

INDIANA CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD
Spring 2016 Thea Bowman Leadership Academy Public Comments

Comment overview

Type	Support	Oppose	Neutral	Total
Public Hearing	25	6	6	37
Handwritten	37			37
Email	18	11		29
Phone	1			1
Total	81	17	6	104

All comments at the public hearing were in favor of keeping TBLA opened as public charter school option. Even those who indicated that they “opposed” to the Drexel Foundation application to ICSB and instead supporting the Ball State plan of chartering the newly-formed parent board that would utilize Lighthouse as an ESP still want the school to remain open.

- Support (25)
 - 6 parents or grandparents
 - 5 students
 - 8 community members
 - 4 employees of TBLA
 - 2 former TBLA board members
- Oppose (6)
 - 2 parents
 - Mayor of Gary (*during the hearing proposed additional meetings with representatives of BSU, ICSB, and both nonprofit boards. On March 23rd submitted a letter expressing support for Drexel Foundation’s application to ICSB.*)
 - 3 board members of the Alliance for Community Education and Economic Empowerment (the BSU proposed new charter holder)
- Neutral (6)
 - 2 community members
 - 4 parents

Written/Email (67)

- TBLA students submitted written letters in support of keeping TBLA open (37)
- Emails (30)
 - Support (19)
 - Vice President of Development for Leona Group
 - 1 Student
 - 10 current TBLA employees
 - 7 community members including HIAT President
 - Oppose (11)_
 - 2 former TBLA teachers
 - 4 employees of Lighthouse charter schools
 - 5 community members (including 1 from Fort Wayne)

Phone (1)

- One call from NWI Parents for Quality Education group, which supported the proposal.

TBLA Public Hearing

March 22, 2016 at 5:30pm CST

Thea Bowman Leadership Academy Elementary School
975 West 6th Avenue, Gary, IN

ICSB Representative(s): James Betley
Michelle McKeown
Dr. Virginia Calvin, Board Member
Kristin Reed, Board Member

Application Discussed: Thea Bowman Leadership Academy

Applicant Overview: Keisha White, current Drexel Board Chair

Public Hearing Comments

Support

Dawn Darceneaux, concerned citizen (submitted written copy of her spoken comments)

- My name is Dawn Darceneaux, a lifelong Gary Resident. I was educated in both private & public Schools. Since its inception, Thea Bowman has enjoyed a sterling reputation. This was not accidental. It was the result of a collaborative effort by Faculty, Students, & Parents under the auspices of a dedicated Board. Ball State's rationale to not renew Thea Bowman's Charter was without merit. It was based on innocuous supremacy issues, rather than Scholastics or Finance, neither of which is a Thea Bowman problem. Further, Ball State was without a Plan for the Placement of over 1,250 Students. Rather than respecting Thea Bowman's opinion, Ball State attempted to put in place their Authorizer of choice. Adhering to State Charter Guidelines, Thea Bowman's Board restructured itself with persons of impeccable credentials & verifiable experience. This new Board wants the ICSB (Indiana Charter School Board) to be Thea Bowman's Authorizer. Earle Phalen (Yale BA & Harvard Law) is slated to assist. Phalen of Indianapolis has worked for Obama. Based on the aforesaid, I wholeheartedly endorse the ICSB (Indiana Charter School Board) to be the Authorizer for Thea Bowman.

Freddie Mullins, grandparent

Not captured due to computer shut down. However, Mr. Mullins supported the proposal, as reflected by the sign-in sheet and brief staff notes.

Calvin White

- Not fully captured due to computer issue (one staff computer died and other staff member began taking notes). However, Mr. Mullins supported the proposal (as illustrated by sign-in sheet). He questioned why the other plan (the BSU/Lighthouse plan) had merit because TBLA had outperformed Lighthouse for several years. He also expressed preference to not continue with the same authorizer with which TBLA had been working with before.

LeVon Whittaker, parent

- I support keeping the doors open of TBLA. I see the kids running around and training for basketball. I support the students who I worked with going to Purdue. I challenge the ICSB and Phalen as an ESP to also raise the elevation and the bar – and not just limit it to this community but throughout the state and all communities they serve. Especially students who have educational challenges that are not just in school.

Thomas V Barnes, citizen and former Drexel Board member (Submitted hard copy of his spoken comments)

- I testify on behalf of the application by the Drexel Foundation for Educational Excellence, Inc. informed by my service as a founding member of the Drexel Foundation, in my capacity as a citizen for three reasons:
- First: I have been involved with the Drexel Foundation and the genesis of its efforts that have evolved to this point from its inception. Many others have also been involved, including current and past directors, school board members, administrators, teachers, staff, students and parents – and other stakeholders – most notably, Drexel/TBLA co-founders Anne Thompson and Father Bob Gehring.
- Second: Drexel has done an admirable job of building on what was envisioned in its original purposes, a decade and a half ago – an institution dedicated to providing enhanced educational opportunities for the elementary school children of the City of Gary. Not a perfect job, not without missteps but credible and noteworthy because a decade ago, this building where we gather now was a closing school, but through Drexel efforts – starting before Ball State’s involvement – 1000s of children have been educated; and on West 5th avenue, what were acres of vacant land is occupied by a secondary campus school of more than 600 students – even including the Eagles Nest Entrepreneurial Course with children raising chickens selling eggs – and perhaps in the near future, the site of a Science Farm where through Science, technology, agriculture and entrepreneurship, our students will not only forge new individual pathways to success, but can be an important part of lifting our entire community up where it belongs.
- Third: Ball State has failed, as an authorizer, to provide meaningful input or support to TBLA even while collecting 100s of thousands of dollars in fees – over the years – and refused request to support our efforts to obtain evaluation of school operations and academic programs by the North Central Association or other independent evaluation entity – and more recently – through Ball State employee(s), consultants and other surrogates engaged in a campaign of rumors, misinformation and threats, communicated variously to staff, administrators, parents, bond holder representatives and to some Drexel directors, creating an environment of uncertainty and fear – negatively impacting teacher and student morale, recruitment and retention while seeking to portray the Drexel foundation unfavorably, reasonably calculated to make it difficult if not impossible, under continued Ball State Authorization, for responsible individuals to successfully conduct the educational affairs of the Thea Bowman Leadership Academy – culminating in the January 15 and January 30, 2016 Letter(s) of non-renewal – which were fabricated on untruths, half-truths, selective application of standards and improprieties.
- Some of these half-truths and unfounded misconceptions concerning “governance issues” continue to this day:
 - Allegation that No Term Limits included in Drexel By Laws – In fact Ball state has on numerous occasions over the past decade or more been provided by laws of Drexel which provide details of Drexel term limits, including provisions for the removal of founders who might suffer from the disease invented by Ball State of “founditis” which By Laws provided for 3 years term limits excepting Founders and that any member (including Founders) can be removed by 2/3rd majority vote –for cause.
 - Allegations of Repeated requests to Drexel to change its board membership disregarded – in fact there are no records of any such “repeated requests.”
- It is for these reasons that I support favorable consideration of the Drexel request for a new authorizer.

Tammy Tiede, teacher

- I have been a teacher here for over ten years. I have seen a lot, and I will tell you what I saw last week when I visited Phalen Leadership Academy. I think that we should move forward with the ICSB and Phalen. I

have support of the majority of the teachers (at which point roughly 45 people stood in the crowd. She also then read aloud two letters from second graders that were in support).

Montrell Barfield, student

- I am here to speak on behalf of Coach Nunnery. As I head to Gary each day across the skyway, - one that is politically motivated from nepotism or cronyism. I believe that we have found that person in Earl Phalen. He bring a capital campaign, national network, and a student athlete. He played basketball at Yale, and then went to Harvard Law. He is a strong role model for AA students. I believe that he will help us close the achievement gap.

