

January 28, 2017

Ms. Julie Fedele, Analyst  
Joint Legislative Oversight and Sunset Committee  
Legislative Hall  
411 Legislative Avenue  
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Ms. Fedele,

I'm Lea Wainwright and I served as the 2014 Delaware Teacher of the Year. I'm writing this letter of support for the efforts of the Delaware State Board of Education. A few years ago, I had the opportunity to address this group and it continues to stand out as a highlight in my career. I count myself as lucky to work in a small state where all of the stakeholders that can positively impact our education system can come together in one room.

When I looked at the State Board's vision statement, I realized that we are kindred spirits. Their vision reads "All Delaware students are prepared to lead full and productive lives and be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global society." This is what we should all want for our children. An internationally-focused education.

I first went to France when I was 16 and you would think that I would be the first person to grasp the notion that we need to reach out of the classroom for something bigger. It wasn't until I started to hear about the partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that my personal philosophy of education took on a new focus.

If you aren't completely familiar with them, some of the big tenants are: global awareness, environmental and health literacy, creativity, communication and collaboration, flexibility, social skills, and LEADERSHIP. When I talk about this, I tell kids these are the things you have to be good at to be ready to take on the world as you enter a career, as you become those responsible for the world.

I'd like to tell a story about how our little state has changed and the awareness that the State Board of Education brings. After one Thanksgiving break, with my level 4 students, we always started with discussion. You can assume this was in French. So what did you do for break? See any movies? Travel? One student said yes I traveled. I went to Africa. Turns out this young man's father does environmental research and development in Africa. Development like physically building systems to try to get clean water for those people that either don't have it or who are refugees and have lost it. They were there about 4 hours. The area is dangerous with unrest so they didn't want to risk staying too long. His father is there and mom is here with 5 sons.... Talk about global and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in practice. A perfect example of why what the State Board of Education is doing is the right thing to do. We, as a state, need to focus on the important work that the State Board is doing – to prepare children for these amazing opportunities.

Beyond these endeavors, the State Board has been an advocate for education across the state, having worked to help make salaries fair for our educators and offer meaningful teacher leadership positions, available from the classroom.

I would be happy to continue the discussion of the many positive contributions the Delaware State Board of Education has made. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Best regards,

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