

[External] Bryan Allen Stevenson school

From Regina Tallas 

Date Wed 2/18/2026 12:42 PM

To infocso <infocso.DOE@doe.k12.de.us>

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My child attends this school and there's been nothing but tears and anxiety for her. The teachers and principal are bullies.. They wouldn't allow me to transfer my daughter back to her district school. I felt this was only for there best interest not hers. She will not be returning. Also when you ask for documents to be filled out and sent back. They take over a month. I do not support keeping this school open. Thank you for your time.

[External] Bryan Allen Stevenson School Of Excellence

From Kat Michelle [REDACTED]

Date Wed 2/18/2026 10:19 AM

To infocso <infocso.DOE@doe.k12.de.us>

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Good morning, I can across the new article based on this school. And I wanted to give my honest opinion as a parent who had a child there short term. My child went when it first opened. First impressions it was horrible building resembles jail and I don't mean the "normal" metal detectors and other things some schools have. I mean the locked gate, big numbers outside the classroom doors (as jail cells) which I see as a safety issue if someone wanted to cause harm. The staff were very unpleasant and unprofessional more then half the building was closed for opening day due to staff shortage and a lady named Chantelle ashford stated a classroom as falling in supposedly. She was very unprofessional and unpleasant any concerns you had she completely ignored and have no care for parents concerns. A male teacher threaten female students and there was a video and her and the office said they would be putting cellphone blockers in so students can no longer video or contact parents during school hours about what was going on. This does not fix this issue that only raises more concerns as you knew what was going on but they wanted to cover up every possible situation. My daughter had absolutely no grades in 6 months of school none call the school "oh we haven't done any grades. Kids making threats to other children and they stated they wouldn't interfere until a child got hurt, at that point it would be to late. No school work was ever given my child learned absolutely nothing in the months she was there. She stated they would play board games, talk amongst friends or have freedom to cellphone use. I was there almost every day with my concerns and other parents came in daily as well, our concerns were being thrown under a rug they wouldn't allow parents inside the school anymore unless they had a doctors appointment for the children. My daughter was denied free meals multiple times even brought this up to mrs ashford and other staff as I did the paperwork correctly on time and my child still would come home multiple times telling me she was denied meals and the response I was given was "oh her account must be mixed up with another student" that is extremely unacceptable as no child should be denied free meals. This "school" should of never been allowed to open at all. They weren't ready, no where close to ready and still years later it should not be opened. It has not made any improvements at all. This school had years to make improvements, fix concerns, but students being removed by parents, safety concerns, academic concerns nothing has changed at all. I truly believe this school closing down is the best opportunity and safest option. It would give a chance to another person potential to maybe reopen in another name under different circumstances "head of school" better owners a civil rights lawyer owns this

school and this is the "best" he can do? If nobody sees a problem there. We need more charter schools yes but this basse school needs to be shut down. This school is so bad I put my child back into public school as I felt it was a safer option, if I kept my child at basse I expected the worse to happen to my child or someone else. I hope you take my personal experience and opinion into consideration about the decision of closing at the end of the year. As well as other parents opinions because at the end of the day it's the children suffering.

[External] Comment BASSE

From Maria Rogers [REDACTED]

Date Thu 2/19/2026 1:26 PM

To infocso <infocso.DOE@doe.k12.de.us>

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Hello I am a parent that did have a student enrolled there we pulled him out because there was no communications between parents and administration staff. They weren't equipped to deal with kids with special needs. I pulled him and started homeschool him because his home school wouldn't let him come back. I truly think the school should go back to the drawing board. They aren't ready and it's a shame that the teachers have to do double the work. They need more teacher support like paraprofessionals they can help in the classrooms or even help with writing the goals for the IEP's or helping guide the students with the disabilities or learning disabilities especially if they have ADHD or ASD or LD. they're just not equipped, especially having kids with sensory issues.

Thank You,
M.Rogers

[External] Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence Opinion

From [REDACTED]
Date Wed 2/18/2026 3:35 PM
To infocso <infocso.DOE@doe.k12.de.us>

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Hello, I am a student of BASSE and want to share my perspective with you about the school. First, we have a major student decline. From the year it opened to present time, kids have been leaving left and right! Mostly because they feel our education is at risk. I also feel this way. I feel like I'm not learning to my full potential and my education is slipping.

Second, we have low teacher numbers. Same thing with the students. Last year, almost all of our teachers left because of how disorganized and lazy our system was. This year, 3 teachers have left because of the major work load they were getting as there were not enough teachers for it all.

Personally, I came from a good school. However, I left because I thought I would have a better chance here as they promised sports, clubs, and AVID classes. We have none of that. The only club we have is the volleyball club. The volleyball club is ran by our old science teacher who left last Friday. Third, my education isn't what its supposed to be. I'm terribly bored in this school. I feel as if we're being taught the wrong curriculum sometimes and that makes me upset. Considering how I came here to be excellent, I don't feel it.

Lastly, I don't have time to risk my education!!! I try hard in school because I want to go somewhere in life. I have a goal set in mind for my future. I feel that if I don't have the materials and knowledge for that goal then I'm going to fail. I hate failing. I don't want to seem cocky or over confident but I feel as I have a better chance striving at another school, a stable school than a growing one.