ZaDayah Exford, student

- Second grade student who read her letter. We have teachers who help us learn to go to the next grade. My teacher's name is Ms. Teady. She helps us to learn, and she can help us with anything. Help us with a charter for 16-17.

James A. McDaniel, Jr., taxpayer

- I am a product of GCSC. I also had a daughter who was an assistant to the teachers, and communicated with parents about homework etc. I thought that form of teaching was extraordinary. I had two cousins play on the Varsity BBall team. They did an extraordinary job. I used to work at School City. When I did, Charter was a bad word. Now that I do not work there, I have had a chance to look at what was going on. And, I can see that what is going on is very positive here.

Derek Taylor, taxpayer

- Although I do not have any children at TBLA. I have friends and family who do. There has been a lot of great work at TBLA, and I rise in support.

Sharida Combs, TBLA EL 3rd Grade teacher

- I am a third grade teacher at TBLA. I am speaking on behalf of the foot soldiers at TBLA, and this message has been approve. We approve of the partnership of Phalen. We ask the ICSB to consider our proposal. As a teacher, I have taught for 6 years. I have leaders who have invested in my professional development. They assisted me in my choices re: higher ed, and they gave me constructive feedback. When third graders were asked why they like to be at TBLA, they answered "because it is a safe place to learn." T=tough students, temperate teachers. H: Heroic efforts N: nerve to be different. I humbly request that you approve chartering TBLA. Yes, we still have gains to make. We are working on our school- community relations. But, in the words of a 3rd grade student. TBLA still has it.

Tina Glasco

- I believe that our children are a success. Our kids are looking up to our teachers today. This is our village. Phalen, thank you for letting us come down and see your school. I am here for my children, but for all children. I stand here for all these children. I am a parent who volunteers. Please do not shut these doors because these kids do not have any other place to go.

Marisa Simmons, TBLA El teacher and parent

- I came back from a conference to be here. I am the instructional coach here. I used to be a substitute. Then Elementary teacher, parent, junior high teacher ... now an administrator. We have some things to work on, and we have some really great things here at TBLA. This is for you staff [she became emotional] it

is hard to see what we have been through, and I whole heartedly believe that we can get back to that point. Our students are great. Our teachers are great and they do not get enough credit. It is hard to learn with the info in your ears. I have 2 students in GCSC, and one here. My son is here because he is a student with disabilities and he was not getting what he needed at GCSC. My other two children do okay at GCSC because they are at a performing arts school. I am a home grown TBLA member. I crossed the stage and I never went anywhere else because I didn't want to. I love TBLA. I just put 40 miles on my car to be here. Take wholeheartedly what our goal is. That is to continue the educational process of our children. We are still going to blow this test of this water despite all that is going on. If you are in our building, you do not see kids playing like they are on the playground. And, you see them lift each other up. We are a family, and we need to be mended. Let's put our differences aside and heal. I am for this wholeheartedly.

Simmicka Anderson, TBLA parent

- My son is Derrel Payne. He was the second student speaker earlier, and he was a little nervous. He has been here since K. He loves bowman. He plays all the sports. Bowman is a family, and they may argue and disagree, but they are a family. They call each other brother and sister. He has had ups and downs. He was almost failing in 8th grade and 9th grade. But, as a junior, he has a 3.8 GPA. I could say that it is because of me, but it is because of the teachers- they call the kids and lift them up. I am for the kids, and I am for this Phalen. I support this 100%.

Pamela Stalling, TBLA parent

- I am coming to you because I am parent, and I have two kids there now, and one who graduated last year. The experience that I had as parent of TBLA, has been great. My kids had been in other schools, and I transferred them to TBLA. They have two new programs- entrepreneurship, and they learned things in that class that I use on an everyday basis. My kids are athletes. I am so proud of TBLA family. With that, I am in support of the charter.

Shaun Tate, mentor

- I do not have kids, but I have mentored here and in Illinois. Unlike some of the public schools with padded stats and scores, and when I came to TBLA, I saw young men who could compete. I hope that the ICSB approves this school and keeps everything open and keeps our young men and women moving forward.

Keith Mabone, community member

- I really appreciate the parents who have had years of experience with this school. I really support this position, as an administrator, but not at this school, I need to give a shout out to the other schools in Gary. We need to understand that we need to support his plan to make sure that these kids are College and Career Ready- now. I am here today to say that I am proud to see kids who are sitting and behaving, doing homework, and I think that this plan can work to give people opportunity and I also think that we should hold everyone accountable.

D. Wesley/N. Joseph, Students at TBLA

- I am a junior who has been here since 4th grade. I am in NHS and have played sports. I am graduating a year early because of the rigorous classes. I am here to ask you to support his proposal. Second student-cheerleader, volleyball, and track and field. I am a junior and have been here since (was it 4th or K?). I support this.

LaToya Haggard

- I was not going to speak, but after listening- I cannot sit and not say anything. I can from different aspects- whether my son who graduated two years ago- and he is in college on a full scholarship. That is because the staff sat my son down, and talked to him about a school that I had never heard of, and he will never have to write a check for student loans. I can speak from aspect of my 8th grader who is inducted in NHS, and daughter in elementary. I like other parents, I thought about removing my kids because of the turmoil, but my daughter checked me and said she looked forward to TBLA. I can speak as wife of dean of students and seeing him wake up every day and look forward. I am not afraid of change and risk. I think about 8 years ago, and we were faced with risk, and we made history and elected our first Black president.

Robert Kuprenus

- I am an academic coach. We emphasize respect and civility. I want to read an email from a principal where we had a basketball game: Your students were the most respectful of any section.... at one point your students reached out to our AD and asked what could be said and what could not be said.... [from principal at Boone Grove high school].

Sophia Shittu, 2nd grade student

- Second grade student - mother introduced. Please save our charter because we learn a lot. The teachers are very nice, and we do well on our tests. We have a nice classroom and everyone likes it. Please give us a new charter so that we can learn and get good jobs.

Michael Collins

- I am certainly in favor of the proposal of the application of the proposal of the ICSB and Mr. Phalen. To the ICSB, we would be an asset to your organization. We have a special culture. You would be amazed and impressed with our students and teachers and our culture.

Kendra S. Johnson, Gary citizen advocate

- At one time, I thought that charter schools were the mistress in a marriage of education. However, I now see charters as something as more important- part of parental choice. I have seen students from this school get on public transportation and conduct themselves well. I have seen a student from Dory Public Housing and come to this school, and that is why I am here. I strongly believe that if someone will not invest in your child's education then you need to find someone who will. I am the parent of 6 children, and 3 have graduated HS, and 2 have graduated college. I have 3 more. I have been to three parent meetings, and they have been packed. I am a title I parent, and I support education and parents. I will fight for these parents

Dr. Shelly Fisher, citizen

- I speak as a taxpayer, and I speak as an organizational scholar. We were told by BSU that we were closed for governance reasons. What does that mean? I need some specifics. Were we told that we violated? Ball State has promised us the Lighthouse- yet, the Lighthouse is in trouble- all you have to do is read the paper and see that they closed a school in Milwaukee. If you are in favor of your children doing things with creativity and breaking barriers. We need people who can communicate with us and be specific. All year we have heard things through rumor and innuendo instead of clear and concrete communication

Oppose

Taryl L. Bonds, parent and board member of Alliance for Community Education and Economic Empowerment

- I do not have issues with the board or Mr. Phalen. There is no competition. We are all parents and we are just worried about keeping the doors open in the fastest way. With that, I'd like the ICSB to keep that in mind.

