate using the \$1 law. Please let our local students have a chance by providing them with the public education that they deserve. Thank you for your consideration.

Rueben Benzel, Former Emmerich Manual Teacher

- My name is Reuben Benzel. I am an 8th year high school mathematics teacher. My educational experiences are diverse from having attended Columbus City Schools in Ohio as a student to teaching in failing and A rated charter schools. I taught at Emmerich Manual High School from 2012-2014 at ground zero of the state takeover. I want to offer you my perspective of the situation and I believe that there is a call for immediate action concerning the availability of basic PUBLIC education on the southside of Indianapolis. To be blunt: this is a story where all of the powers to be IPS, Charter Schools USA, the Indiana Department of Education and the State Board of Education are evils. CSUSA is to blame for not supporting some of the best teachers and leaders I have ever seen. They are a shady, at best, organization. Looking at their charter renewal application brings all sorts of suspicion. CSUSA around 3-4 years ago created a non-profit subsidiary called Noble Education Initiative that operates out of the state of Delaware. Underneath that organization is an organization called ReThink Forward Indiana. I do not think that CSUSA does what is best for the students. Out of the 50 or so teachers that started with me in 2012, only around 5 of those 50 remain. CSUSA has a track record of not supporting their teachers. In the 3 years after I left, EMHS went through 4 different principals. In my time at Manual, I was forced to make "graduation packets" to get students graduating who did not meet requirements. Students rode busses on CSUSA's subsidiary A and S transportation that were not up to modern safety codes. I am not in support of CSUSA because they do not put students and teachers first, rather they put profit first. IPS is to blame for completely disregarding entire communities. I came into Manual High School in 2012 at ground zero of the state takeover. EMHS was a failing school because there were no systems in place. We had to write our own curriculum. IPS allowed Manual to disintegrate from quality school that offered quality vocational options into a school where students could roam the halls and attendance could be below 80 percent. I acknowledge that there were other factors and tough circumstances in many of the neighborhoods. IPS recently has implemented a disturbing trend of shuttering perfectly nice school buildings in favor of consolidating its schools. While this business practice of acquiring cash from buildings may help the yearly balance sheet, shuttering neighborhood schools is not good for the communities that surround them. The southside is at a pivotal moment right now in neighborhood development. On one end, a drive down Madison Ave has painted a picture of extreme decline even since when I left Manual. The local Wendy's where us teachers congregated was shuttered, the K-Mart is now a storage center and even the White Castle is gone. On the other end, there are signs of gentrification. One can go to Garfield Park and enjoy a farmers market on Saturday mornings. One can see revitalization in the older homes of Bates Hendricks. One can go sip craft beer in Fountain Square or Garfield Park. If we want to see the forces of neighborhood development outweigh the forces of neighborhood decline, is it not important that there be a serviceable public school in the neighborhood at all grade levels? After all, those in the southside neighborhood pay property taxes for IPS. Don't they have a right to a public school too? The good guys of this story are the teacher, support people that I worked with and the students. I worked with people who worked after hours bringing a food pantry into the school, creating new clubs for students to get involved and actually spend time reaching out to families. The other good guys of this story are the students who came to Manual and made the best of their education. You can see many of them out there doing good things. They are serving our country in the military, some have found success in college, some are working meaningful and productive jobs. I have always said that the best way of turning around Emmerich Manual High School was to reawaken Manual's roots a Manual High School. When I taught at Manual I found that the largest gains with students could be made by getting them meaningfully involved in something. I found that our biggest test score gains occurred when we could give our students a reason to come to school or to care: whether that be through JROTC, Ag Science, welding, sports or music. And these gains were much larger than fancy math and reading programs that CSUSA spent thousands of dollars on. I can only hope that IPS or another charter authorizer can see value in investing in Emmerich Manual High School. I think there is

space for Manual to offer its neighborhood and the rest of the city a good quality career readiness program that can train a future workforce that can positively impact the neighborhood and surrounding city. This decision is not only about keeping a school open but has tremendous implications for the prospective economic development of an entire neighborhood.

Laura Giffel

- I recently submitted a comment voted on by my neighborhood association, and I also wanted to submit a personal comment. As a member of the community close to Manual High School and leader in the community, I am writing to voice my concern over the future of Manual High School under the control of CSUSA and ReThink Forward. During my five years in the neighborhood, I have worked to find ways to support our community schools and ensure that families do not have to choose between our urban neighborhood and quality schools. We host a quarterly school community council with neighborhood associations, non-profits, churches and both public and charter schools to address needs and continue to build trust between the community and schools. Through this work the staff of the schools have created connections that ensure that families are comfortable with their decision. Unfortunately Manual High School has not been part of these conversations until this month which has a negative impact on the relationship families have with the school. I will continue to support the teachers working hard to support these students, but we cannot support the administration with CSUSA. It is essential that our neighborhood has a strong and sustainable high school to serve the diverse population on the Southeast Side. We must have an educational institution that can meet the needs of all students, from those that are college bound and those with a future in trades. As the school stands today, few of my neighbors are willing to send their children to Manual. Most of us are unaware of their focus, work or goals. In the competitive educational environment of today, it is important that high schools have a focus and a vision to recruit students to maintain enrollment. Regarding the reputation of CSUSA, I am fearful of their lack of honesty in our community. Aside from the lack of community engagement, the administration has proven itself loose with the truth including encouraging struggling students to choose home school rather than providing intense interventions to ensure they leave high school with the necessary skills to be successful adults. As a therapist, I often work with similar families and know the wrap around services necessary to serve these families well. I struggle to see a change of heart once a charter is granted. Since the task force decision, we have been presented with a petition with the false dichotomy that if we do not sign the petition, Manual High School will close. This type of misinformation has been frequent in the little communication that we have received. Meetings have not been well publicized and CSUSA, ReThink or current administration have not attended a single community meeting in Bates-Hendricks to present their work or answer questions. Community liaisons from both elementary and middle schools attend our meetings often and are actively engaged in our community. While my personal preference would be for IPS to regain control of Manual High School so we can have a strong public high school, I understand that without a strong stance from IPS this might not be an easy choice. If a charter is approved, we ask that the operator have a clear vision and a connection to the community it serves. ReThink or CSUSA has not earned my trust as of now, and I hope that a better partnership can be found in the coming months.

Reverend Judy Fakhenthal, Board Member, ReThink Forward, Inc.

- As a ReThinkForward board member, I have to say, my heart soared when I walked in for the public hearing and saw two youth from our church who are speaking in support of the charter proposal tonight. They've both been accepted to IU for next year. I have watched them excel first at Emma and now at Manual because of the Turnaround program's impact on their lives. It's youth like them that is the reason I support the charter of these schools. Kids lives matter.