In conclusion, you don't have to take me into full consideration as I'm just a student. This is just a perceptive to add to your knowledge about our school and how it's been operating.

Sincerely, anonymous student at BASSE

[External] Public Comment re: Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence

From Meghan Hill [REDACTED]
Date Wed 2/18/2026 1:13 PM
To infocso <infocso.DOE@doe.k12.de.us>

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Good afternoon.

I am writing to respectfully urge you to keep the Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence (BASSE) open, as it has had a profound and life-changing impact on my daughter. Although I am unable to participate in the public comment session in March, it is very important to me that my perspective be included as you consider the future of this school.

My daughter has been attending BASSE since last year. Prior to enrolling, she experienced repeated bullying at two different schools, including in-person verbal threats and cyberbullying, which escalated to threats of physical violence that went unchecked. As a result, she reached a point where she no longer felt safe attending school at all. Mentally and emotionally, she was in the lowest place I had ever seen her, and as a parent, I was deeply concerned for her well-being.

When we first came to BASSE, my daughter was in 8th grade, and it was still early in the school year, just around Halloween. We quite literally showed up at the school and asked if there was someone who could help us. From the very first interaction, Chantalle Ashford was nothing short of welcoming, compassionate, and empathetic. She listened to our story, validated our concerns, and immediately reassured us that there was a place for my daughter at BASSE. She was also honest that the school was still working through some challenges and asked for grace, which I agreed would need to be a two-way street, as my daughter required significant rebuilding after years of being torn down in previous school environments.

Once the necessary paperwork was completed, my daughter was able to start the following Monday. While there were—and may still be—opportunities for growth, I can say unequivocally that BASSE is the safest and most confident my daughter has felt in a school in years, possibly ever. The staff has taken the time to truly know her as a whole person. They understand her emotional needs, her mental health challenges, and her academic strengths and weaknesses, and they have supported her in ways no other school has.

I am aware that low enrollment has been cited as a concern or potential reason for revoking the charter. However, I firmly believe that this smaller environment is precisely what has allowed BASSE to connect with students like my daughter—students who need additional attention, trust-building, and care after being repeatedly failed elsewhere. That individualized support has made all the difference in her ability to heal, grow, and reengage with school.

One clear example of this support was the comprehensive nature of our first IEP meeting at BASSE. My daughter has a stutter and requires speech services, and this was the first time she was invited to actively participate in her own IEP meeting, which we both agreed was incredibly valuable. It was also

the only meeting where her IEP was reviewed in its entirety and where we received meaningful input from multiple members of the school team, not just the Special Education Coordinator and Speech Pathologist. Seeing this level of dedication to students requiring special services gave me great confidence that the same care and attention are extended to all students. It is clear that the teachers and administrators take their roles seriously and consistently act in the best interest of their students.

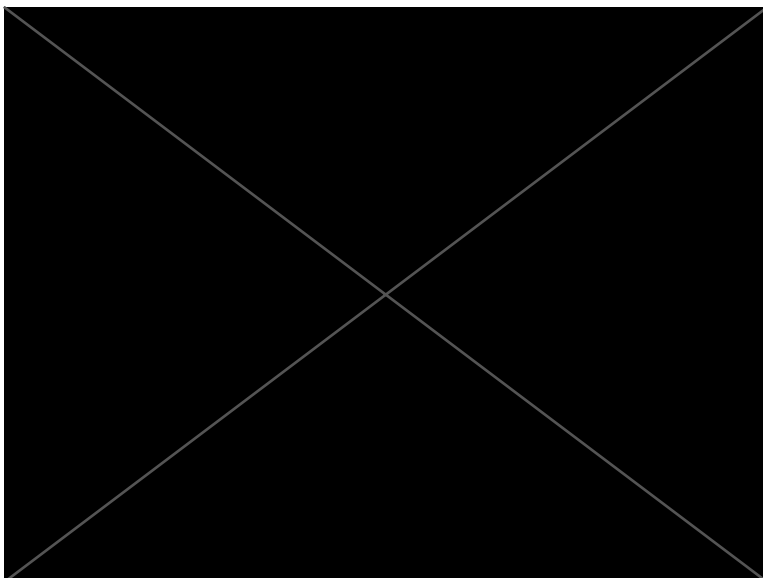
Today, my daughter is a freshman at BASSE. I have seen clear improvements in the curriculum from year to year, and she is being challenged more academically than she was previously. Just as importantly, she enjoys the work she is doing and does not feel that she is missing out academically, which had been a concern at certain points last year. She has also formed meaningful, lasting friendships, begun to find herself, come out of her shell, and rebuilt confidence that once seemed lost. After years of being let down by peers, she was finally able to tell me—with pride—that she had a friend group. She was beaming.

This sense of belonging became even more evident when our family hosted our annual Halloween party this year. For the first time ever, she asked to invite friends from school. What started as a small gathering turned into about ten classmates attending, with six girls staying the night. This was something that had never happened before, and she was so proud to be able to host her friends. Moments like these reflect the deep personal growth she has experienced as a direct result of the environment BASSE provides.