Cynthia Taylor, parent (Submitted hard copy of her spoken comments)

- I am the mother of a Thea Bowman Leadership Academy Graduate, an aunt of a student in the first graduating class and a grandmother of two elementary school children. I also have a great niece and nephew attending the school. I have been a proud Bowman parent since its inception. I have seen the school develop into an outstanding school and have also witnessed it crumble into the shell of a school it has become over the past several years.
- Several years ago, I noticed that things were changing. There seemed to be disorganization and rumblings from teachers and staff. I learned that there are differences between the school board, Drexel board, AQS and administrators. There were allegations of secret meetings by the Drexel Board. Without warning, after 2013-14 school year, Dr. Adell followed by the high school and elementary school principals were gone. Dr. Adell had been the backbone of the school since it started. The 2014-15 school year seemed to be riddled with more changes and instability and a decrease in enrollment. I later found out that the Drexel Board had decided not to renew their contract with AQS in 2013 but left them in charge of the school for two additional years. During those two years, Bowman was destroyed by many decisions spear headed by AQS and approved by the Drexel Board.
- The Drexel Board refused to accept guidance from Ball State and in January 2015 received notice that they would receive a provisional charter for the next year. The conditions were clearly spelled out but Drexel ignored them. Drexel refused to explain themselves to parents and refused to answer questions at Board meetings. In spite of being told that they were not ready to self manage, the Drexel Board decided to try to self manage and even gave there then board president Ben Clement a paid position at the school that he accepted after resigning from the board. They also selected the Leona group from Michigan to be the service provider.
- The Leona group it was discovered had some affiliation with Ben Clement. The decision to self manage has been a disaster. More teachers have left and children have had 5 to 6 different teachers. The Drexel Board's continued poor decisions have led to the downfall of Bowman and it is time for a change.
- As you know, Ball State advised the Drexel Board that they will not renew the charter because of governance and finances. The school also has declining academic performance, receiving a grade of "D". Ball State has asked the board to resign and is willing to move forward with a new board. The bondholders who also have extensive experience with the board also asked the board to resign and has sent a notice of default to the board. As a result, a group of parents has come forward and established a nonprofit that Ball State and the Bondholders are willing to work with that will allow Bowman to stay open and to get back to their original standards. The Drexel Board refused to step down but has now removed six of the eight members leaving Keisha White and James Harris. They have applied to you for an authorizer change which I find perplexing. It appears to me that the authorizer shopping law is clearly applicable to this situation. Drexel is seeking to avoid the consequences of their poor performance as a board for Bowman and asking you for a second chance. At our PTSA meeting on March 17, 2016, Keisha White stated that a member of your Board told her that they were glad that Drexel contacted them because they were just discussing Bowman and were about to approach Drexel. I paused and had to ask myself why the Charter School Board would be soliciting a failed board. After gathering more information, I realized that the Charter Board is in a competition with other authorizers to open charter schools in the State. I have also heard that you have an alliance with Phalen and that all of this is a done deal. I would hope that none of this is true and that you are not playing political games with the lives of our children.
- The ICSB does not know or understand the history of the Drexel Board. You don't understand the years of deception, poor governance and improprieties this school has suffered at their hands. You are now offering a failed board a second chance to now give our school away to strangers. If you approve this new charter, Bowman will have a new authorizer, new and unknown board members, its third EMO in 2 years with

Leona and Phalen having no experience in this area and limited or no experience in operating a school K-12. We have suffered enough from this Board's decisions.

- Considering this application clearly goes against the authorizer shopping law both literally and in the spirit of the law. **Thea Bowman Leadership Academy does not need a new authorizer.** Bowman will continue to operate with its original authorizer and with the people who love Bowman and understand its history and culture.
- The failed Drexel Board is the one that needs a new authorizer. If you allow Drexel to switch authorizers you will be rewarding a failed board and giving them a last ditch effort to make questionable decisions that may create further chaos for the school. Keisha White is already a part of another board that has applied to you for a new charter. There are many uncertainties that are presented in Drexel's proposal because they are grasping at straws. They have admitted that they have been turned down by several other groups they contacted. They have proposed the only option they could find. That kind of decision making is what put Bowman in the position that they are now in. I believe Bowman will see a further decline in students and an uncertain future for staff because no one is certain how these changes will affect them. A decision to grant this application will leave this school further fractured and if it recovers at all, it will be a long process.
- Please end this chaos for Bowman. Deny the Drexel Board's application. End the authorizer shopping debate and remove yourselves from the appearance of impropriety. Allow Bowman to get back to the task of stabilizing the school, healing the wounds and bringing it back to its former excellence. This will be best achieved by allowing the Drexel Board to pass the torch and to allow our parents and community to take the lead in Bowman's Future.

Tawanna Staples, parent and board member of Alliance for Community Education and Economic Empowerment

- My son has been at TBLA for 13 years, and he will graduate this May. As a parent, and no disrespect to Mr. Phalen, but we need to keep in in the community. ICSB, you don't know our kids. At the end of the day, there is a faster process to keep these doors open. Ball State didn't want to not renew the charter. Unfortunately, you have been fed lies by the board asked to step down. I have had people ask why I am involved when my son is graduating. This is our village- Gary. We do not need outsiders to come in and tell us what to do with our children. No offense to Mr. Phalen. I am sure that you have great options, but we do not need them. When I see what I see right now, I am sick to my stomach. I never thought that it would come to this, but our board knew what was going on... when I was a parent, I didn't go out of state for help. I asked my family in town. This is authorizer shopping.

Genesis Jones, PTCA President, board member of Alliance for Community Education and Economic Empowerment and parent

- I am the current PTCA President. I am here as a parent. As a parent, I am not able to be for this. I was not given the opportunity to meet with Mr. Phalen. What I learned I had to learn on my own. I comment you Mr. Phalen on your K-2 experience. But, we are a K-12 school.

Marion Rea, TBLA parent

- First, I want to thank Mr. Earl Phalen for coming. I love my community, and I love the teachers in my community. The teachers do an excellent job, and the kids do an excellent job. My position has not changed, and this is not about MR. Phalen- I have a lot of respect for you and what you do. I am about protecting community, and I have a lot of questions. Why do we have to the ICSB, and then we have to go through the SBOE. And, they call this "Charter shopping". I believe in taking care of kids. Part of taking care of kids and providing stability. I would just like to see some stability. What about our teachers- they haven't had raises in 4-5 years [a teacher yelled out 7- and audience laughed]. If you do not give teachers raises, how are you going to have qualified teachers? A qualified teacher does not mean a license to me - there are qualified people who do not go to school for that license but bust their humps working with kids.

Either way we go, I will support the community. There are too many options, and we need stability. I support you Mr. Phalen, but I need questions answered. We need stability.

Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson, Mayor of Gary – Oppose

- First accept my sincere apologies for my tardiness. We had two council meetings, and it goes on. We can all agree that a good education in the lynchpin of a society.... I was blessed to receive an exemplary education from GCSC as so many of our leaders did. But, I also know that the landscape is changing. While GCSC has been hit hard by declining tax.... there have also been vouchers and charters. Some have brought successes, and certainly that is the case with TBLA. The successes have not been without challenges. Such as the decision by BSU. As the mayor, I have had meetings and learned about both proposals. Now I will note that as Mayor, while both ideas have merit, but there are enough uncertainties that give me pause. The discussions have led me to conclude that the best proposal is somewhere in the middle. I am offering the commitment of the city and my office to achieve that goal. We cannot allow our differences on methodology to impede our ability to providing an excellent education.

Neutral

Antoinette Troupe, parent

- I am in favor of what works for our children. We need to look at it with a microscope and be absolutely clear that it works for our children. It is the absolute best option. These doors cannot close.

Dennis Young, parent

- Single parent whose daughter attends TBLA. Daughter feel like a champion because of Thea Bowman. Keep the doors open to help him raise his daughter. She needs an education.

