

The News Journal

A Gannett newspaper

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OUR VIEW

RONALD R. RUSSO

Selection of an able administrator enhances start of charter school

WHERE WE STAND

If charter schools are to be effective and accepted, they must have strong leadership.

The coalition of businesses forming the state's first charter school moved quickly and wisely in its selection of an administrator to help establish the new school. Ronald R. Russo demonstrated able and creative leadership as principal of St. Mark's High School for 18 years.

Mr. Russo had a falling out with his superiors in the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington. He was ousted at the end of the last school year. The specific reasons for Mr. Russo's termination were never disclosed, but students, parents, alumni and faculty members were virtually unanimous in support of him.

The spokesman for the business coalition made it clear that Mr. Russo's record had been examined thoroughly. He was not the final choice, he was the only candidate considered.

The charter school, to be located at Wilmington High School, will focus on math and science. Mr. Russo has a strong interest in these important subjects and an impressive track record of student achievement in these areas at St. Mark's.

Another factor which must have impressed the business leaders is Mr. Russo's strong commitment to independent school operations free of bureaucratic interference. That, essentially, is what charter schools are.

Charter schools and school choice are now realities in Delaware. For these concepts to succeed along with the other school reform proposals, they must come out of the gate well-organized and tightly focused. We think Ron Russo has the ability and the drive to make sure the math-science academy has a successful opening next year.