BASSE is also unlike other schools with which I am familiar because of the level of accountability it maintains regarding peer interactions and student behavior. Bullying is not tolerated, and reports are taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. The school actively promotes a culture of inclusion and respect. My daughter no longer comes home with stories of hallway fights, vaping in bathrooms, or cruel comments in the lunchroom. The smaller student population—even at full enrollment—creates a calmer, more structured environment that limits chaos and reduces opportunities for conflict. Additionally, small class sizes encourage students to branch out, build relationships beyond typical social circles, and learn how to work with and learn from peers who may be different from them. The result is a school culture that is far less cliquey and far more supportive.

Closing BASSE would mean taking away a school that has given my child safety, belonging, and hope. I respectfully urge you to consider the real, human impact this school has had on students and families like ours as you make your decision.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to serving students who need supportive and alternative educational environments in order to truly succeed.



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[External] Our Child Is Thriving at BASSE – Please Don't Take This Away

From Candice Kinsler [REDACTED]
Date Wed 2/18/2026 6:08 PM
To infocso <infocso.DOE@doe.k12.de.us>

WARNING: External Email - This email originated outside of the State email system.
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Dear Cindy Marten and Members of the Delaware Department of Education,

I am writing to you not as a policymaker or an expert in education, but as a mother pleading for her child's future.

My daughter's life has been transformed by Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence (BASSE). Before attending this school, she struggled deeply. School was a source of anxiety, frustration, and discouragement. She did not feel successful, understood, or supported in the ways she needed most.

Today, she loves school. She is learning. She is confident. She feels safe. That change did not happen by accident—it happened because BASSE took the time to understand her individual needs and put meaningful supports in place.

My daughter has multiple IEPs and is simply not suited for a typical classroom setting. The structure, attention, and accommodations she receives at BASSE have allowed her to thrive academically and emotionally. Forcing her to return to her sending public school would set her back tremendously. The academic regression alone would be devastating, but the emotional toll could be even greater. She finally feels capable and proud of herself. Taking that away would undo years of progress.

I understand that decisions about school closures involve data and accountability. But behind every data point is a child like mine. Behind every performance metric is a family whose life has been changed for the better.

We may be just one family, but to us this school is everything. It has been life-changing for our child and for her future success. Schools are not built overnight. Culture, systems, and progress take time. We are humbly asking you to give BASSE one more year to continue the work it has begun—to allow improvements to take root and for students like my daughter to remain in the environment where they are finally thriving.

Please consider the real children whose futures hang in the balance. Please consider the emotional and academic impact this decision will have on students with special needs who have finally found a place where they belong.

For our child's sake and for the sake of so many others—please allow this school to remain open and give it the opportunity to turn things around.

With hope and heartfelt gratitude for your consideration,

Candice Kinsler



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[External] BASSE Public Hearing

From [REDACTED]

Date Fri 3/6/2026 7:07 AM

To infocso <infocso.DOE@doe.k12.de.us>

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Hello! I am a student of the Bryan Allen Stevenson school of Excellence. My mom spoke a bit at the zoom meeting, but I figured I would comment myself, since student voices were the vision of the school. Some of my points are very similar to what she said, but there are some more details I touched on. Please acknowledge and/or take into account my perspective and experience as you read on.

First, I personally regret my decision to come to this school. I went to a fantastic elementary school, with gifted and talented classes, tons of programs, and teachers who made personal connections. I even skipped a grade. However, I got accepted into BASSE. I was thrilled! Me and my mom loved the vision of the school, the student inclusion, and the independence in it all. I saw it as a place to grow my academic knowledge and build strong relationships. While I have met some amazing people, I feel I lost that strong relationship with teachers. I'll touch on that later. I noticed most of the parents in the zoom meeting talked about their children with special needs thriving here. I think that is good for them, that they are learning. I just wanted to explain that I was a very advanced student, and that I didn't come here out of need for a private school.

Second, I feel my education is taking a hit. This joins the lack of advanced learning and the loss of teachers. Last year, in seventh grade, there was a sudden drop in teachers. Both history teachers left, the Spanish teacher, both science teachers, an ELA teacher, a math teacher, and our art teacher. The school leaders were constantly being replaced, and every connection you started with any teacher was abruptly cut off. This year, it started off fantastic. Until our math and English teacher left, who were from the very start. Then, our science teacher left pretty recently. That same worry came right back, and once again we feared for our future. We've seen substitutes come and go, and some pretty wild teachers too. For instance, one teacher only fills in when the substitute is absent. A teacher with a degree hands the classes to a substitute likely with no degree. Throughout this, our many teachers and substitutes have started on different parts of the same topics. I know lots of different fragments of different things, but never the full knowledge. Our math teacher had me in algebra, and things were going great. When she left, the teacher who currently has replaced her teaches 5th grade and 6th grade curriculums to build up to the 8th grade level. I also noticed in the last zoom that I didn't see many teachers. That's something we're missing- the teacher's voice. Last year, and now this year, I have constantly struggled with the importance of my future over the importance of my education. I'm glad to say I will not be returning, and I'm hopeful my education will begin to thrive again after leaving BASSE.

