

# State of South Carolina

## Office of the Governor

NIKKI R. HALEY  
GOVERNOR

1205 PENDLETON STREET  
COLUMBIA 29201

March 5, 2014

The Honorable Kenneth A. "Kenny" Bingham  
South Carolina House of Representatives  
519B Blatt Building  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Representative Bingham,

Let me begin by thanking you for the diligence you and your subcommittee have shown during the past several years in working to address the persistent challenges we have faced at the John de la Howe School.

Like you, I was troubled by the Inspector General's January 2014 report on the institution, which found that the school's leadership had lost focus and was substantially unable to connect the school's programs and service offerings to any particular outcomes for students. This is unacceptable in its own right – certainly at a per-student cost to the taxpayers of \$87,000 per year.

I submitted my Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-15 shortly before the Inspector General's final report was released. Since then, your subcommittee has even more forcefully called upon the school's leadership to account for its actions to date and also to take steps to set John de la Howe on a more constructive and viable path forward. We have already seen some results. In the wake of your hearings, the Board called for the President's resignation. The principal also subsequently stepped down, followed closely by the Board's Chairwoman and Vice Chairwoman.

As we move forward, it is imperative that we remain focused on providing for the educational and therapeutic needs of all of the children who attend the John de la Howe School. Given my concerns with the school's leadership, I recommended in my budget that the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) play a leading role next fiscal year in assessing the needs of each child and producing an individualized plan for his or her continued care and education. I believe the events that have transpired during the past six weeks are further proof that this type of intervention is necessary in order for these children to receive the services they need and to make it possible for the John de la Howe School to regain the respect it once so richly deserved.

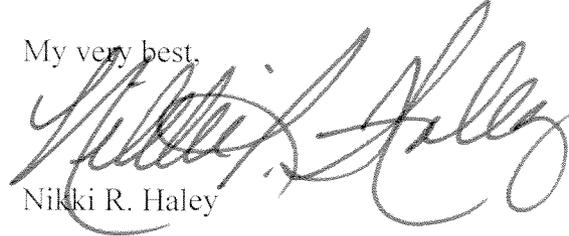
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As the full House of Representatives prepares to take up the budget, I hope that you will consider an approach similar to the one I laid out back in January. It is clear to me that both John de la Howe's staff and its students stand to benefit from the assistance that DJJ and other state agencies could render in the coming year. Thanks again for your commitment and your continued action on behalf of these students. God bless.

My very best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nikki R. Haley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "N".

Nikki R. Haley

NRH/tp

cc: The Honorable W. Brian White, South Carolina House of Representatives