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News.....

State Teacher's Association proposes that Delaware contribute to research on single-gender schools

Dover, DE, January 15, 2008 The Delaware State Education Association is proposing that the state seriously consider allowing a school district to open a girls-only magnet school if the General Assembly and Governor decide to permit a boys-only charter school. "In this way, we could conduct some quality research to guide future decisions about choices within our public school system, both here in Delaware and across the country," says DSEA President Barbara Grogg.

At present, single-gender charter schools are not allowed in Delaware. "But we're very willing to look at this issue," comments Grogg.

Prestige Academy would like to enroll only boys this fall and a bill is expected to be introduced soon to change the law to allow this to happen.

When the Prestige Academy charter was first approved by the Red Clay Consolidated School District, DSEA pointed out that it violated the state's law against single-gender charter schools. The Delaware Dept. of Education, following an opinion rendered by the Attorney General, issued a letter in December of last year to the Red Clay School Board and Prestige Academy founders stating that, "Delaware law does not permit same sex charter schools."

(Despite that, Prestige Academy continues to accept applications on its web site:

www.prestigeacademycs.org/Applicationdeadlineextended.shtml.)

More...

“If we set aside the argument about the current law and just look at what the research says about single-gender education, we find that only 40 of 2,221 studies are valid, according to the U.S. Dept. of Education**,” says Grogg. “We would like to propose that we set up our own research laboratory right here in Delaware.”

Instead of simply changing the law to allow single-gender schools, DSEA proposes taking advantage of this opportunity by setting up an educational research study. The DSEA proposal would allow one school district to step forward and provide a similar opportunity to girls in a school district-based magnet school so that the performance of both schools can be studied. She added that this initiative should ensure that students in both schools reflect the racial composition of the school districts in which the schools are located. “Delaware has a significant opportunity here,” she concluded, “to make a much-needed contribution to the body of educational research regarding single-gender education.”

**The most comprehensive review of the existing research that we found was done in 2006 by Gerald Bracy of the University of Arizona. He examined the existing single-sex education studies, and found that, although there were many studies on this subject – 2,221 – only 40 are valid, according to the U.S. Dept. of Education (meaning that these were the only studies that controlled for class, financial privilege, selective admissions, religious values, prior learning or ethnicity.) An executive summary as well as the complete study are available at: http://epsl.asu.edu/epru/epru_2006_Research_Writing.htm. Click on the pdf file for “Separate but Superior?” – the name of the Bracy report.

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With 11,500 members, DSEA represents the public school teachers in all 19 school districts, as well as many support employee groups in 16 school districts. DSEA also represents the teachers employed by the Division of Children, Youth and their Families as well as the state's public health nurses.

DSEA is a private, non-profit membership organization dedicated to promoting and defending outstanding public education for all students; and advancing and protecting the interests of its members.