Finally, there are hardly any students! It started off with plenty of people and so many different opportunities. They started leaving one by one, and now we only have 15 or less people per class. Most of them don't even show up. At first, and I admit, I was happy. People who always complained about the school and never just stuck it out were

leaving! However, that was until more than half left. Our students, teachers, and our mortality were slowly chipping away. Some sooner than others. I cannot name everybody who left the school. This has further frayed our relationships, connections, and social confidence. Additionally, there aren't enough clubs! There is one club, which is the volleyball club. Last year, we added a whole hour dedicated to clubs and programs. They used that hour and divided it between classes, which was another hour of sitting bored. We were told cross country was going to start this year, but there have been no plans. Our old science teacher created the volleyball club, and she left, so I doubt we're gonna get any more sports. However, in the midst of all this, there is still a lot of good things. In a pitch black room, a sliver of sunshine is a lifeline. Me and my friends have made unforgettable memories, which include jokes, card games, random made-up games, stories, anything to pass the time. I've made valuable friends and important memories, even though I've missed out on most of the middle school experience. I've also met some amazing teachers, and I'll never forget that.

In conclusion, I do not think this school should stay open. In school, many of the leaders tell us even if we don't return, we should help it stay open for the next kid. I wouldn't wish this school on my worst enemy. I have gone through stress, worry, and fear having my education and comfort on the line. However, I will forever remember the things I went through, and it has made me so much more grateful for seemingly ordinary things, like a library, which we don't have. I'm glad the school has worked out for some kids, but as somebody who strives to be above and beyond it is not suiting. In short terms, this school doesn't do justice to the Bryan Stevenson name. I appreciate your time and consideration. Thank you.



Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to share my comment.

My name is Breanna Shuhart, and I am the parent of a 7th grade student at The Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence.

We made the decision to enroll our daughter at BASSE after she struggled for years with reading in her previous public school. Despite the efforts of the school, we felt that the resources and support available there simply were not helping her thrive.

The difference BASSE has made for our child in just two years has been incredible.

When she first came to BASSE, she was reading at about a 5th grade level. Today, she is reading at a 9th grade level. But even more important than that growth is the confidence she has gained along the way. Because of the smaller class sizes and the support of the special education team, she has received the attention and individualized support she needed to truly grow.

The special education department at BASSE has exceeded every expectation we had as parents. Our daughter now feels confident advocating for herself when she needs additional help, something she never would have felt comfortable doing before.

That kind of growth does not happen by accident. It happens when students are supported by educators who are committed to meeting them where they are and helping them move forward.

I also want to acknowledge something that many of us in this room already know: the first year of BASSE was not smooth sailing. There were challenges, and as parents we all saw them. However, the changes that have taken place this year have been meaningful, and many of us have seen real improvement.

While enrollment may not currently be at the target level, I believe the fact that families have chosen to stay should speak volumes. In a year when the school has been under the threat of closure, expecting enrollment growth is not a realistic measure of success. BASSE is still working to rebuild trust and its reputation in the community, and that kind of progress takes time.

Closing BASSE now would not give the school the opportunity to continue the progress that has clearly begun.

Most importantly, closing BASSE would disrupt the education of students like my daughter, who are finally thriving. I worry that if this school closes, she will be forced to return to the same environment where she previously struggled and could potentially lose the progress she has worked so hard to achieve.

I respectfully ask the Department of Education to consider the real impact this decision will have on students and families and allow BASSE the time it needs to continue building on the progress that has been made.

Thank you for your time and for listening to the voices of the families who depend on this school.

[External] Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence Issues

From Daddy Paul [REDACTED]
Date Mon 3/9/2026 9:47 AM
To infocso <infocso.DOE@doe.k12.de.us>

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Hello,

I am writing to express concern about the continued operation of a school that has consistently failed to meet acceptable academic and operational standards. When a school repeatedly underperforms, it limits students' opportunities for a quality education and diverts public resources away from more effective solutions. Keeping a failing school open without meaningful improvement can prolong poor outcomes for students, undermine community confidence in the education system, and delay the implementation of stronger educational options.

I would also like to state that I myself having worked inside this building having seen these failures both happen in the previous school year and continue to happen. Classrooms being led by teachers and substitutes that are not teaching subjects. For example just handing out packets and sitting back down. Discipline and safety issues not being properly addressed. Students traveling the halls in groups to spread drama and issues. Staff that sit on their phones during the work day. Employees being denied certain benefits. Extreme staff turnover. Failing grades and then admin manually changing grades to save face. Terrible state testing scores. This all comes as an even greater concern when you take in the fact that these issues began last year and continue now with zero improvement. At some point as a tax paying Delawarean, I and we all must ask ourselves is this model worth dumping more money into with the hopes that it will somehow be straightened out in time to make any difference. I have been told by multiple staff members that BASSE is a place for those who have nowhere to go. I don't necessarily see that as a good thing because those who stay with us for that reason only survive here because we allow them to continue their destructive process on others in the learning environment. With my efforts here, I would say that most if not all of these students would be better served both academically and structurally somewhere else. I hope with this "honest" take on the school you will make the best decision for the students and the investors(tax payers) to close the charter.