Steve Stangel, Horace Mann

- My name is Steve Stangel. I am an insurance agent with the Horace Mann Companies. I started partnering with Manual and Emma Donnan in 2001. I have seen how Emma Donnan has made huge strides since they transitioned to CSUSA. The amount of community involvement has increased under the work of Angela Parker. I see teachers being more active in their classrooms by using many resources outside the the “normal” classroom that provides enrichment to their students. I have seen behavior of the students become more focused on academics versus being a distraction and making school difficult for others to learn and teachers to teach. It takes many people and organizations to make a school work. I am happy to say I have witnessed these amazing people and organizations working together to improve Emma Donnan, Emmerich Manual and T.C. Howe become better schools.

Kevin Sandorf

- Greetings! The original intent of the takeover of schools was to have selected turnaround management govern affected schools, and then RETURN the schools to the district. "Home owned- home operated" works. Furthermore, financial bond obligations will ultimately cost the taxpayers of Center Township extensive legal fees if schools are not returned to the school corporation which holds title.

Beth Whitaker

- I attempted to speak tonight at the forum and wanted to share my experience as well as my thought. When I arrived I was ‘greeted’ by a woman who works for CSUSA. She was standing in front of the table where people were to sign in to speak, I missed the sign up on my first pass through. There were two mostly completed pages laid out. I then had to reach behind her for further information on how the forum was to run, which she said I didn’t need. To begin the hearing CSUSA started with a presentation on the great work they had done. I noticed many inaccuracies and/or half truths in the presentation. The rules for speaking at the forum were not clearly (or efficiently) laid out. The first name was called, a principal of a CSUSA, this person went over the three minutes (easy to do when you don’t have a way to tell the person to stop.). It was said that the forms were rabfomnly gathered up and given. However, the person who handed the form lists, and presumably ordered them by writing numbers at the bottom, works for CSUSA. The first three people were the principals of the schools. The next hour and a half were all people paid through CSUSA or alumni who do not want the school to close. This does not seem to be the randomized format that was laid out to me. I knew the sheet my name had been on, and who I was to speak after. I stood at the edge of the auditorium, but my name was not called. To be fair, there is a possibility that I had turned to answer a question in the hallway- a very small chance. I DO NOT support the charter of CSUSA. I would like to see local control of this school. I would like to see the community be on the boards and have accountability. As a neighborhood advocate and community organizer I have asked over and over for a funding structure plan from CSUSA to see the sustainability for the programs. This has never been provided. The lack of transparency and communication is concerning. The process has been very deceitful to the community by not sharing information and reporting incorrect data. I would also employ the board to not grant the \$1 rule. This would not be in the tax payers best interest based on the current bonds and loans on the building. Lastly, I would encourage the board to instead hear from Indianapolis Public Schools for their plans for the school. Having a school on the Southeast side of town is vital for our community’s health. But the school cannot be run by CSUSA.

Betty Bussberg

- As a home owner of Irvington community, I support CSUSA -NEI to have the charter to run TC Howe.

Ed Mabern, past president, Garfield Park Neighbors Association

- Fifty years ago, today I was a teacher in the IPS system. At that time there were approximately 100,000 students in the IPS school system. Now there are approximately 30,000 students in the IPS system. I could go over the factors that lead to this decline such as 2 Interstates taking out hundreds of homes, busing which caused white flight to the suburbs and realtors guiding new homeowners away from the city core. But the number one cause in my mind was busing of black students into formally over whelming white schools. Many of the families that stayed in IPS had no ability to leave for financial reasons. For the next 40 years as the numbers of IPS students declined the IPS administration dealt with schools that were running at lower and lower capacity and therefore became impractical to keep open. About 10 years ago major changes started to happen at IPS. Within the past 2 years IPS closed 3 high schools within the system and IPS and the City of Indianapolis has teamed with other school operators in creating charter and innovative schools. IPS, with the help of the Indianapolis Chamber supported a successful referendum to raise taxes and just last week was able to offer teachers within IPS long delayed pay raises. Meanwhile the Indiana State School Board 7 years ago decided to take over 4 IPS schools and 3 of those schools were turned over to Charter Schools USA (CSUSA). All 3 of those schools have less students now that when they were taken over. Manuel, which was originally built to house 2400 students now has around 600 students and in 2018 Manuel graduated 83 students with 60 students that were classified as leaving for home -school instead of drop outs. Before the State creates charters for CSUSA or its sister created organizations I would suggest the following. 1. Have an independent organization to do confidential interviews with a random group of 20 students and their families who have left Manuel in the last 3 years as to why and how they left and to report what the students have done since they left Manuel. 2. Have an independent organization to do confidential interviews with a random 20 licensed teachers who have left the Manuel staff in the past 4 years. Establish why they left and how they would rate the administration of the school. 3. Have new operators of Charters pay fair market value to IPS for any real estate taken. 4. Request that the State School Board enter into discussions with the Leadership of IPS to discuss what ideas IPS might have about any of these schools. In closing I want to stress that the State School Board look at the desires of young families who are moving into the nearby neighborhoods and not what the schools once were some 50 years ago, but rather the possibilities of what they might become.

Brandon Mott

- My name is Brandon Mott and I am a resident on the Southeast side of downtown Indianapolis and I have two children currently enrolled in IPS elementary schools. I would like to ask that the Charter School Board consider Indianapolis Public Schools as an option for Manual High School to continue to build our public school system and allow for a magnet high school here on the Southeast side of Indianapolis. By allowing additional community conversations, we believe that a better plan of action can be created in partnership with Indianapolis Public Schools to best meet the needs of our neighbors. We also request that Indianapolis Public Schools consider an alternative pathway that will allow for additional oversight and accountability for Manual High School. As a community member, I feel we have largely been left out of the conversations deciding what is best for our own neighborhood school.

