

July 26, 2021

Arkansas State Board of Education
4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201

To the Arkansas State Board of Education:

My name is Bill Dillard III. I am a long-time advocate for enhanced educational opportunities for families and children. I have volunteered with and supported several education-focused non-profits in Arkansas with a particular focus on Central Arkansas, which is my home. For the past year, I have spent time with, and gotten to know, IDEA Public Schools, which seeks to open schools in the Little Rock area in 2023. Based on what I have seen and learned, I am respectfully requesting that you approve IDEA's application to open schools in our state.

I had the opportunity to visit an IDEA school in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas in 2020. I saw firsthand how IDEA ensures every child is challenged to excel and supported to achieve. I saw a culture of learning and growth as powerful as any I've ever witnessed. As I walked through AP classrooms where students were performing calculus and debating the finer points of college-level literature, I was struck by the fact that many of the students had only recently come to America or were first generation English speakers. IDEA's data bears out the remarkable success of this highly equitable program: last year, 30% of IDEA's seniors earned the AP Scholar award, a prestigious designation granted when a student passes at least three AP exams. Each one of those children will have credits they can carry with them to college, to say nothing of their enhanced confidence and abilities. As someone who has spent many years involved in educational improvement in our community, I am extremely confident about what IDEA can achieve alongside our families and community. If IDEA can bring this same level of success to Pulaski County, it will positively transform the lives of many of our children and our wonderful state in the process.

I thank you for your service to our state's children, and for your consideration of this letter and IDEA's application.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Dillard III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the "III".

Bill Dillard III

Richard L. Moss, PhD
211 Bucky Beaver Street
Jacksonville, AR 72076
Phone 501-960-1704
Email: rlmoos12@gmail.com

August 6, 2021

Arkansas State Board of Education
4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201

To the Arkansas State Board of Education:

My name is Richard Moss. I am the parent of a high school student and a former School board member in the Jacksonville North Pulaski School District. I write this letter in support of IDEA Public School's application to operate schools in the greater Little Rock area, starting in 2023. As the parent of a child who attended a charter school in elementary (LISA North), I understand the value of a charter school education. The knowledge she gained gave her a great foundation for her current education as she moves into high school.

IDEA has helped 100% of its seniors get into college for each of the last 15 years – a senior body that, in 2021, was over 70% first generation collegegoers. IDEA has earned top spots on the US News and World Report ranking of top high schools. These awards are typically reserved for magnets and schools serving wealthy communities. We need more schools like IDEA in our state, both to serve students and prove what is possible.

Students in the Pulaski County area deserve an excellent, free, open-enrollment school. Very few low-income children have access to one. I saw this firsthand as a teacher at one of our community's high schools. Demand for better options is evidenced by the persistent waitlists for charter schools in the city of Little Rock and surrounding areas. We need more schools that can raise the bar for academic excellence. Poverty should not determine the destiny of our children. They deserve a great school, right now. In my opinion, IDEA is the best path to accomplish this.

I ask that you approve IDEA's application for a charter to serve our children. This will be to the benefit of thousands of families in the Little Rock area.

Respectfully,



Richard L. Moss, PhD



July 28, 2021

Arkansas State Board of Education
4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201

To the Members of the Arkansas State Board of Education:

My name is Ted Dickey. I am a lifelong Arkansan and, among other things, a trustee of the University of Arkansas system. My grandfather, Jay, grew up an orphan in Fort Smith and became student body President at the University of Arkansas; and thereafter to law school. My mother, Betty, grew up in Walnut Ridge and moved to Pine Bluff to be an educator at Pine Bluff High School before going to law school. In these, I have witnessed the transformational power of education. I am writing to you today to share my personal support for IDEA's application to operate schools in our state, starting in the greater Little Rock area in 2023.

I first learned of IDEA through other community leaders in Little Rock. I met with IDEA's leadership team and through several meetings heard a great deal about IDEA's mission, academic model, achievements, and results. As a trustee of our state's university system, I was delighted to learn that IDEA's college-for-all program has ensured that 100% of its seniors have been admitted to college for each of the last 15 years, and that all but a small handful of those thousands of students have matriculated to college. They also come to college well-prepared and armed with college credits, thanks to IDEA's AP program, which ensures that nearly every student takes at least 11 AP courses. All four of my kids may not have a total of 11 AP courses! As the University of Arkansas system works to be the engine of our state's prosperity, I am excited to have a partner in IDEA. If we intend to make Arkansas a home for new companies, we need every primary and secondary school in our state to set a rigorous bar of excellence and support students to meet that bar. IDEA, by all accounts, does just that. IDEA students, most of whom will be the first in their families to go to college, will enter the University of Arkansas system prepared to learn, and to serve our state.

I have also seen firsthand how IDEA selects locations for its campuses. I know how committed IDEA is to finding locations where they can educate some of the most underserved students in our community. IDEA has the potential to change outcomes significantly and permanently for students who otherwise would not be able to attend a top-flight public school. This opportunity will lift not just students and families, but whole communities. The locations IDEA has considered reflect this as they are going to areas of the greatest need.

As someone who is committed to serving the underserved, and to ensuring strong educational options are available to all students, I respectfully seek your support for IDEA's charter application. Thank you for your service to the state of Arkansas.