Thank you
An Anonymous Staff Member At BASSE

[External] Public Comment

From [REDACTED]
Date Mon 3/9/2026 11:07 AM
To infocso <infocso.DOE@doe.k12.de.us>

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[REDACTED] he comment below is from my daughter, a current 8th grade student at BASSE:

Hello! I am an 8th grade student at the Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence. Since student voices were meant to be part of this school's vision, I wanted to share my own perspective.

First, I regret my decision to come to this school. Before BASSE, I went to a great elementary school with gifted classes, many programs, and teachers who built strong relationships with students. I even skipped a grade. When I got accepted to BASSE, I was excited because my mom and I believed in the vision of the school and hoped it would help me grow academically. While I have met some amazing people here, it has been hard to build strong relationships with teachers.

I also want to explain that I came here as an advanced student. During the Zoom meeting, many parents talked about their children with special needs doing well here, which is great. However, I did not come here because I needed a private school. I came because I believed in the vision.

Second, I feel my education has been affected because so many teachers have left. Last year in seventh grade, multiple teachers left suddenly, including both history teachers, both science teachers, the Spanish teacher, an ELA teacher, a math teacher, and the art teacher. School leadership also kept changing. It made it very hard to build connections or have consistent learning.

This year started well, but then our math and English teacher left, and recently our science teacher left too. Since then, we have had many substitutes and different teachers starting different parts of topics. Because of that, it feels like I've learned small pieces of things instead of fully understanding subjects.

There are also very few students left. When the school first started, there were many students and opportunities, but people slowly left. Now there are about 15 or fewer students per class, and many don't show up regularly. This has made it harder to build friendships and have a normal school experience.

There are also very few clubs or activities. Right now, there is only a volleyball club. Last year we were given an hour for clubs, but it ended up becoming more class time instead.

Even though there have been many challenges, I am grateful for the friendships I've made and the memories with my friends. We've found ways to make the best of things together, and I have also met some teachers I will never forget.

In conclusion, I personally do not think the school should stay open. I would not want other students to go through the stress and uncertainty many of us have experienced with our education. While I will always remember the friendships and memories, I feel my education has been affected. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my perspective.



Alonna Berry
Milton, DE 19968

March 9, 2026

Delaware Department of Education
401 Federal Street
Dover, DE 19901

Re: Public Comment Regarding the Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence

Dear Members of the Delaware Department of Education and Charter School Accountability Committee:

I write to offer formal comment regarding the review and proposed closure of the Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence (BASSE).

My name is Alonna Berry and I am the founder of BASSE. I offer this perspective both as the school's founder and as a member of a family whose roots run deeply within this community.

I was twenty-five years old when I began the journey that ultimately led to the creation of BASSE. The idea did not originate from a policy proposal or strategic document. It began at a kitchen table with a simple question that many families in Sussex County have asked for generations: how can we do better for our children?

At the time, I was traveling across the country studying innovative rural schools through the Rural School Leadership Academy while also serving as an academic coach supporting first- and second-year teachers across Delaware. Those experiences provided a clear view of both the promise and the limitations of our education system. Extraordinary educators and students exist throughout our state. Structural barriers, however, continue to shape opportunity.

Funding gaps and generational inequities are widely recognized across Delaware's education community as barriers within our system. BASSE emerged from those experiences and from a belief that Sussex County families deserved a school built with excellence, dignity, and opportunity at its center.

This story is also deeply personal. My grandparents were not allowed to attend certain schools in this community because of who they were. That history shaped my family and shaped my understanding of how transformative access to education can be. The opportunity to help found a school here represented an effort to honor generations who came before us while creating something different for the generations who will follow.

The journey from concept to opening required seven years of planning, organizing, and community engagement. Seven years of work built BASSE. The proposal to close the school after only two years of operation raises serious concerns regarding equity and fairness.

Educational research consistently demonstrates that meaningful school improvement requires time. Many studies indicate that five years is the minimum period necessary to fully implement and evaluate significant educational change. The charter law itself reflects this understanding by providing a structure that allows schools to refine their models and incorporate lessons learned during the early years of operation.

Two years is not a sufficient period to determine the long-term viability of a school. A probationary year would allow BASSE to implement the lessons learned from years one and two while demonstrating the impact of structural changes already underway. Such an approach would align with both the intent and the spirit of the charter accountability process.

Financial context must also be considered. Research consistently identifies financial instability as the leading cause of charter school closures nationally. In Delaware, that challenge is closely tied to a school funding formula that is widely acknowledged to be inequitable. Leaders across the state have recognized this reality, and recommendations are currently under consideration to modernize the funding system to better support schools and students.

Closing BASSE before the school can operate within an updated and more equitable funding framework would be premature. Fiscal progress should also be evaluated considering forward planning. If the school can operate a balanced budget in the upcoming fiscal year, that progress should be considered as part of the overall assessment.

Lastly, my final concern relates to the decision-making process itself. Any process that allows for the closure of a school without decision makers visiting the school and observing student learning firsthand is deeply troubling. Schools are not simply data points or financial reports. They are living communities of students, educators, and families. No decision to close a school should be made without stepping inside the building, observing classrooms, and engaging directly with the learning environment.

The Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence represents far more than a single institution. It represents families who believed their voices mattered. It represents educators who believed innovation could exist within public education. It represents generations striving to expand opportunity for the next generation. Seven years of planning built this school. Closing it after only two years of operation would be inequitable and premature.