Willie L. Miller, Gary/EC/Valpo Ivy Tech Staff

- I am here on behalf of my community. I grew up here. I went away to school and not everyone thought that it was a great place to grow up. Too many people think of only poverty- I think of music and great leaders. Your education does not just end here. We really need to take care of the kids, and our kids will persevere. The things that we do right now will impact this city. Things are going to work out.

Jori Moore, parent

- I am a parent. I had a daughter who graduated from here in 2011. She is now a graduate of Harvard. I have a 5th grader. I am the former president of the TBLA parent board. In the last 6 months, we have taken our kids through more turmoil than in the last many years. In the last 2 years, we have taken them through turmoil, and they have seen teachers and leaders leave. As a parent, we need to level this out. The one common theme is that no one wants the school to close. We have had issues with the authorizer (BSU), but what makes ICSB so much better? We have had issues with ESPs, and I have read the proposal and I have questions. It is not about ICSB, BSU, Phalen, etc. We want the school to stay open. Make it work.

Stephen Mays, State Farm

- I have no skin in the game. I am a graduate of BSU. I am proud of my alma mater. Board you have a challenge because I used to not support charters- not because I supported the district, because I thought that they didn't serve our interests long term. Gary has more charters than it needs. But, when we have something special, we need to lift it up. Why, when we as a community have something that works, do we go and try to tear it down. Why? When we have a good thing, we need to lift it up. Do not even consider

closing this school. This community needs to work through these issues. You have a gold mine here. Let's make this work.

Chasity Martin, parent

- My son attends and has been here since kindergarten. I was one of the moms who stood outside hoping that my son could be here bc I did not want him in GCSC. I want to say that I am so disappointed in what has happened over the last two years, that I almost put him back in GCSC- and I want you to know how strongly I felt- because that would be detrimental. I think he would have been successful because of what you all have put into him, but I wouldn't want to do that - but I thought about it and it hurts me in my heart that I went there in my mind. My son has not participated in any required reading this year at all because of all the issues of teacher licensing and the board. I am for what is going to best suit our children. At the end of the day, whatever the board needs to look into to keep the doors open, you need to take a look at it. I have a problem when a 5th grade teacher says that kids in that class do not want to learn. The children are disconnected right now, because they feel in their hearts and minds that this building is not going to be open. We are hurting them- the children. We have to do what is best for our children. Whatever that is- I hope that this building does not close.

Other Comments

Written Comments (not emailed)

Support

TBLA student letters

- 37 total
- All support school staying open

Phone calls

Jami Beckham - Support

She is part of the Northwest Indiana Parents for Quality Education group. She gives two big thumbs up for the TBLA/Phalen partnership. NW Indiana desperately needs the kind of quality education options that Phalen represents. Her group is dedicated to attracting groups like Phalen to NW Indiana. She hopes the charter is approved. Her number is 219-577-3154.

Emails

Support

Javier Garibay, VP of Development for MI & IN, Leona Group

This email correspondence serves as a letter of support for 'Thea Bowman Leadership Academy' petition before the Indiana Charter School Board for an authorizer transfer. I know firsthand of the board's commitment to the financial and academic integrity of the Academy.

TBLA's presence in Gary is testimony to the Academy's mission to serve diverse student communities that are in need of choice and opportunity. From an academic perspective, TBLA does far better than its host public school community corporation AND charter schools! The Academy is on sound financial ground and is operating in a positive financial position for fiscal year 2015-2016.

Clearly, the ICSB would benefit from having a wildly successful urban charter school academy in their portfolio. While the Leona Group is saddened that we will not play a role next fall at the Academy, we are delighted that the board has found an alternative pathway to keep the Academy open for years to come.

Danei Wesley

My name is Danei Wesley. I attend Thea Bowman as a junior. I have been going here since fourth grade. During my time here, I have been involved in several school clubs and activities, some of those being Honor Society, Student Council, Volleyball, and Cheerleading. My academics have excelled here at Thea Bowman due to the rigorous courses. This is also one of the reasons why I am able to graduate a year early. The purpose of this email is to instill my support in the new authorizer. I feel that it is a change that needs to happen. I feel that everything is being done in favor of the students. I fully support the decisions that are being made to help better Thea Bowman. Thank you for your time.

K White (2 emails)

Please approve the mentioned charter for Theo Bowman.

I am in favor of the charter being approved.

Migel Nunnery, Head Boys Basketball Coach and Athletic Director, TBLA

As I enter Gary every morning across the Chicago Skyway Toll Bridge it's hard to miss the grey clouds (smog) hovering over the city from factories and mills. A "breath of fresh air" is desperately needed in "Steel City", one that is not politically motivated through nepotism or cronyism. One that understands the economic struggle of urban areas with a resume that reflects due diligence in closing the achievement gap.

I believe we have found that person through Earl Phalen and Phalen Leadership Academies. Phalen provides capital funding, national networks and an educational background which can propel Thea Bowman Leadership Academy into the 21st Century. Earl demanded more of himself than just taking advantage of the opportunities his foster parents provided. As a student-athlete (tennis/basketball) from Yale University, who went on to Harvard Law; Earl has shown the value he places on education through his experience not just his words.

As a African-American male from Gary, IN fulling my life's calling through education, having someone like Earl with a hands-on approach not only inspires students but also educators as we fight towards closing the achievement gap.

Earl Phalen has already agreed to mentor Langston Stalling (10th grader)

- * 4.6 GPA (top of class)
- * baseball team
- * basketball team
- * all-state in both sports

Fred Dodson

I'm in favor of them becoming our new authorizer.

Dr. Darlene Henderson, President/CEO, Heritage Institute of Arts & Tech

I support TBLA for the charter with ICSB!

Shari Cunningham

Gary, IN kids deserve quality education options. I support a THEA BOWMAN/ Phelan Charter School.

Ryan Rogers

My name is Ryan Rogers and I'm a resident of Gary, IN. I am just e-mailing you today to say that I am in favor and support ICSB being the new authorizer for Thea Bowman Leadership Academy in Gary, IN. Should you have questions concerning my support, please reply to this e-mail address or contact me @ 219-218-3659. Thank you.

Jason Terry

I am in favor of the ICSB becoming the new organizer for Thea Bowman Leadership Academy. I strongly believe that ICSB'S guiding principles (Students First, High Expectations, and Commitment in Leadership, Commitment in Innovation, and Rigorous and Transparent Accountability) will create a foundation for Bowman's continued success. Again, I AM IN FAVOR OF ICSB BECOMING THE NEW ORGANIZER FOR THEA BOWMAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY.

*Lynda Bodie-Fernandez -Paraprofessional, 4-H Leader, Lego Robotic Coach, Science Olympiad Coach, and Science Fair Sponsor.
TBLA*

I am writing in support of the Indiana Charter School Board issuing a charter for Thea Bowman Leadership Academy in Gary. I have been associated with and employed by TBLA since its inception and feel very strongly that this is an institution worth saving. I believe with the support of Earl Phalen, our school can become the true beacon of education it has always aspired to be. Thank you for your consideration granting us a charter. This opportunity will help us to continue our mission to educate our great students to become productive citizens

Calvin Witherspoon

I am an instructional assistant at Thea Bowman Middle School. I want to move forward with the charter proposal with Phalen Academy and our principal Ms. Stevens because of her positive and progressive leadership under pressure.

Sandra Gries – CTE teacher at TBLA

I am a first year teacher at Thea Bowman Leadership Academy and I am sending this memo to show my support for the school. It is my hope that the Indiana Charter School Board will move forward and approve Bowman's application for re-authorization under the ICSB.

The most important aspect of this process is to not have any educational disruptions for the students. The students need to know that they are what's important and that nothing should impact their quality of their education.