Nick Zuckerman

- Good evening and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak. My name is Nick Zuckerman. I am also social worker and a long-time community leader and resident of the southside. And my biggest job is being the father to two little boys. I have been a part of the coalition of neighborhood organizations that are seeking accountability, transparency, and responsiveness from CSUSA and their affiliated nonprofits - ReThink Forward and Noble Education Initiatives. The School Transition Taskforce recommendations do not represent the will of the community and actually misrepresent community input directly. A prime example - the Manual High School Alumni group represented here

tonight encouraged its members to take the survey as many times as possible and took paper surveys at every public meeting they attended, which heavily weighted the responses in favor of CSUSA. And this was by design because the Taskforce process was presented as selecting one of two options: choose CSUSA, or close the schools. Understandably, the Manual Alumni community and a handful of community members chose CSUSA when faced with this inaccurate set of options. But these are not the only choices available to the community, despite misleading information that is being shared by CSUSA and the alumni group. A survey that you will receive as public comment again emphasized these two choices – give CSUSA a charter, or close the schools. The homeschooling practices uncovered by Chalkbeat Indiana are just the tip of the iceberg in what appears to be a pattern of inaccurate reporting and unethical practices. As we have done outreach, we are hearing horror stories from former parents and teachers who suffered under CSUSA’s management. There are many passionate people who care about these schools, which is what you will hear in the public comments tonight from everyone. Our group of dedicated community members is passionate about providing the best options for children on the southside and beyond - not just the only thing that’s being offered to us. We want accountability, transparency, and responsiveness - something that hasn’t been offered to us by CSUSA or its affiliated nonprofits. As has been mentioned, the community has been in active discussions with the IPS Administration and Board of Commissioners to explore alternative paths for Manual High School. Our community also supports IPS’s decision not to renew their contract for Emma Donnan Elementary and request the State Board of Education turn the middle school back over to IPS. We hope you will consider engaging IPS before making your determination for charter authorization. Further, should you authorize charters for any of these three schools, the community requests the following: Enhanced accountability to the community and vigilant oversight. Prohibit CSUSA and its affiliates from accessing the buildings via lease or sale using the \$1 law.

Bryan Hannon, chair of the South Indy QOL, president of the Rosedale Hills Neighborhood Association (RHNA)

- I am the chair of the South Indy Quality of Life Plan and the president of the Rosedale Hills Neighborhood Association (RHNA). The South Indy Quality of Life Plan represents eight neighborhoods on the city’s south side, focusing on issues such as housing and education to improve our neighborhoods and RHNA represents nearly 700 residences on the south side. On behalf of South Indy and RHNA, I write with four concerns regarding the pending charter application from Charter Schools USA and its affiliated operator. First, we believe that schools are critical to building strong quality of life in our neighborhoods and it is our wish that these schools remain operational. Second, we believe that the schools in our neighborhood should be quality schools that meet rigorous standards, be accountable to our community and serve all students. In these ways, CSUSA and its operator have fallen short. Throughout this re-authorization process, our neighborhoods sought details from CSUSA and its operator about its plans for the Donnan and Manual schools—ranging from budgetary details to planned facility use to academic standards. On all accounts, our community received little or no feedback from these entities, leaving many concerned about the long term viability of its operations in our south side neighborhoods. Further, recent media reports indicate that CSUSA and its operator have flouted accountability standards by artificially inflating its graduation rate by marking drop out students as home school students. This issue, which CSUSA has failed to adequately address, is a troubling development that reveals a lack of oversight. That is simply unacceptable and our community deserves—and demands—better from a school operator that serves our neighborhoods. For these reasons, we believe it is reasonable to consult with Indianapolis Public Schools about the feasibility of returning both schools to the District. Should IPS proffer an application to run both schools, we believe the Board should give due consideration to that proposal. Third, if the Board does authorize a charter for Donnan and Manual, we believe the recent media reports about inflated graduation rates and the lack of responsiveness to the

community questions and concerns warrant increased oversight of the operator. CSUSA and its operator should be accountable to our community and the Board should consider all appropriate measures to ensure that vigorous oversight is provided to CSUSA and its operator, lest these entities continue efforts to deceive the public about its record. Fourth, under no circumstance should CSUSA be permitted to acquire school property under the state's \$1 real estate law. Our community has gone to great lengths to develop a quality of life plan that addresses several key areas, including economic development along our key corridors. This includes advocating for the highest and best uses of property. Both Donnan and Manual sit along these key corridors and are valuable pieces of property to our community. Taking these properties from a public entity like IPS and giving them to a private entity belies the work of our quality of life plan and risks the interests of our community. Our community strongly opposes any attempt to transfer these public properties to CSUSA or another private operator. Thank you for your consideration of these points. On behalf of the South Indy community, we are grateful for the opportunity to share our concerns and we commit to being diligently engaged in the future of these schools to ensure accountability and quality education opportunities.

Mary Griffin-Grisham

- Hello, my name is Mary Griffin-Grisham. I am a proud 1967 graduate of Howe. I felt very lucky to attend such a magnificent school. While the sheer beauty of the building was impressive, it was the sense of community that made it special. Howe was an anchor for the East side. It gave our community a feeling of belonging. I pray you will continue to allow Howe to be a Charter school. The teachers and principal have made such strides. Graduation rates are up. Attendance is up. Grades are up. Students and faculty alike are taking such pride in academic achievement, sports, after school activities. Not only would it be a travesty to see such a beautiful historic building sit empty, it would also be a travesty to take away the option for future students to be able to chose to attend this school of their choice. Please consider helping the East side community and the students keep this school open.

Cassie Richardson

- My husband and I are residents of the Bates Hendricks neighborhood. We moved here in August 2018 from Greenwood. My husband is an engineer and I am a pharmacist. We are expecting our first child in February 2020. My husband and I both grew up going to public schools and received excellent educations. My husband got a bachelor's of science in engineering and I have a doctorate of pharmacy. When we lived in Greenwood we were in the Center Grove school district which is the type of public school system my husband and I grew up going to. When we moved to Bates Hendricks and found out we were expecting, it was very disheartening to find out the state of the public school system in this area. Even though we love our neighborhood, we feel our hand will be forced to move back to Greenwood or another surrounding area when our child is school aged. The underperforming, under reporting and teacher turn over rates at Manual High School are truly disturbing. Not only our child but all children in this district deserve access to good public schools. You will continue to lose families such as my husband and I to better school districts unless these charters and schools are held to higher standards. Our community leaders must be heard and must be a part of the conversations for our local schools. I am begging you to listen to these concerns and not continue to lose families from our district due to the schools. With the turn over of houses and gentrification of these neighborhoods, the only way to maintain this growth will be that families feel they can stay. You will be doing a disservice to the people of this community if nothing is done to the schools.

Debra Lewis

- I am a graduate of Thomas Carr Howe High School and I would just like to say that closing this school so rich in history & tradition would be an epic failure!! I.P.S. closed it several years back and the strain it puts on a community is real. Parents having to either quit jobs or ask for

different hours so they can tend to their child's needs is very taxing on a family, especially single parent households. We have an alumni association that is beyond fantastic with the students and a disruption of this could set some of these at risk students back into a feeling of not being wanted. Our school makes these kids feel wanted and loved. When I went to Howe, I had teachers that cared about what I was learning and always there to help when needed and I believe that I am a better person because of that. In closing, I realize this is going to be a tough decision for the board and I appreciate everything that has been done. All we ask is to let Howe High School receive the charter so that we can keep enriching the lives of our students there.