I respectfully urge the Department to consider an alternative path that allows BASSE the time necessary to demonstrate progress and stability.

Respectfully submitted,



Alonna Berry

Founder

The Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence



BRYAN ALLEN STEVENSON SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

March 9, 2026

Ms. Cynthia Marten
Secretary, Delaware Department of Education
John G. Townsend Building
401 Federal Street Suite 2
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Secretary Marten,

I serve on the Board of Directors of the Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence (BASSE). I have been working with the school since 2018 and am excited about our future. While I respect CSAC's interest in ensuring quality education for all students, I consider it extraordinarily premature to reach the conclusion that BASSE cannot provide a quality education for our students just eighteen months since we opened the doors. I am further concerned that the critiques leveled against the school related to organizational, enrollment and financial issues address issues primarily related to our first year of operation. BASSE has intentionally done what no other school in the county (with the possible exception of Sussex Tech) has done...our student body reflects the demographic and economic profile of school aged children in Sussex County—13% of our students are Hispanic, 23% are African American and the remainder are White or Asian. Close to 38% of our students have special needs/learning accommodations...and *all* of our students are getting quality education. We need more students, yes, and we are confident we can recruit sufficient numbers of students to support our staffing needs for next year. Please review more specific support for these statements below.

Organizational

In September 2024 students from 44 different schools throughout Sussex County, plus a number of students who had previously been home-schooled walked through the doors of the Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence (BASSE). While the school's mission includes a focus on individualized learning and ensuring that all students have equal access to a quality education, we had little to no information about most of the students

joining us in our inaugural year to assist us in meeting their academic and social/emotional learning requirements.

Delaware DOE selected BASSE as one of a handful of schools to test out a new statewide data system called Infinite Campus (IC). There was no capacity for E-School (the existing statewide data system) to transfer data to the new system and BASSE did not have access to E-School. Consequently, we were forced to rely on the 44 schools from which students had arrived, and parents of the home schooled students to provide us with student records which we then had to hand enter into IC. At the time DOE was directing us to online tutorials provided by IC to assist with learning how to use and navigate the new system.

While effective in many ways, neither the first Head of School nor the Interim School Leader, whom we hired in March of 2025, had had direct experience as a charter school Head of School.

So, yes, there were organizational issues in the first year.

By the time the school year began in 2025 the organizational issues were no longer impeding our success. In August we hired a new, experienced Head of School who had also worked previously with the Delaware Department of Education. IC was up and running at BASSE and within DOE. Our Head of School established an Interdisciplinary School Leadership Team, and based on experiences from the first year, set goals for the year and began implementing organizational and structural changes to better support students and staff in reaching their goals of excellence.

Enrollment

Organizational issues had a significant impact on enrollment/retention during our first year. Our September 30, 2024 count was 208 students, and by June of 2025 that number had dropped to 138. In contrast, while the September 30, 2025 count was 123, the current enrollment holds at 119, a retention rate of 98%. By the mid-way through the 2026-2027 school choice enrollment process we had secured 33 applications from potential new students.

On December 19, the day before the two-week winter break, DOE posted a press release that it was placing BASSE under formal review. And on February 17 CSAC announced its recommendation to revoke BASSE's charter. While it can certainly be assumed that these announcements have put a damper on new applicants over the past eight to ten weeks, we anticipate picking up a number of new applicants following the March 20 date when Sussex Academy and Sussex Tech acceptances are due and waitlists are finalized for the two schools.

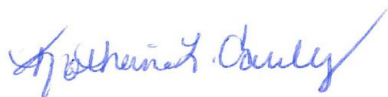
Timing is everything... Students and their families typically choose charter schools for two reasons: they are excited about the mission of a new school or they are dissatisfied with their current schooling experience. While BASSE has a number of students and families excited about our mission, just eighteen months after opening the school we are still not well known in the county. Last year's experience, however, leads us to anticipate a number of new applicants after the March 20 date when close to 2000 students learn they have not been accepted in the first round of admissions for the two other charter schools in the county.

Finance

In Fall of 2025, our enrollment did not justify our budget. The new Head of School made necessary changes to staffing to balance the budget based on our enrollment and we are currently operating with a budget surplus. Complicating our management and reporting of budgetary issues, however, was the fact that a charter school in Kent County with whom we had contracted since December of 2024 to assist us with personnel and financial issues abruptly canceled the contract effective September 30, 2025 affording little opportunity for a smooth transition to our new leadership. This meant our new Head of School was faced with having to secure relevant documentation and records from the contractor, and to immediately set up new budgetary management and reporting processes, both internally and with the State. We found we were not responding to vendors in a timely fashion, and worked hard to get back up to speed. Regardless of these difficulties, we are currently operating with a budget surplus, and have strengthened internal fiscal processes.


Having addressed and resolved the issues of the first eighteen months, we are more than ready to continue to grow and thrive.

Sincerely,



Katherine Cauley, PhD
Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence
Board of Directors, Secretary

[External] BASSE information

From Carey McDaniel 
Date Mon 3/9/2026 5:58 PM
To infocso <infocso.DOE@doe.k12.de.us>

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Dear Secretary,

I am writing to ask you to extend the charter of BASSE in Georgetown, DE for at least one more year.