In the brief time that I have been a teacher here at Thea Bowman, I have seen the many exciting activities that are offered for the students. We offer clubs such as Spanish, Poetry, and Debate. Students participate in the Science Olympiad and Robotics Competition. Thea Bowman has the only STUDENT RUN Urban Farm Program in the area. TBLA offers after school tutoring programs to assist students the areas of math and reading. Bowman has an outstanding athletic department. Last, but certainly not least, we are forging partnerships with local businesses and foundations to help propel these students to the next level.

Thea Bowman Leadership Academy is a proven school with a track record of providing a quality education for students in a high needs area. It is a fact that on state standardized testing TBLA excels over the public and other charter schools in Gary.

I am proud to work here at Bowman and again URGE the ICSB to move forward on the approval process, so that we can continue to provide a great education to the children of Gary, Indiana.

Willa Okeke – TBLA Math teacher

As a first-year teacher at TBLA, I am writing to support TBLA's re-authorization of becoming chartered by the ICSB. From what I've experienced thus far, working here has been a rewarding experience for me. This means a lot coming from a place where the environment was not conducive to learning or teaching. The team here is strong. The environment is safe. The administrators are very supportive; and the teachers are dedicated. This makes me want to fight for this school.

The important factor is these children. I am a ninth grade math teacher and I am overwhelmed by the number of students who stay after school for extra help. These students work hard and don't deserve to be put in the middle of the controversy regarding the state of our school.

We have so much to offer here at TBLA and it would be a great disappointment to close this school or place it in the hands of people who do not have the best interest of the students. In closing, I strongly hope that ICSB will become the new authorizer for Thea Bowman Leadership Academy.

Kenya Barlow

I am a teacher at Thea Bowman Leadership Academy. I am writing this letter because just like you, I want to continue to see the students at Thea Bowman Leadership Academy succeed through education. As a first year teacher at Thea Bowman, I have witnessed firsthand the impact a solid education could have on a student's success. The students and administrative staff have shown excellent leadership throughout the school year by promoting community and parent involvement through academic programs, volunteerism, and sports. Although we have had a few bumps in the road, the atmosphere at Thea Bowman has remained positive and our students and staff have shown remarkable resilience through hard work and perseverance. With your support, our students have the opportunity to continue their education without worry and interruption. As you all make the decision to charter our school, it is my hope that you will consider Thea Bowman Leadership Academy.

David Allen, Jr. – Spanish Instructor

I am presently a foreign language instructor at Thea Bowman Leadership Academy Senior High School, in Gary, Indiana.

I am completing my fifth (5th) teaching school year at this academy. In the few years I've been here, I have found the students to be more "academically" inclined, studious, ambitious, and a willingness to learn. The students here seem to be more optimistic, and to display a greater academic work ethic than any other school I have been in--even as far as the public school District #501 in Topeka, Kansas.

I've served as principal of a junior high school, a vice principal of a high school, and a vice principal of an elementary school right here in Northwest Indiana--over thirty-five (35) years, and I have NEVER been able to so PROUDLY serve a group of youngsters as this group that I have had the pleasure of instructing at our Thea Bowman Academy. Surely, we (staff/administrators) have our unique problems, but so does everyone. We are working hard--endlessly--to make great stride in goals and academic accomplishments for our students. It will take a little time; our problems didn't occur just over night, and surely, they won't be resolved over night. It will take a little time.

What is needed now is STABILITY--stability in a charter--stability in personnel and management--stability in the mobility of our students--stability in our instructional staff and building personnel, etc.

If you can assist in any way, it would be more than appreciated. Our staff is optimistic--our students and parents are looking to us for academic guidance and instructions. We want to be able to offer that service.

Stacy Lindskog – 4th grade teacher at TBLA

My name is Stacy Lindskog, I am a product of Gary public schools, and a generational community member. Most importantly, I am a fourth grade teacher at Thea Bowman Leadership Academy. I am writing to express my strong support of a partnership between Thea Bowman and Phalen Leadership Academies.

During my three years at Thea Bowman we have undergone many changes. At the elementary school alone, we have had six changes in administration and countless changes in faculty and staff. We struggle to maintain basic supplies. The limited technology that we have available is antiquated and inadequate to facilitate optimum skills and educational tools. All of these turmoils have occurred while we have been under the sponsorship of Ball State University.

It is my strong belief that Thea Bowman, students, staff, and families deserve a change. We deserve a fresh start. We deserve the opportunity to build upon what we do that works and to improve upon that which does not. Phalen Leadership Academies is offering us that opportunity. Phalen wants us and believes that they have a data proven model for success that may work for our students too. More impressive to me than having a model at the ready is Mr. Phalen's expressed attitude that we would do whatever was necessary to overcome the obstacles to our student's success. He enthusiastically expressed a desire to invest in the success of our students. I cannot represent the positions of BSU as I have not had the pleasure of meeting them. Our current charter sponsor refused to renew our charter, and to the best of my knowledge, only wanted us back after another showed interest in us.

Please allow us the opportunity to actualize our full potential as a learning institution by progressing the partnership between Thea Bowman and Phalen Leadership Academies.

Arthur Haggard

My name is Arthur Haggard and I am both a parent and an employee of Thea Bowman Leadership Academy. I believe that Thea Bowman Leadership Academy is the best Charter School in Northwest Indiana. Thea Bowman Leadership Academy has been the mother ship for Northwest Indiana and the Chicago land Area Charter Schools. Thea Bowman Leadership Academy has been a beacon of light to Gary, Indiana. Thea Bowman Leadership Academy Board Members understood both the barriers and the challenges our citizens was faced with in regards to providing a quality education for our youth in Northwest Indiana. So the board devised a plan to open a school that was cost effective, safe and therapeutic that provided a rigorous curriculum that would allow the youth of Gary to compete with students academically throughout the state of Indiana as well as creating jobs for the people of Northwest Indiana. Thea Bowman Leadership Academy has brought pride back to the city of Gary and has given our student body hope and a sense of purpose. I pray that the Indiana Charter School Board understand how the student body and the citizens of Gary would be impacted if our school was not to chartered. Please help us move forward through these difficult times so we can get back to educating our youth without any distractions.

Sherrie Gooch

My name is Sherrie Gooch and I teach fourth grade at the Thea Bowman Leadership Academy. Even though I have been with the Academy for a short while, I want to express my full support of the partnership between Thea Bowman and Phalen Leadership Academies.

For the first time in years, I truly feel comfortable and welcomed as part of the Thea Bowman family. The fourth grade team that I belong to have been very helpful to me since the first day I started. Anytime I have needed their assistance, they have not hesitated to help me. Two of my team members were afforded the opportunity to go to Indianapolis and saw one of Phalen's academies. They came back with nothing but high remarks.

In conclusion, I strongly feel that if my team members have been supportive of me in my new position and encouraged me when they felt I needed it, then I must stand with them in support of the partnership between Thea Bowman and Phalen Leadership Academies.

Charles Lucky

I support the application submitted by the Drexel Foundation for Educational Excellence, Inc. on behalf of the Thea Bowman Leadership Academy. The educational mission and vision of the Thea Bowman Leadership Academy must continue under the leadership of the Drexel Foundation to ensure the academic achievement and success of the students attending this institution of education.

Oppose

Ms. Patrice D. Matthews, Director of Social Emotional Learning and Counseling Services

East Chicago Lighthouse Charter School

As a employee of Northwest Indiana and believer in School Choice, I understand that every application received by the Indiana Charter School Board must legally be considered. In the very unique circumstance of Thea Bowman Leadership Academy, I ask you to listen to the voice of the parents of TBLA and the community and deny the Drexel Foundation's proposal for a new charter.