Ted Dickey

August 4, 2021

To the Arkansas State Board of Education:

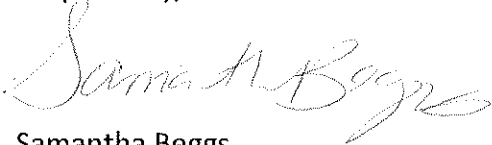
My name is Samantha Beggs. I am a teacher in Central Arkansas. I write this letter in support of IDEA Public School's application to operate schools in the greater Little Rock area, starting in 2023.

Over the last 15 years, IDEA has helped 100% of its seniors get into college. In 2021, over 70% of the graduating class was first generation college students. IDEA has earned top spots on the US News and World Report ranking of top high schools. Typically, these awards are reserved for schools serving affluent communities and magnets. Arkansas needs more schools like IDEA, both to serve students and to prove what is possible for our students.

Students in the Little Rock area deserve the opportunity to attend a school that excels, is free, and has open-enrollment. I have seen this firsthand that the several different school districts that I have worked at in the Little Rock area. There is a high demand for this in the area as waitlists for charter schools in the city exist for the charter schools. We need schools that can raise the bar set for academic excellence and encourage our students to be great. Socioeconomic status should not determine the success of our children. Students from all walks of life deserve a great school, and in my opinion, IDEA is the best path to accomplish this.

I ask that you approve IDEA's application for a charter to serve our children. This will be to the benefit of thousands of families in the Little Rock area.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Samantha Beggs". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Samantha Beggs

August 5, 2021

To the Arkansas State Board of Education:

My name is James Bellamy. I am co-owner of two Mathnasiums in Central Arkansas. In addition, I have almost 20 years of experience teaching at the college level. I write this letter in support of IDEA Public School's application to operate schools in the greater Little Rock area, starting in 2023.

IDEA has helped 100% of its seniors get into college for each of the last 15 years – a senior body that, in 2021, was over 70% first generation collegegoers. IDEA has earned top spots on the US News and World Report ranking of top high schools. These awards are typically reserved for magnets and schools serving wealthy communities. We need more schools like IDEA in our state, both to serve students and prove what is possible.

Students in the Little Rock area deserve an excellent, free, open-enrollment school. Very few low-income children have access to one. I see this every day in our community as more parents and students seek additional educational assistance. Demand for better options is evidenced by the persistent waitlists for charter schools in the city of Little Rock. We need more schools that can raise the bar for academic excellence. Poverty should not determine the destiny of our children. They deserve a great school, right now. In my opinion, IDEA is the best path to accomplish this.

I ask that you approve IDEA's application for a charter to serve our children. This will be to the benefit of thousands of families in the Little Rock area.

Respectfully,



James Bellamy, Ph.D., MPH, CNMT



**Arkansas State Board of Education
4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201**

To the Arkansas State Board of Education:

My name is Anthony Smith. I am a Small Business Owner in Little Rock AR. IDEA has helped 100% of its seniors get into college for each of the last 15 years – a senior body that, in 2021, was over 70% first generation collegegoers. IDEA has earned top spots on the US News and World Report ranking of top high schools. These awards are typically reserved for magnets and schools serving wealthy communities. We need more schools like IDEA in our state, both to serve students and prove what is possible.

Students in the Little Rock area deserve an excellent, free, open-enrollment school. Very few low-income children have access to one. Students In Little Rock deserve options, IDEA gives the community those options that are not normally afforded to our youth. We need more schools that can raise the bar for academic excellence. Poverty should not determine the destiny of our children. They deserve a great school, right now. In my opinion, IDEA is the best path to accomplish this. As the great Nelson Mandela said “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Let’s start by taking a step in that direction of change by approving IDEA’S application.

I ask that you approve IDEA’s application for a charter to serve our children. This will be to the benefit of thousands of families in the Little Rock area.

Respectfully,

Anthony Smith

To whom it may concern,

Growing up in a disadvantaged neighborhood in Long Island NY I was always told by teachers that Charter Schools took away resources from public schools, were solely interested in financial gain, and negatively impacted the community. I held these beliefs to adulthood.

Many years later, as a young parent in a historically underserved public education system I faced a tough choice, do I send my child to a public school or a charter school? This question led me to shake off those thoughts of the evil money grabbing charter schools and really educate myself on what they really bring to communities.

Through research about what charter schools are and are not, I was amazed by the numerous opportunities afforded by Charter schools. After some research I enrolled my child at a local charter school. The first year was challenging and we did not feel like it was the right fit for him. The following year I researched other a charter schools that would fit his needs. We ended up enrolling him at another charter school and his brother at public school. This new charter school helped him blossom and grow. It required a commitment from his educators, us as parents, and our child. This commitment is what made the difference for us. When the opportunity came to move his sibling to the Charter school we did.

My pervious beliefs of the Charter School simply selecting students or taking away resources from public schools was put to rest. Instead, what I saw was an unrelenting commitment to meet the educational needs of my child. This choice in schooling is not for everyone. However, having the option to take advantage of this opportunity is something I am very thankful for.

We relocated to Northwest Arkansas in 2016 and have been in this incredible area ever since. As a parent in the region I encourage you to consider IDEA's goal of opening charter schools in our region. The organization has a strong record of supporting students and families achieve their educational dreams. IDEA will help underserved communities close the achievement gap we often see.

Sincerely,



Harold Castro