I believe that having more school choices makes all of our schools better. They don't threaten each other. Instead, they complement each other- and serve our young people to the best of their abilities. We need to improve our school opportunities for our children and we need to improve our test scores. I think BASSE is capable of that.

I realize the enrollment is low, and I think we as a community can recruit better for the school. I think they can run the school better. I know they can communicate better. And I think BASSE is ready.

I hope that you will allow the community to have this excellent opportunity for a while longer. I ask that you allow BASSE to continue to grow and make a stronger 1,5 and 10 year plan.

I'd love to see them succeed.

Thank you for considering!

Carey McDaniel (302) 632-9409

Del Tech Owens Campus employee

Sent from my iPhone

[External] BASSE Public Hearing

From Jael [REDACTED]
Date Mon 3/9/2026 5:37 PM
To infocso <infocso.DOE@doe.k12.de.us>; raushann.austin@basse.k12.de <raushann.austin@basse.k12.de>; ashford@basse.k12.de <ashford@basse.k12.de>
Cc Jael Ortiz [REDACTED]

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To whom it may concern

My name is Jael Ortiz, and my daughter, Jayliana, is a 7th-grade student at BASSE. Jayliana has attended BASSE since the school first opened approximately a year and a half ago. During this time, she has grown tremendously both academically and personally. Compared to her previous experience in the Milford School District, BASSE has provided an environment where she has been able to thrive.

One of the most valuable aspects of BASSE is the strong relationship between teachers and students. The teachers know their students individually and develop meaningful connections with them. The school environment is safe, welcoming, and supportive. Additionally, the smaller classroom settings make it easier for students to receive individualized attention and assistance from their teachers.

My daughter has an Individualized Education Program (IEP). At BASSE, Mrs. Schelter and other teachers worked closely with me to identify areas where Jayliana needed additional support. They updated her IEP to address those deficiencies, and since the revisions were made, my daughter has shown significant improvement in her academic progress.

Prior to attending BASSE, my daughter often felt like just another student in a large system. At BASSE, however, she is known by name. The teachers and office staff

recognize her, care about her progress, and actively support her success. This personal attention has made a tremendous difference in her confidence and motivation. She genuinely enjoys going to school each day, looks forward to her classes, and has built strong friendships.

Whenever I had questions regarding assignments or academic expectations, BASSE teachers were always responsive to my emails and phone calls. They consistently worked with me to ensure my daughter stayed on track and succeeded.

My concern now is for the students. If BASSE closes, what will happen to them? Many parents, including myself, enrolled our children in BASSE because the schools in our district were not meeting their needs. While no school is perfect, the small classroom environment and personalized attention at BASSE have been incredibly beneficial for many students.

It has been difficult to see the school portrayed negatively without what appears to be a full understanding of the experiences of students and families. While the school may have faced challenges, it does not seem that it was given adequate time to address and correct those issues. I was also disappointed to see public criticism from state representatives on social media without what seemed to be meaningful engagement with students, teachers, and families at the school.

I respectfully ask the Department of Education to reconsider allowing BASSE to remain open. Doing so would allow students to continue their education in a stable environment without disruption and without feeling that their education and well-being are secondary.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the perspectives of families like mine who have directly experienced the positive impact BASSE has had on our children.

Sincerely,

Jael Ortiz

[External] Letter of Support- Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence

From Joseph H Kim 

  so <infocso.DOE@doe.k12.de.us>

 Hockstein, Neil <neil.hockstein@delaware.gov>; Dr. Teresa Berry <drberry@basseinc.org>

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Dear Secretary Marten,

Good day. I hope you are doing well. As you know, I have been a family physician in Laurel, Delaware for twenty years and I am the current Chair of the DIMER Rural Health Committee. Additionally, my wife, Nicole Evans, Esq., and I started a charitable foundation in 2017, the Kim and Evans Family Foundation, to support disadvantaged people in Sussex County, DE. I am also one of the Founding Board Members for the Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence (BASSE). I am writing in support of the school.

The school has dealt with numerous challenges in its infancy, yet they have continued to persevere and are on the brink of thriving. I am proud to say, despite all the recent obstacles and misinformation, the school has approximately **100 students** for next year! The school was founded on the core values of excellence, equity, community, voice, and hope. Our vision is to foster critically conscious individuals who are self-empowered leaders and advocates for change in our community. However, how can we accomplish this vision if not given a proper opportunity? In healthcare, it takes 2-3 years before a primary care physician has an adequate patient panel.

Many of the students enrolled had been ignored or were invisible at their home schools, but at BASSE we are committed to creating an inclusive learning community that embraces the uniqueness of all the learners. The school's approach is to provide proximate service-learning experiences, thereby cultivating the students' commitment to stay engaged and dedicated to Sussex County. I, personally, will be leading the growth of our future healthcare workforce by giving mentorship and guidance to passionate and interested BASSE students. Currently, only 6% of physicians in Delaware identify themselves as Black or African American, while the Black population in the State is about 23%. Even more concerning, Black women only make up 3% of physicians nationally. This disparity, just in the physician workforce, is extremely troubling since Black adults generally suffer from poorer health outcomes. For example, Black adults are more than twice as likely to die from cardiovascular disease compared to White adults. A school like BASSE can potentially improve these gaps by breaking down barriers to entry early in students'

education and throughout their scholarly lives. Our core values will undoubtedly produce more physicians, lawyers, pilots, engineers, leaders, educators, etc., who are committed to serving our rural community.