The parents and community wish and desire for the school to remain authorized by Ball State University. The proposal submitted by the Drexel Foundation is unnecessary as Ball State University has approved a group of community members consisting of TBLA Parents who wish to save the school. Furthermore, the fact is that even if the charter is approved by the ICSB, it still may be denied by the Indiana State Board of Education. This uncertainty of charter status will lead to a decline in student enrollment and staffing will suffer. Please put the children of the community first and say NO to the Drexel Foundation

Ryan Schoon

As a lifelong resident of Northwest Indiana, Indiana University Northwest Alumnus, and believer in School Choice, I understand that every application received by the Indiana Charter School Board must legally be considered. In the very unique circumstance of Thea Bowman Leadership Academy, I ask you to listen to the voice of the parents of TBLA and the community and deny the Drexel Foundation's proposal for a new charter. As an educator, I have a duty to listen to the voices of the families I teach. It is my belief that you share this responsibility.

The parents and community desire that the school to remain authorized by Ball State University. The proposal submitted by the Drexel Foundation is unnecessary as Ball State University has approved a group of community members consisting of TBLA Parents who wish to save the school. Furthermore, the fact is that even if the charter is approved by the ICSB, it still may be denied by the Indiana State Board of Education. This uncertainty of charter status will lead to a decline in student enrollment and staffing will suffer. Please put the children of the community first and say NO to the Drexel Foundation

Gwendolyn Adell

I am writing this letter to make sure my voice is heard before a final decision is made. My name is Gwendolyn Adell. I was the school leader at Thea Bowman for eleven years. During this time, Thea Bowman was one of the best Charters in the state. I also have a nephew who attends the school, as well as being a citizen and taxpayer living in the city of Gary.

I have first hand knowledge of what Drexel is trying to do. Ball State University, as the authorizer, has been open, honest, and helpful for all of those years. The Drexel Board, on the other hand, has been deceitful, dishonest, and determined to tell Ball State that they had no authority to ask them to make any changes to the way they were doing business, even when laws were being broken and their decisions were causing students and staff to leave in large numbers. Their decisions also caused people to lose jobs. They were not fiscally responsible either. I, personally, have heard James Harris say that Ball State could not tell them what to do? If what you are being asked to do is only to better the operations and governance of the school, then what should the problem be, and who should Drexel be accountable to?

The problem is the Drexel Board crossed the line and started to think the school belonged to them and started making very bad decisions which caused the decline of the school for the past two to three years.

The Drexel Board had no problem with Ball State until they were given a one year provisional renewal and later notice that the Charter would not be renewed. Then and only then did they actively seek a new Charter Authorizer.

The President of the Board, Keisha White, admitted at the February Board meeting that they had been shopping for a new authorizer. She also admitted that everyone they asked said no. Last week Thursday at a PTA meeting, the Principal, Sarita Stevens, stated that when she contacted your organization, a Mr. Betley told her that the Indiana State Charter Board was going to contact them and that is why things are being expedited for them. The Drexel Board getting this Charter is a done deal. It would be a travesty to our children and our city to allow a Board who thinks they are accountable to no one to continue destroying our school. The school belongs to the public, parents, and students. So when Drexel was asked to step down and turn the Board over to new members, they refused. They refused until they were going to submit a new application to your Board. Then, James Harris and Keisha White wrote a resolution that required all other Board members to resign, (some members were surprised by the action). We, members of the community, asked for the total Board to step down at that same Board meeting and they refused again. Authorizer shopping for a school not in good standing is against the law. This is a clear case of authorizer shopping to avoid accountability. Please vote NO to this proposal. This will allow a new Board to work with its present authorizer to stabilize the school and move forward.

Julie Hollingworth – Fort Wayne, IN

I believe the solution to the governance of Thea Bowman is for the school to join the Gary Public School Corporation. That will solve the board and governance issues that led Ball State University to withdraw Thea Bowman's charter.

Kena Sequin, Regional Director of Information Technology, Northwest Indiana Lighthouse Academies

As a resident of Northwest Indiana and believer in School Choice, I understand that every application received by the Indiana Charter School Board must legally be considered. In the very unique circumstance of Thea Bowman Leadership Academy, I ask you to listen to the voice of the parents of TBLA and the community and deny the Drexel Foundation's proposal for a new charter.

The parents and community wish and desire for the school to remain authorized by Ball State University. The proposal submitted by the Drexel Foundation is unnecessary as Ball State University has approved a group of community members consisting of TBLA Parents who wish to save the school. Furthermore, the fact is that even if the charter is approved by the ICSB, it still may be denied by the Indiana State Board of Education. This uncertainty of charter status will lead to a decline in student enrollment and staffing will suffer. Please put the children of the community first and say NO to the Drexel Foundation

James Borom

I am a resident of Northwest Indiana who is employed by a nearby charter school. I am a big supporter of students and families having choice as to what school fits their students needs. More importantly charter schools are suppose to fill a need that public and private schools are able to offer. We are suppose to be the biggest supporter of scholars and their families to offer every student that walks through our doors an opportunity to succeed. We are suppose to be the ultimate voice of the community that we serve. As a resident of Northwest Indiana and believer in School Choice, I understand that every application received by the Indiana Charter School Board must legally be considered. In the very unique circumstance of Thea Bowman Leadership Academy, I ask you to listen to the voice of the parents of TBLA and the community and deny the Drexel Foundation's proposal for a new charter.

The parents and community wish and desire for the school to remain authorized by Ball State University. The proposal submitted by the Drexel Foundation is unnecessary as Ball State University has approved a group of community members consisting of TBLA Parents who wish to save the school. We ultimately serve and adhere to the needs of the community. This uncertainty of charter status will lead to a decline in student enrollment and staffing will suffer. In Gary we need and welcome the support of the community we serve. Please don't reward the Drexel Foundation for not listening to parents of our scholars. Please put the children of the community first and say NO to the Drexel Foundation

Janora Holmes, former teacher of TBLA

As a resident of Northwest Indiana and believer in School Choice, I understand that every application received by the Indiana Charter School Board must be legally considered. In the very unique circumstance of Thea Bowman Leadership Academy, I ask you to listen to the voice of the parents of TBLA and the community and deny the Drexel Foundation's proposal for a new charter.

The parents and community wish and desire for the school to remain authorized by Ball State University. The proposal submitted by the Drexel Foundation is unnecessary as Ball State has approved a group of community members consisting of TBLA parents who wish to save the school. Furthermore, the fact is that even if the charter is approved by the ICSB, it still may be denied by the Indiana State Board of Education. This uncertainty of charter status will lead to a decline in student enrollment and staffing will suffer. Please put the children of the community first and say NO to the Drexel Foundation.

Renaë Ricks-Miller, Art Specialist, Northwest Indiana Arts Infusion Coordinator, East Chicago Lighthouse Charter School

As a resident of Northwest Indiana and believer in School Choice, I understand that every application received by the Indiana Charter School Board must legally be considered. In the very unique circumstance of Thea Bowman Leadership Academy, I ask you to listen to the voice of the parents of TBLA and the community and deny the Drexel Foundation's proposal for a new charter.

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Charlotte Jackson, Principal, Gary Lighthouse Upper Academy

As a resident of Northwest Indiana and believer in School Choice, I understand that every application received by the Indiana Charter School Board must legally be considered. In the very unique circumstance of Thea Bowman Leadership Academy, I ask you to listen to the voice of the parents of TBLA and the community and deny the Drexel Foundation's proposal for a new charter.

The parents and community wish and desire for the school to remain authorized by Ball State University. The proposal submitted by the Drexel Foundation is unnecessary as Ball State University has approved a group of community members consisting of TBLA Parents who wish to save the school. Furthermore, the fact is that even if the charter is approved by the ICSB, it still may be denied by the Indiana State Board of Education. This uncertainty of charter status will lead to a decline in student enrollment and staffing will suffer. Please put the children of the community first and say NO to the Drexel Foundation

Joseph Thomas

#VOTE NO TO THEA BOWMAN AUTHORIZER SHOPPING

Cheryl Taylor

#VOTE NO TO THEA BOWMAN AUTHORIZER SHOPPING

Attachment A
Public Hearing Sign-in Sheets

Attachment B
Student Letters

[Redacted]
1/22/16

To whom it may concern,

I don't think Thea Bowman should close down. Some people only have this school as a choice. For example, their parents may not have a car and they have to walk here. The parents may not be able to afford to drive to school and back. The teachers care about us and they want us to succeed.

