

Thank you for allowing me to provide comments. My name is Jenn Cinelli and I am a parent of a child with Autism and a Special Education Volunteer – while I live in Sussex County, I support families across the state with IEP meeting assistance and I have worked with Legislators to get legislation passed to help not only special ed students but at risk children as well.

First and foremost, I do not object to Charter Schools and feel that under a limited construct, they can be very beneficial. However, what has happened in DE is a bleeding of our public school system resources in order to create Charters that are glorified private schools being funded with public funds. To explain why I hold this view I only need to point to Sussex Montessori which is a Catholic Church based teaching method that is now a Charter. Most experiences parents of spec ed students have with Charter Schools is at best not good and at worst horrific. This is not Equity this is preference, and it is feeding privilege. We as a State need to turn our focus back to our public school systems and make them better for all of our students. I agree with Dr. Nobel – smaller is better and reducing student counts will make our schools so much more effective. If COVID taught us anything it is that traditional schools are failing at every level. Our teachers and staff are superheroes who have been stepping up and giving 200% or more on a daily basis. Please consider this when making future decisions. It's time to pause the Charter approvals. I would ask the Board to consider requesting this of our Legislators. We need to and have to do better. Thank you.