President Biden has stated that investing in education is essential for creating pathways to success and opening doors for individuals. He believes that education is a societal necessity that contributes to the well-being of the nation.

Bryan Stevenson once said, "Proximity is a pathway through which we learn the kind of things we need to know to make healthier communities."

The Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence has the potential and foundation to be an exceptional institution, creating opportunities and pathways for our rural students to improve the well-being of our community, our State, and our Country.

Therefore, I humbly request a decision in favor of the school, our current and future students, and our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph H. Kim, DO FAAFP
TidalHealth Executive Medical Director
Primary Care

TidalHealth CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This message, including any attachments is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and privileged information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, contact the sender by reply e-mail or telephone and destroy all copies of the original message.

[External] BASSE

From [REDACTED]

Date Tue 3/10/2026 1:04 PM


To infocso <infocso.DOE@doe.k12.de.us>

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Unfortunately I cannot support BASSE. This school has let me down for 2 years. The disappointment starts with the board. They made a ton of promises and haven't delivered n one. Only about 4 of them participate in board meetings and do not come around the school to support when needed. Then there is the inability for the heads of school to lead. There has been 3 people in this position in 2 years and they have all been unable to be successful. Behaviors are not dealt with, safety in the building is an issue and teachers are left unsupported/ignored. Which led to the incredible staff turnover. Last year 7 staff members left during the year 4 left over the summer and this year 3 left. I know many other staff members will not be returning if the doors remain open. That turnover creates instability for the students which shows in their behaviors. The students do not respect the people or the building. They are allowed to leave the cafeteria a complete mess. Food is thrown on

the floor and no one is asked to clean it up. The students argue with their teachers, talk over them, curse them out and walk out of class whenever they feel like it. The students are not held accountable for their actions and are just sent back to class to continue the behavior. The teachers are incapable of teaching in conditions like this. The teachers also do not put in much effort to teach. Most teachers sit at their desk and hand out packets. Since they are not providing instruction grades are just handed out and overridden if they are not passing (especially the special education students). They are not supported when asked for help. Often time told there is no time to help them and they should do it themselves. No mentoring is taking place. Because no teaching is taking place the test scores are below average. Most students score 2 to 3 grade levels below. There are no higher academics offered or after school activities. Benefits have been denied to staff members that work full time hours.

[External] Audit Response

From Dr. Teresa Berry 
Date Thu 3/12/2026 3:12 PM
To infocso <infocso.DOE@doe.k12.de.us>

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Response to Audit Findings – Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence

March 12, 2026

Delaware Department of Education

Dover, Delaware

Dear Sec.Martin,

The Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence (BASSE) acknowledges the findings identified in the recent financial audit and appreciates the opportunity to respond.

As noted in the audit, the auditors were unable to obtain sufficient supporting documentation to complete certain audit procedures related to financial statement balances and transactions. Specifically, documentation was not available to substantiate certain receipts, disbursements, payroll, and related financial records during the audit period.

We take these findings seriously and recognize that strong financial systems, documentation, and oversight are essential to responsible stewardship of public resources.

It is important to note that the audit period reviewed BASSE's first year of operations, following the school's opening in September 2024. Like many new charter schools, BASSE faced significant operational challenges during its inaugural

year, particularly in establishing administrative systems, staffing key operational roles, and gaining timely access to required state financial platforms.

During the initial operating period, several employees responsible for financial administration did not receive full access to the State of Delaware's financial management systems, including the First State Financial (FSF) platform and related procurement systems, until after key reporting deadlines had passed. These delays created challenges in accessing historical documentation and completing the financial reconciliation processes necessary to fully support audit testing.

While these circumstances help explain the documentation gaps identified in the audit, BASSE acknowledges that the responsibility for establishing strong internal controls ultimately rests with the school's leadership and governing board.

Since the period covered by the audit, BASSE has taken significant steps to strengthen financial governance and operational systems. These corrective actions include:

- Strengthening board-level financial oversight, including enhanced financial reporting and review procedures.
- Implementing improved fiscal controls and documentation standards for receipts, disbursements, payroll, and procurement activities.
- Establishing clearer financial record retention and reconciliation protocols.
- Ensuring staff responsible for finance and operations have appropriate access and training on state financial systems.
- Working with external advisors to support financial management practices and compliance requirements.

These improvements are designed to ensure BASSE maintains documentation sufficient for audit review and that internal systems support transparent and accountable financial management.

BASSE remains deeply committed to serving students, families, and the Georgetown community. We recognize that strong operational systems are foundational to sustaining that mission and are committed to implementing the improvements necessary to ensure the school meets the highest standards of fiscal responsibility and governance.

We appreciate the role of the audit process in strengthening accountability and welcome continued partnership with the Department of Education and state partners to ensure the long-term success of BASSE and the students it serves.

Sincerely,

Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence Board of Directors