Before I came to Thea Bowman, I would sit in class bored because the work was so easy. Ever since I came here, I receive challenges everyday. They teach us everything that we need to know about life. They'll pull us to the side and give us advice and joke around with us to keep us entertained. That is why Thea Bowman Leadership Academy shouldn't be closed.

Yours truly,

A Thea Bowman Student

[REDACTED]

Jan. 22, 2016

Yes I think Theodor
Bowman should stay
open because I think
this is the best school
I ever went to. I want
to shout out to the
custodians for keeping most
of our building clean.

I really know alot
of kids here from a couple
years ago. They have good
food to. All I want
now is a field trip. I
also wish dress down could
be \$2.00 to save us more
money. The staffs are the
main reason though.

To whom it may concern,

I believe you should not close the school but give a charter back to us.

The school is the best in the area, and it would benefit you to give the charter back. We have promising students in this school. I sincerely hope you (Ball State) reconsider a charter for Thea Bowman Leadership Academy. I love this school. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Name], Thea Bowman Student

[REDACTED]
Jan, 22, 2020

They shouldn't close Bowman is because
New Bowman has been open for 23
years and is a great school and with
good teachers and great staff workers.
New Bowman is a big school and a
great school to go to it barely any fight.
At New Bowman it also has
from 7th - 12th grade.

The second reason why they shouldn't close
New Bowman is because New Bowman is
a bad school they do good things such
as help other and other community they
have good field days and give us more
money to school.

To Whom it may concern:

Hello, My name is [REDACTED], I'm in the 7th grade, and I go to Thea Bowman High school. Thea Bowman high has been open since 2009. I believe that our school should stay open because this school has a very good reputation in Gary as "the best school".

I, ~~as an~~ individual student, would be overwhelmingly grateful that someone would be kind enough to sponsor our school.

Dear Ms. Stevens

I think this school should not close down because we have a B as a grade for our school. Our school has many students and all of them would have to find a new school to attend if this school closes. Also this school is the best academically and students will be looking forward to attend next year.

Sincerely,

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

7th Grade

Dear To whom it may concern

I say bowman shouldn't close because academically its the best school. I love this school, it has so much to teach us. If it ever closed down i wouldn't know what to do. I have all my friends and some of my family here. I learn alot like math, science, and language arts. I would never want to close this school down. I have been at Thea Bowman for at least 7 years back in first grade. I hope this school never closes.

Sincerely,

7th grade

To whom it concern

I think that Thea Bowman
shouldnt close because there
will be a lot of kids that wouldn't
have a school. Teachers
would also have to find other
places to work. Thea Bowman
been a school for a very long
time. It is a very nice school
and have very nice students
and staff. They work very hard.

Sincerely,



1-22-16

To Whom it may concern,

I believe Bowman shouldn't close because of many reasons. I believe that we can and have the potential to get good grades on ISTEP, we have the highest senior graduating rate. We are the best school in Gary. The Bowman I've been here since kindergarten. I've learned so much and had so much fun here at this school. My teachers were very great teachers. The seniors have a bright future and want to come back one day and be able to talk to the students. We have a great basketball program. We've won 3 championships and have been ranking in the country and state. This is truthfully a great school. We have a great building with a nice gym. We have teachers and staff members who are trying to help us make it in life. We have so much and achieved so much since we first opened in 2003. So why close now. We can find and will find a new charter. I believe in our students, principals and other staff to make that happen. We student will do our best to make this happen.

Sincerely,

1/22/16

To whom it may concern,

Thea Bowman is a caring, fun, but a strict school. The reason I say strict is because we have so many rules. Some of our rules state that if we are late the teachers will have to fill out a tarty slip. The slip states if you are late 9 times you fell the class you are late to for the quarter. That is one reason I say they are strict.

When the school year starts you get a wierd feeling, because you don't know the teachers. Once you get to know them the are so nice and friendly. Don't get me wrong that's true. Thanks to Thea Bowman teachings and teachers I have never flunked a grade.

Sincerely; 

To whom it may concern,

I believe that Bowman is and can continue to be one of the best schools in Gary, Indiana. I've been attending Bowman since kindergarten. My teachers from the Elementary are one of the reasons that I'm able to write this letter now. Bowman can set goals for several students to go to college and to be able to graduate. The a

Bowman is a well-educated school in my opinion. At our school, we have some very smart kids that can do a lot of big things, and I think Bowman can help them achieve their goals. In my opinion, Bowman should be one of the last schools to ever get shut down. Our students grades matter, we have some very smart athletes from the Elementary to the Highschool. I would be very proud to say that I've graduated from Bowman in a few years.

Sincerely,



To whom it may concern,
I think that Thea Bowman shouldn't shut down. We are one of the highest charter schools in Gary, Indiana. Also we have teachers and staff members that care about our future. We also have sports that keep kids out of trouble.

Education comes first though. I think personally that we have some of the smartest kids from our generation. This school will also keep kids competitive. I think that if the school stay open it will be the ultimate school.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]

To whom this may concern

Hello my name is [REDACTED] I'm
a concerned student @ Thea Bowman
High school. This is one of the best
schools I've been in so far. This
school has been open for 13 years
so far and I'm hoping it stays open.
This school has many teachers that can
teach their hearts out. This time
we want you to step in and be
apart of our school system

[REDACTED]
1-22-16
TBLA

Thea Bowman Leadership Academy is a commitment to the highest educational and ethical management standards will become a model in Indiana high performance urban schools, which repairs all students for academic success and leadership roles in their community. I Lyon Jenkins have been going to Thea Bowman Leadership Academy for 8 years. Thea Bowman is the most educational, successful school I have ever been to. Since Kindergarten Thea Bowman has taught me to be a proper student and young lady. Bowman was founded in 2003 and was raised by the most educated woman Sister Thea Bowman. She was the top role model for our school. If there is anything to say about Thea Bowman it would be that since 2003 it has been successful and it still is as to the year of 2016. I have been going to Thea Bowman Leadership Academy for 8 years and haven't had any problems. I started to learn multiplication in 2nd grade, Thea Bowman has high-advanced classes. The staff there are so polite and respect. Bowman has set an enormous path for me to be the most educated, successful young that I could ever be.

~~_____~~ ~~_____~~

To Whom It May Concern,

Thea Bowman should stay open just for me to graduate because my family members also graduated from here. do I want to also. And I been at Bowman since kindergarten, might as well finish here.

7th Grade

[REDACTED]

1-22-2016

Period 6

Why I think Thea Bowman should stay open

I think Thea Bowman should stay open because this is a great school.

Also Thea Bowman make sure the student are having fun. Some of the teacher

I know that work a Thea Bowman is

~~fantastic~~ teachers. Their Bowman education

is wonderful. Hope the Thea Bowman won't close because I like this school.

[REDACTED]

1/22/16

I think Theo Bowman shouldn't get closed down, because one there's not a lot of schools like Theo Bowman, also because most of these schools are dirty some don't have heat or air, some schools don't have hot lunch or good food, but Theo Bowman provides. All of that for this to be my first year coming here I have to say it is the best school I been to in years. The teachers are nice, and treat us good and help us, and so does the student's. Also Theo Bowman focus on four grades before you can do anything most school don't care.