Robert Williams

- I implore you to allow Emmerich Manual High School to remain open as a charter school. It should keep its doors open so that future generations of students may benefit from Manual as I did. I am a proud 1956 graduate, one of the first classes to go through the new Manual. I was a member of the ROTC for all four years and that permitted me to be a Private First Class as soon as I entered the United States Army. I went on to graduate from college and law school. The building, students, and faculty are dearly remembered in my heart. All my memories of Manual are superb. It would be a tragedy to see the school close its doors.

Lezga Harman-Lineback

- I'm writing asking you to decline the request to extend the charter to CSUSA. My family and I have lived in the Garfield Park neighborhood for over 15 years, so the fate of these schools is super important to us. We LOVE charter schools in our neighborhood, we NEED them, but an overwhelming majority of us do NOT like CSUSA. CSUSA is giving charter schools a bad name. Teachers have reached out to our neighborhood asking for help to buy things for their students. I don't have a problem with this, but I was surprised by these requests. I would expect a multi-million dollar, FOR-PROFIT company to be in a better position to tap into resources than a non-profit neighborhood association. I have also read about CSUSA abusing the homeschooling option. We heard about them pushing students into homeschooling and forging documents showing parental consent to homeschooling just to artificially inflate their graduation numbers. I was very mad and disappointed by this. There are times when homeschooling is a great option, but this option should not be abused to the point it will hurt others who need it and could benefit from it. We wouldn't allow students to cheat and change their grades on tests, so we can't allow administrators to do it either. If I worked at another school in Indiana, I would be furious that my school's score are being compared to one of CSUSA's schools fake grades. I attended the public meeting on Monday at Manual High School. I wanted to listen to comments to possibly change my mind about CSUSA. I was so happy to hear all the wonderful comments about how much spirit, support and love everyone has for Emma Donnan, Manual and Howe. I heard time and again the passion that people have for their schools. The teachers, students, neighbors and alumni love these schools, they don't love CSUSA. If the charter changes hands, I don't have a doubt in my mind that the same teachers, students, neighbors and alumni will be right there supporting these schools. A member of the Manual High School Alumni Club said they have raised nearly \$200,000 in the last 12 years for the school. They mentioned all of the wonderful projects that they have funded for the students. This is amazing to me. This school is in a somewhat financially-depressed area and for them to be able to raise that kind of money shows the love and passion for the kids and the school- not CSUSA. I beg you to NOT CLOSE these schools, but please choose a different charter school or opt to have IPS run them again. I heard many CSUSA employees speak in favor of them keeping the charter. Well, obviously they are going to speak out in favor of their employer- they are on the payroll! The alumni have all been told that IPS wants to close the schools, so they think the options are keep CSUSA or close the schools. They are fighting to keep the school open, they don't care who runs them. Our

neighborhood group has been told there are other options, so that's what we want- another option. I never once heard from anyone from CSUSA from Florida, which is where the company is from. We need a local and community-based group running our schools. We do not want a FOR-PROFIT company, from out of state, who have been proven to BREAK THE RULES and cheat on their grades to run our schools. Our community depends on your board making the right decision for us.

Marilyn Shank

- As an Indianapolis resident, an IPS alumna and grandmother of an IPS student, I urge the Indiana Charter School Board to vote against issuing a charter to ReThink Forward for Emmerich Manual High School, Howe High School and Emma Donnan elementary and middle school. ReThink Forward is a new and unproven entity. Why would you trust an organization with no track record to make a difference at these schools? What ReThink Forward does have is an affiliation with Charter Schools USA, the company IPS no longer wants to partner with. Charter Schools USA is a for-profit entity, making a profit off of tax dollars across the country. Charter Schools USA has not made significant improvements in student performance in the last four and a half years at these three schools. Go back and look at what they promised to accomplish five years ago. Charter Schools USA did not fulfill those promises. I acknowledge it's challenging to work with low-income, ESL and high-mobility students. That's why you want the schools to be managed by your best and brightest administrators and taught by your best and brightest teachers. I urge you to reject this charter application. There must be a better solution. These students deserve our best, not our default.

Scott Hottell

- I am contacting you concerning recent charter school applications. Charter school have no business accessing Public School funding, nor Public School buildings. Granting such a charter to these corporations only continues the sad history of embezzlement, "lost" funding, and substandard education, while the corporation profits. Public Money should go only to Public Schools.

Ike McCoy, President, Carson Heights Neighborhood Association

- My name is Ike McCoy and I am the President of the Carson Heights Neighborhood Association. Carson Heights' neighborhood boundaries are just South of Garfield Park from Troy to Hannah, and from Madison to Sherman Dr. I have been following the developments regarding the renewal of the CSUSA Charter for Manual High School and would like to make a public comment. First, I would like to say that no one wants to see Manual High School close. Manual has been a source of pride for the thousands of Alumni that have graduated from the school over the past decades. Manual is an institution on the South side of Indianapolis and one of the few high schools that is still open in the area. It is very important to Southside neighborhoods, such as Carson Heights, that we have quality public High Schools available to our families. Secondly, I do firmly believe that the educators and the on the ground staff truly do care about their students and I have always had great interactions with them. I would, however, like to voice some very serious concerns that I have with CSUSA's administration and oversight. CSUSA has over and over again touted their grade level improvement as a shining success. They have also pointed to an increase in graduation rates as another reason as to why they deserve to be granted a charter for 2020-2021. I believe, that given the recent revelations regarding the extraordinarily high home school rates, that residents have begun to seriously doubt the validity of the improvements in school grading and graduation rates. If the allegations of coaching students into homeschooling are true, which CSUSA has so far been unable to explain, then this would constitute a complete break in trust with the community. It would also strongly demonstrate that CSUSA is, in fact, not fulfilling their their stated goals of creating job and college ready high school graduates. I ask that the State Charter Board take a much harder look at the

home schooling rates and seriously investigate whether staff and administrators were coaching students into home school to boost their graduation rates and school grade. I simply do not understand what else could explain the fact that for every 50 students who graduated, 4 dropped out and 36 left for home schooling*. A second serious concern that I and the community has is that CSUSA has shown no sustainable model in how they will maintain a facility built for 2,300 students with the tiny student population that they now have. It would be a tragedy if CSUSA were to be granted a charter, to acquire the property, and shortly thereafter fold - allowing them to sell the property to a developer for a quick buck. It is for these reasons that I ask the State Charter Board not grant CSUSA a charter renewal and that they allow the community to find a suitable replacement. Thank you for your time and for reading my comments. The Carson Heights community appreciates your interest in this matter.

Dale Smiley

- I am a 1962 Graduate of Manual High School and have had a (to steal a title from my favorite Jimmie Stewart movie) "Wonderful Life" and it is based on the solid foundation and "training" I received at Manual. My wife is a 1960 Graduate of Manual and we are approaching our 51st wedding Anniversary. We have been involved in the process of getting Manual established as a Charter School since the Alumni board made us aware of the situation. We have been to meetings, signed petitions, and been to more meetings. I was at the meeting at Manual Monday night, 11/25. They had at least 60 speakers when I got there (my wife had a church function and could not attend) so I felt this was a better way to show my support for Manual. We do this to indicate our support of Manual and our belief that Indianapolis will be better off WITH Manual open as a Charter School than allowing it to be closed. Indianapolis and Marion County need to keep the current High Schools open. Each school has its own unique properties and students in the Greater Indianapolis area should be able to pick the High School that is "right" for them. This may seem odd, so I will explain what I mean. When I was in the 8th Grade we were handed a paper to fill out which allowed us to pick "what" High School we wanted to attend and filled out some basic information on the student. We could "PICK" any Indianapolis High School IF we could get there ON A CITY BUS! This was IPS policy in the 1950's. The only "School Buses" were used to transport sports teams to other schools for games. My wife and I both lived in the old "Riverside Neighborhood" (an area sometimes called "Cerealtown") which was from Riverside Drive on the West to Montcalm on the East, and from 16th Street North to 30th Street where Riverside Park used to be! We walked to IPS School #44 everyday. City Bus Route 15 ran from 30th and Riverside Drive down Harding Street, West on 21st to Montcalm, South to Stadium Drive, Southeast (Stadium Drive became Indiana Avenue South of Fall Creek) to Meridian, around the Circle, South on Meridian Street to Pleasant Run Parkway North, East to Madison Avenue, South on Madison to Southern, and on to its South turn-around. It repeated that route in reverse. So we had a DIRECT Bus Route to Manual. We could have chosen Tech, Washington, or Howe because you could 'transfer' at the Circle to other Buses. We both chose Manual because we thought it had the best classes for us. Strangely, we did not know each other at that time (she is older than I)! I know this is old and boring. I just wish to add my endorsement to having EMMERICH MANUAL TRAINING HIGH SCHOOL remain open as a Charter School. I really wish they would stop trying to "hide" or "forget" the word TRAINING as it is something that is done at all schools whether they believe it or NOT! Please issue the Charter for Manual! Thank You!

Marianne Glick

- I would not recommend renewing this charter school operators license for these schools. I think another Charter school operator would do a much better job.

Diana Ratcliff Winter, Parent

- I'm writing to urge you to not renew the charter at Emma Donnon and Manuel High School. I currently have a 5th grader and 6th grader, and as a parent I do not trust these schools. They have not been good community members, and they are not running a good school for our children. Right now my kids ride the bus for an hour to go to school which is not ideal for our family, but it was the best school the lottery selected for them. We would love for better middle and high school options in our district and within walking distance. We are praying that we will have better options by the time my children go to high school. Please consider the families in this district when you decide what to do with the school.

John Winter, Parent

- I am writing to convey concerns that I have with Charter Schools USA. I have been on the Bates-Hendricks Neighborhood board for many years, I have also been President and Vice President of the neighborhood association. During this time I have never been approached by anyone from CSUSA even though they have been operating Manual High School, which is next to our neighborhood. Many of the children from Bates-Hendricks go to this school, but I believe that many more would consider it an option if we had a community partner. CSUSA has no accountability to the students or the parents that they serve. I have been extremely upset about their tenure and hope that IPS can have a chance to bring the school back to it's former glory, much as our neighborhoods have been revitalized over the last few years. I currently have a son and a daughter in 5th and 6th grade. I hope that I can choose Manual as an option when they get to High School, but I see no way that we could consider that if CSUSA is allowed to continue to run the school into the ground.

Cathy Fuentes-Rohwer

- I am writing to you as a parent and public school supporter. I see that you will be voting on several potential charter schools and I am writing to ask you to not vote on several. In particular, I am deeply concerned that turning the 3 charter schools in Indianapolis formerly authorized by Charter Schools USA to another sister organization that is for-profit to manage the schools will result in more instability for children and parents and teachers. Please return these schools to the democratic oversight of the publicly-elected IPS school board. I don't believe that schools should be profit-making and it is disruptive and painful for them to open and close like businesses. Also, it was tax dollars that paid for the school buildings themselves and should stay in taxpayer (not private) hands. Please vote 'no' on turning Emma Donnan Middle School, and Thomas Carr Howe and Emmerich Manual high schools over to any more charter operators.

Kristin McMurtrey

- Please consider a full stop on approving more school applications at a time when Indiana is not able to fully fund the schools it has. Thank you.

Dakota Hudelson

- Please vote against turning three charter schools in Indianapolis over to Charter Schools USA's sister network, another for-profit entity attempting to leech money off of students. Please return these schools to the democratic oversight of the community by putting them under the control of IPS.

Deborah Myerson

- I am writing to ask you to vote NO on several proposed charter schools. Please vote 'no' on turning Emma Donnan Middle School, and Thomas Carr Howe and Emmerich Manual high schools over to any more charter operators. I am deeply concerned that turning these three

current charter schools in Indianapolis over to a for-profit organization to manage will result in more instability for children and parents and teachers. Please return these schools to the democratic oversight of the publicly-elected IPS school board. I don't believe that schools should be profit-making. It is disruptive and painful for them to open and close like businesses. In addition, taxpayers paid for the school buildings, and should stay under public (not private) control.

Letters

Robert Lindeman, Pleasant Run United Church of Christ

- Dear Board Members: As a long time southside resident, as a graduate of Manual High School, and as a member of a neighborhood church, Pleasant Run United Church of Christ, that I as well as several other members of this church who are involved in a Faith Based Committee providing for students' basic needs, write to support the continued operation of Manual, Emma Donnan, and Howe schools. It is obvious from our involvement over several years that there are competent administration and staff who are dedicated to student educational growth and achievement; that there is commitment to help students as well as their families with basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter that if lacking are often obstacles to learning; that there is widespread support in the community and the alumni to keep these schools in operation to maintain continuity in educating students and nearby availability for their families. We have observed growth in the educational expectations of students. We have seen hands' -on opportunities for individualized instruction to encourage critical and creative thinking. We have seen dress codes that address appropriate conduct. We have meet numerous teachers who "go beyond" in their investment of their students. I join with many others in urging your committee to allow these three schools to continue in their dedication and mission ... to teach and reach all students where they are and to prepare them for future success. Anything less on your part would be a message to negate these goals and their progress. Thank you for your consideration.