I feel that Thea Bowman should not close down. I think that they should not close down because we have great teachers and staff. Also they shouldn't shut down because some of the students parents think that this is a good school and they choose for their children to come to school at Thea Bowman. The school Thea Bowman Leadership Academy also got built from ground and up not to long ago so they shouldn't just let the building just go to waste. My last reason is some people like use to coming to Bowman and they are close with their teachers. This is why I think our school Thea Bowman Leadership Academy should not close down.

1/22/16

7th grade

Dear; To whom it may concern

Thea Bowman should not close because this is the only school that's keeping us together. All the memories Thea Bowman had with the basketball team going to state, being in the newspaper, the trophies + certificates would go to waste. It shouldn't close because Bowman is a really good school. Our academics is what's keeping the school open. If Bowman close then everyone will be disappointed. Yes we may talk down about our school but at the end, Bowman is our home. We will still be straight outta Bowman, just a kid from Bowman. This is still the Eagle's Nest.

Sincerely From; Riquell Dixon

1-22-1:

To whom this may concern,

I am a student at
Thea Bowman Leadership Academy.
Of course everybody is in freak
out mode because ~~everyday~~
rumors are going ~~to~~ around saying
that "Thea Bowman is closing".

I think we should really keep
our school open because not to
brag or anything, but we feel like
we are the best charter school in
Gary & our grades tell everything.
Everyone is talking about how
we need to give more education
to the black kids at school. We
are doing excellent because we
have some of the most amazing
teachers ~~here~~ here. I really want
to go to an outstanding college &
~~but~~ I can't do that if my
school records weren't good. So
that is my thought for why TBLA
should stay open.

Sincerely, A TBLA Student.

Dear:

Thea Bowman shouldn't close!
Thea Bowman is one of the few good schools that are still open. It has one of the highest student counts, high academic records, and Great teachers. It doesn't really have an reason to be shutdown either.

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

1-22-16

P1
7th grade

To whom it may concern,

The Bowman should not close. A lot of students planned on graduating here. Also, some students don't have any where else to go. In my opinion it should also not close because I like this school and it's not that bad to be here. If the school does close down I will not be able to graduate from here. The elementary students will also not be able to attend the Bowman high or middle school.

1/22/15

To Whom It May Concern,

I believe that Thea Bowman should stay open. It is a really good school. They need to change a few things. They have some good teachers. They need to upgrade a few things. The principal can be more involved with students in my opinion. Overall this is an okay school for the area that we are in.

Truly yours,

[Redacted Name]

7th Grade

Jan 22, 16

Dear Mrs. Brown

The reason this school shouldn't shut down is because we need our education. Another reason we shouldn't shut down is because this money has too much money on it. Another reason is because the average is a B. The last reason is because if we shut down all the students will have to find a new school to attend and we have too many students.

Sincerely,

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

7th Grade

Bowman Nest

Dear Bowman care takers,

Thera Bowman has been my school ever since I was in kinder-graden. Now I am at the one on fifth ave 3401 W. Gary, Indiana. This school been opened for 13 years now, same age as me, but they won't have no one to spenser us or that care of the Bowman Nest. Bowman is one of the greatest and largest school in Gary now. "Thera Bowman closing" I really don't want to hear all that. Memories been made that I don't want to lose and also friends I don't want to go away ner seperate. Thera Bowman basically formed the person I am today. This school provided me with discipline and education that I needed in life so I can stay away from the streets, guns, and drugs. Also away from unnessasary things.

- Sincerely



I feel that the Bowman shouldn't
shut down because first of all it is better
than my old school and there are some
great teachers and staff plus I'm
really learning something and it's the
best school.

Why Bowman should
stay ~~to~~ open

The Reason why

I think Bowman should stay
open IS because the deserve
one more chance. We can
prove that we can do what
we ~~can~~ come to school to
do not what they see what
we do. Then Bowman may not
have the best test scores
but we

~~Theresa Bowman~~ 1/22/16

I would like For Theobowman to stay open because it's an awesome school. People Have Graduated From Thea Bowman. Like what's the problem what did we do. I just got to this school I love it.

~~I~~ I think no! I know I have a good Reputatior for this school. I want to Graduate From this school. I just Recently played football.

I Don't think any other schools would let a girl play football. I want to get a good scholar ship from this school. I need to graduate from this school. So don't close Thea Bowman down please don't.

[REDACTED] 1-22-16

To whom it may concern:

Hi my name is Shanon. I believe we should stay opened because this is a great school. I've been a Thera Bowman since Kindergarten. Every-day students come in the class working their hardest. There's 100% students. Out of that there's 5% that want's to act up. The other 95% is great.

Every parent send their children to Thera Bowman so they can learn. They believe and have faith in our school. Not only that, but Thera Bowman is the number one school in Gary, IN. We have the best reputation. If they were to have our school close. Parent would have to send their children to a school they don't believe in.

Then you have Thera Bowman Teachers make our education fun. So that it's easier for us to understand. They work their hardest everyday. Some teachers

have families. That's how you
know Thea Bowman is a true
dedicated school.

Boman Eagles

Thea Bowman leadership academy is a well educated school. Bowman shows thier commitment, its kindress. This is a school that you would want to put your children in. Thea Bowman has been a good school since 2003 and still is now. 13 years of hard work, 13 years of training, 13 years of finding more and now are improved teachers. I've only been in thea Bowman for 2 1/2 years now working hard trying to set a good example for myself and for the school. Thea Bowman has a high standard and a high goal for thier students. Students may think that the staff members are being hard on them when it comes to school work but actually they just want thier students to be the best. We have a school that has grades K-12 grade. Our school hires immediately, but you have to be a liscenced teacher for thea Bowman. We have 2 openings for kindergarten 2 openings for 1st, 1 opening for 2nd 1 opening for 3rd grade and 2 openings for 6th. Bowman has a basketball team for girls and boys, cheerleading, football, volleyball and much more. Thea Bowman has a right to stay open because of there good qualities.

Thea Bowman Leadership Academy is a commitment to highest educational and ethical management standards will become a model in Indiana for high performance urban schools with repair all students for academic success and leadership roles in their community

Sincerely



Rec'n

I don't want my school to
et

Dear, who ever it may concern,

I really don't want my school to close. The behavior at are school is good. We ~~hardly~~ rarely have fights. The students excell at academics as far as grades go. The school has excellent sports teams. Some students, like me, have gone to this school since kindergarden.

It would be sad for the school to close when some ~~to~~ seniors are just about to graduate. This school has some of the best teachers in Gary. If it closes you would be stopping teachers from getting paid, ~~the~~ and teaching. Then you would be preventing the students from finishing their education. If you close this school in the middle of students

getting their education you
would basically be marking
the students dropouts.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

If would make you think this
is the right place, you would
need to stay in.

[REDACTED]

I think Bowman should stay open because it is a much developed school. You would learn things that you would do or see in the future. Bowman might not be the best school in Gary, Indiana but it mostly make you stay focus & learn things that have you interested. Bowman have you working till your hands fall off. It have you working your brain each & everyday. Also when you come to Bowman you always meet people. You always fit in a group either if your weird, crazy, wild, quiet, a reader. You will always make thousand of friends that is most likely like you. Bowman is the type of school that no bullying happen into the school. Teachers teach us a good lesson in how we going to do in our job, what we need to learn before we come a nurse. They explain alot of the things we need to know. Bowman would have you want to come to school mostly everyday. Bowman might have a low grade but have you learning new things & doing the things that would make us understand things better. It teaches step by step what you would need to know. Bowman is a perfect school to be in.



1-00-6

Hi my name is Carson Bradley. I think the teachers respect @UV not close down. The reason why is because I love this school. I been at the high school for little under a year and so far a like ever thing about it. We have a great middle-high school basketball team. And a great middle high school football team. We should also stay open because were a smart school were one of the best schools in grade. And we should stay open.