Laura Giffel, President, Bates-Hendricks Neighborhood Association

- Bates-Hendricks Neighborhood Association is a charitable community organization located just north of Manual High School and we are passionate about improving the quality of life for those in our boundaries, including our youngest neighbors. We believe that strong public education institutions are a key player in the health of our community and we ask that you partner with us in ensuring that Manual High School is led by administrators and a board that share our vision of healthy and strong neighborhoods. For these schools to succeed, we believe that the administration must be accountable to the community that they serve. Our students are diverse with a diverse and sometimes complicated set of needs. It is our desire that Manual High School remains open and becomes a viable option for the families in our neighborhood. Until recently, the interaction with Manual High School has been limited and we are disappointed with the decision to not replace the community liaison position. We ask that the Charter School Board consider Indianapolis Public Schools as an option for Manual High School to continue to build our public school system and allow for a magnet high school on the Southeast side of Indianapolis. By allowing additional community conversations, we believe that a better plan of action can be created in partnership with Indianapolis Public Schools to best meet the needs of our neighbors. We also request that Indianapolis Public Schools consider an alternative pathway that will allow for additional oversight and accountability for Manual High School. In general, BHNA has felt left out of the conversation despite its proximity to the school. If the charters are approved, we hope that CSUSA will include community members on the school board and take a more active approach to build trust with the surrounding families. In the competitive school environment, it is important that Manual continues to recruit local families with

quality educational options. We are proud of the relationship that we have built through our community council meetings with both schools, public and charter, in our boundaries. These meetings are essential to supporting our teachers and students and creating important relationships with the families choosing their schools. Lastly, we request that the Charter School Board prevent any operator from accessing the building through the current \$1 law. With the outstanding bonds on this building, we believe it is in the best interest of the taxpayers to require fair market value for these buildings. We look forward to continuing a dialogue with all of you on how we can improve upon educational opportunities on the often forgotten southeast side of Indianapolis.

Brycen Garner

- I am Brycen Garner, a 16-year veteran of a local police department who has worked inside Emmerich Manual High School on three separate occasions. The first was as an Army Recruiter from 2001 until 2004. It was during this introductory time that I was able to interact with the faculty, but mostly with the awesome students of Emmerich Manual High School. My second short stint at Emmerich Manual High School was as a school resource officer in 2008. During this time, I had a distinct privilege to spend more time with the students to show them that all law enforcement officers are not bad. This relationship is key as the young will soon branch out into the community. This leads to my current job of a community liaison between my department and the local high schools. The staff of Emmerich Manual High School has always welcomed my efforts. It is because of my years of interaction with the faculty and staff as well as the students that I support Emmerich Manual High School's application to become a public charter school. I know firsthand of the passion the staff has to teach and mentor lead by Principal Michael Wingert. I know firsthand of the absolutely bright and capable students who are enrolled at Emmerich Manual High School. My experiences have allowed me to enlist students in the Army, speak with and engage in a positive light and now discuss and bridge the gap between the youth and law enforcement in Indianapolis. Emmerich Manual High School is gem in the community and will continue to produce some of our best the community has to offer. I can say this because our department has several alumni from Emmerich Manual High School. Emmerich Manual High School again has my support to have their application to become a public charter school. I hope that my relationship will continue to grow with the ultimate goal of helping lead our future leaders.

Robert King, Assistant Director of K-12 Initiatives, Ivy Tech Community College – Indianapolis

- To whom it might concern: I am most grateful for the opportunity to provide, in writing, my humble insights of the value of the charter schools served by Charter Schools USA in Indianapolis, Indiana, and likewise to offer my own perspective on their unique role and place in our local community. I have worked extensively with Emmerich Manual and Thomas Carr Howe High Schools over the past three years as their dual credit coordinator with Ivy Tech Community College. These schools and Ivy Tech have worked together closely for the past several years in building mutual opportunities for local high students to earn college credit for free within their classrooms and from their own teachers. I can attest to the commitment of the high-quality administration and teachers who serve students through these CSUSA venues here in the city, as well as to the numerous opportunities they offer to the students they so diligently serve. In a strategic way, they foster their students' post-secondary successes already as high school students. This focused and committed work to enhance their students' strengths by offering them the courses, skills, and tools needed for development as future professionals, is what, in my estimation, is the greatest contribution which these schools offer our community. Firstly, I absolutely must attest to the high quality of administration whom I have worked with over the past three years at the CSUSA High Schools in Indianapolis. These are, without exaggeration and with all sincerity, the smartest people I have ever worked with in my life. I have seen industriousness, optimism, and – in all truth – practical genius defined in my dealings with each of them.

In view of challenges they have faced, they absolutely shine. In adverse situations, each of them has not just found ways to minimize damage, but – using their own creative strategies – they have positively used that concrete situation to maximize the potentials and opportunities for their students in the face of these challenges. One of the most common challenges we faced together was that of teacher turnover. In our dual credit agreements, a credentialed teacher leaving the school in the midst of the term could be a crippling blow – for any school. What this would normally mean is that we would need to cancel the dual credit opportunity to students if the credentialed instructor would not be available to teach the remaining portion of the course. But even this drawback has been a way to meet with even greater opportunities in some cases. Our friends at the Charter Schools USA campuses in Indianapolis have, almost every time, not only been able to find a way to salvage their agreements, but they have also found ways to find even other ways to enhance their dual credit offerings in view of the re-adjustments and re-modification of the agreement with a new faculty member or new course offering. Each of my primary contacts at the high schools have had different unique strategies in meeting this challenge. My first year in working with them, being unable to run dual credit English when one of their teachers left Thomas Carr Howe High School suddenly, the administration was able to run the section as an AP English course through College Board, which worked nicely in the students’ favor. In another case, at Emmerich Manual, four of their instructors left by October. At any one of my other schools, in all likelihood, it would have meant an end to the opportunity for the students to earn the credit, but not so at this CSUSA venue. Isaiah Watts, the CTE Coordinator there at the time, had intentionally hired our Ivy Tech adjuncts as members of his own faculty, and in so looking for the definitively-qualified candidate, salvaged each of the four dual credit sections in Business, English Rhetoric, and Education, which would not have been possible without the foresight and quick thinking on his part, even though he had only been in the position for a few weeks when he made those hires. Mr. Watts’ successor, Mr. Bryan Reed, had a like-minded strategy in mind – he is especially purposeful in his selection of his instructors to teach our dual credit, and sought credentialing for those instructors whom he gauged were going to remain at the school and were solidly committed to service within the CSUSA family. He chose faculty whose attitude, work ethic, and commitment gave some promise of their continued service of their community as a teacher at Thomas Carr Howe or Emmerich Manual High School. In so doing, we lost no agreements at all last school year. We did not even lose a single teacher of one of our dual credit agreements to turnover. In fact, we had more agreements than there were students to fill the seats! Everything ran beautifully, and in my sincere estimation it is a solid pledge of future successes which will be enjoyed by these schools who are under the CSUSA Charter here in Indianapolis. These are just a few examples of the prudence and practical genius I had the privilege of witnessing during the three years I have worked with them. I can likewise attest to the sky-high standards of professionalism in the administration of these schools. Being tasked with many responsibilities and duties - more than the usual high school administrator - each of them have calmly handled every task at hand, some of these tasks quite difficult for the ordinary administrator, with exceptional grace, composure, and always with a deeper insight. Each has been immediately responsive to e-mails, phone calls, and any issues which involved their students’ opportunities to earn the dual credit attached to their course sections, but also they have demonstrated a high level of ethics and personal integrity, working with us and abiding by all deadlines, procedures, terms of dual credit with both the state and the college, and followed all rules to the letter. Again, I certainly could not say that about all of the schools for whom I manage their dual credit. While the administration has been excellent, in all truth, everyone I have encountered at the CSUSA schools has been most pleasant to work with – teachers, staff, and the administration. These are professionals who have a heart to serve – they have solid ideals and high standards which they work to meet within the framework of each day at these schools. Every time I call T.C. Howe High School, I am greeted with a positive voice: “It’s a great day here at T.C. Howe High School! How may I direct your call?” In all truth the individuals I have worked with at these schools know the value of every day; it really is a great day at T.C. Howe regardless of the challenges

that individual day might bring. As far as the concrete benefits they offer to their students and to our community at large, while I cannot speak as to all of what they offer – though I wish I could – certainly from the dual credit and professional development standpoint, I can definitely vouch for their high efforts and success in this field. The aim of our CSUSA Schools here is that their students have the opportunity to earn a large amount of intentionally-directed, transferrable college credit upon high school graduation or the first firm steps towards mastering skills in a professional trade. In this way, Ivy Tech has very nicely been able to partner with Emmerich Manual and Thomas Carr Howe High Schools for the past several years, and most especially in the past two years. Some examples of this are the absolute strength of the welding program at Emmerich Manual High School, which rivals that of some of our best career centers in the state. For students who successfully complete both years of the welding curriculum, they can move forward with 15 earned college credit in welding, and they can already begin a profitable career with the skills of the trade they received or – as it is encouraged – to complete their full welding certification at either Ivy Tech or a professional trade school to solidify further what they already received from Emmerich Manual High School. At both Emmerich Manual and Thomas Carr Howe High Schools, there was a student demand for Health Science programs, which allowed students the opportunity to earn 11 college credits in this field, alongside the CNA certification for the state of Indiana. This professional credential gives these students an immediate pathway into a hugely in-demand job straight out of high school. They are presently working to find some strategies to re-incorporate the Health Sciences back into their high schools as an even more concentrated and intentional pathway. Likewise, between both schools, Emmerich Manual and T.C. Howe, they have most of the Statewide General Education Transfer Core curriculum. With embedded college courses in English, math, US history, and the hard sciences at Emmerich Manual, and with courses in world languages, chemistry, and the potential for social sciences at Thomas Carr Howe, these schools meet most of the 30 college credit hours required for the STGEC. And this says nothing of the transferrable and solid credits offered in business-related coursework, visual communications, hospitality, and various other Career-Tech. Ed. (CTE) related fields. It is not unusual for students to graduate from these schools with up to 26+ college credits earned in various subjects – a full year of college done. It spurs them on to a confidence which they may not have experienced previously, especially given some of the students' backgrounds. To illustrate this last point, I should mention that both high schools serve a wide range of students from very diverse backgrounds. At Emmerich Manual especially, the Burmese population among the students they serve have endured trials of which our own US-born students can scarcely imagine, and these wonderful young people especially take full advantage of these opportunities offered at this CSUSA school with great success. We all listened, tearfully, as one young man's story was read during an awards ceremony at Emmerich Manual High School. He was offered a very prestigious scholarship from a local organization, and as he walked on stage to humbly and graciously accept the award, everyone rose to their feet in applause in sheer admiration of their quiet classmate, whose optimism and gratitude for his experience at Emmerich Manual, and for the future opportunities in the United States, shone clearly on his face. Emmerich Manual High School offered this young man the tools to move forward with the life which as a child he never thought existed. One area which I have not directly observed or overseen, but that I likewise believe that I can offer at least some insight on would be the discipline and loyalty taught to students through the Junior ROTC Program offered at both campuses. This program offers students the much needed 'soft skill' of discipline and grit all too lacking in our society. A large part of the problems in modern society has to do with a real lack of commitment, but under the guidance of former law enforcement and military, students at these schools are especially given the opportunity to maximize their own potentials through the character traits they learn in JROTC: respect, sacrifice, loyalty, fortitude, tenacity, and patriotism. I had the privilege of presenting a few scholarships to students at Emmerich Manual and Thomas Carr Howe High Schools over the past few years, and the gravity and respect with which they treated our country's flag was such as to catch just a glimpse of these excellent habits they received within

this program. Finally, even those endeavors which did not work out as planned had a value of their own and fueled thorough strategy for future endeavors. On a few occasions these schools made concerted efforts to put together an early college program, a strategic dual credit model which ambitiously attempts to give students the opportunity at an associate's degree or 30+ college credit hour professional credential immediately upon graduation from high school. At least in the state of Indiana, for multiple reasons, it is not a program which can be sustained in the vast majority of school buildings. The credentialing and building phases of the project is a major one which spans over years, and even for those high schools who have this opportunity for a time, it can be very hard to maintain with so many moving parts in the mix. The very fact these high schools tried – and made a real effort to meet those first steps – speaks to the superiority of the programming offered by these CSUSA schools and their committed administration. As our state has lately come out with some new graduation pathways and some other initiatives to help make sustaining an early college model easier, I have no doubt whatsoever that Emmerich Manual High School and Thomas Carr Howe High School will be able to maintain such an ambitious program in coming years with the right administration, faculty, and committed group of students to fill those ranks. As I said, it is at present very difficult to put together and maintain such a program, but the efforts of the staff at Manual and Howe speaks volumes as to the lengths they are willing to go to foster post-secondary success for the students they serve. I conclude by expressing my deepest admiration for the people with whom I have worked at Emmerich Manual and Thomas Carr Howe High Schools in Indianapolis. These are individuals whose loyalty, energy, and hard work absolutely does not – and cannot – go unnoticed. Recently, due to some new structuring in our dual credit department on campus, I needed to give place to another assistant director recently assigned to handle the dual credit arrangements we have with the two CSUSA Charter Schools here in Indianapolis. Admittedly, it was very difficult for me to need to give that place, as working with the individuals at Emmerich Manual and T.C. Howe have been a source of encouragement to me in witnessing all the efforts they pour out to open opportunities for their students, and – if I can use the term again – the real genius with which they do so. It is my sincere hope that future opportunities and successes can continue to be possible – and to grow – here in Indianapolis with the great help and leadership of our CSUSA schools.

Kavita Mahoney, Manager, Garfield Park Arts Center

- My Name is Kavita Mahoney, and I am representing the Garfield Park Arts Center. I am also a long time community Partner with Emma Donnan Elementary and Middle School; supporting the school for over two years. As I have said many times, I was very skeptical about the turnaround process and the arrival of Charter Schools. Over the years, the school has been overall transparent about their needs, as well as their growth and success. I have been thrilled to witness the overall academic growth and success of both the elementary and middle school. I have enjoyed the ability to be involved in the cultural growth of the schools as a faith based organization. I am here not only representing myself, but the other community partners who attend monthly meetings at the school, volunteer at the school, and contribute to programs that take place at Emma Donnan, and on behalf of the group present with me today, we ask for your vote today for the plan to pursue a charter.

Charles Haynes, Associate Director of Admissions Diversity and Community Outreach, Ball State University

- As a proud community member and resident of the City of Indianapolis who work as a higher education professional with a state university, I fully support Mr. Kendall Price in his work and the great staff at Thomas Carr Howe Community and Emmerich Manual High Schools in their efforts to educate, empower and elevate students to higher horizons and the necessary academic skills to be successful in negotiating high school graduation and their pathway to postsecondary education and/or job readiness training. I believe this work is so essential to ensure our students in these schools have the proper preparation to be successful at the next level and to compete in the workforce. The individuals at

these two schools are invested in making a difference in the lives of their students. I fully endorse Thomas Carr Howe Community School and Emmerich Manual High School in becoming public charter schools and look forward to working with Mr. Price and his colleagues in the future.

Meredith Townsend, Special Education Teacher and READ 180 Teacher, Emma Donnan Elementary and Middle School

- I am writing to show my support for Emma Donnan Elementary and Middle School. I currently teach Special Education for our 7th and 8th middle school. In addition, I teach two READ 180 classes that focus on reading and writing skills. My students have already made improvements with the skills and concepts needed in all core subjects and that will be used in future grade levels. This is my third year teaching at Emma Donnan, as I previously taught 4th grade my first year at this school and was pleased to have one of the highest growth scores in ELA across the elementary level. I know the needs that I am meeting on a daily basis provide a quality education for my students. I am committed to the growth and achievement of all students at Emma Donnan and for the Indianapolis community. I am proud that our school is higher performing than the comparable local elementary and middle schools. I am committed to helping every child perform better than the previous year and for our school to continue to strive for excellence. Thank you for committing to educational excellence within our community. I look forward to seeing our school continue to be open as a public charter school on the South side of Indianapolis.

Aryn Schounce, Southside Community Representative - School Transition Taskforce Member - Garfield Park Neighbors Association, Education Committee

- My name is Aryn Schounce and I was the south side community representative for the State Board of Education's School Transition Taskforce for the three takeovers schools that are being considered for charter authorization. I am also the past president and long-time board member of the Garfield Park Neighbors Association, past Vice Chair of the South Indy Quality of Life Advisory Board, and current member of the Garfield Park Neighbors Association Education Committee. More importantly, I am the mother of two little boys ages four and four months. I have been working with southside community leaders since the Transition Taskforce began and I write to you today as a concerned community member and concerned mother who is asking the Indiana Charter School Board to stand alongside us as we advocate for high quality education and accountability for Emma Donnan Middle School and Manual High School. During the Taskforce process, I was exposed to concerning data, questionable representation of information to the public, reluctance to provide information requested by the community, and a general lack of vision and commitment to long-term sustainability by Charter Schools USA. These charter applications submitted by CSUSA's affiliated nonprofit entities - ReThink Forward and Noble Education Initiatives - only further validate these concerns. In their vision for the growth, the application cites community input from the Transition Taskforce, a process that was inherently flawed and misrepresented community input. A statement detailing the comprehensive failure of the School Transition Taskforce will be submitted for public comment along with a letter signed in March by community leaders representing more than nine southside neighborhoods, community partners, and elected officials requesting the State Board of Education delay their vote by 30 days to consider alternative paths with IPS, which was ultimately denied. But I would like to focus on the applicant's vision for growth to note the ways in which community might be defined and how the applicant ultimately fails to understand why community is important for their success. The community, defined as the families living in neighborhoods that are in proximity to Emma Donnan and Manual High School, have stated they do not support CSUSA's practices and have demanded accountability and responsiveness. A request that has gone unanswered. The community, defined by the broader universe of potential students and families in Indianapolis, are not being reached by proven methods like participation in Enroll Indy or Showcase of Schools due to a refusal by CSUSA to participate. The community, defined as a group of past Manual and Donnan graduates, have been engaged not because of

CSUSA but because of their enduring passion for their alma mater. They do not, however, represent the majority of young families with children living near the schools – which is inarguably the most critical demographic of people if these schools want to grow their enrollment and support. Our coalition's offers to have an open a dialogue with the ReThink Forward Board Chair have been ignored, which signals to me that community is defined differently by this group. I am emphasizing this point because without families with children like mine and those represented by the Southside Education Community Coalition enrolling in these schools, the schools will fail. Because of the Taskforce experience, and the alarming developments since the Taskforce's work concluded around homeschooling, our community coalition comprised of multiple southside neighborhoods, supports IPS's decision to not renew the innovation partnership with CSUSA for Emma Donnan Elementary and to request the State Board of Education turn the middle school back over to IPS so that a high-quality, stable K-8 option can be pursued. As you likely read in the news, Manual High School and TC Howe stand out among their peers in the state for padding graduation rates by directing students to homeschool rather than count them as dropouts. At Manual, for every 50 graduates, there were 36 who left to homeschool – a rate that is 12 times the state average. This is unacceptable to the community and must be addressed regardless of whether your esteemed body authorizes a charter. Specifically, the school data reported should be further examined to ensure compliance and the schools should be regraded if the data demonstrates the need to do so. Further, those who oversaw the school including CSUSA administration and their affiliates should be held accountable for this unethical and possibly fraudulent (completing paperwork without parents' knowledge) activity. Lastly, the community has been in active discussions with the IPS Administration and Board of Commissioners to explore alternative paths for Manual High School. We request that you engage IPS before making your determination for charter authorization. Further, should you authorize charters for any of these three schools, the community requests the following: • Explicit community engagement and accountability to the community, including stricter board requirements; • Enhanced oversight due to the past track record for inaccurate reporting and concerning practices as well as a lack of independence from CSUSA by the nonprofit affiliates applicants; • Prohibition from accessing the public facilities for \$1 due to the lack of consistency with state law and harm to taxpayers. Thank you for considering our concerns and for you time and efforts to provide high-quality, educational opportunities for Indiana children. Our coalition urges you to support the children of Indianapolis' southside by examining the issues we have raised and ensuring accountability and transparency, should the Board decide to authorize charters ReThink Forward and Noble Education Initiative.