



# Delaware State News

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Clayton school buys land, plans to build

By Curtia James  
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CLAYTON — The Providence Creek Academy Charter School signed an agreement Wednesday to purchase a parcel of land for \$1.5 million from St. Joseph's at Providence Creek, representatives from the groups

announced.  
Sen. Thomas R. Carper, D-Del., who worked with his staff to help draft the agreement, served as keynote speaker at the signing ceremony.

"As an advocate for quality education and community service, I am excited to have assisted in the agreement being celebrated between St. Joseph's at Providence Creek and the Providence Creek Academy Charter School," Sen. Carper said in a statement.

"The road has been a long one, but with the cooperation of

both organizations and members of my staff, this agreement allows Providence Creek Academy and St. Joseph's to remain true to their mission and expand opportunities (for students of) Kent County and throughout Delaware."

The purchase resolves the academy's failed efforts in June to block the nonprofit foundation's sale of 50 acres to developer Tony Ashburn and Son to build The Reserve at Providence Creek, a development for residents 55 and over.

The academy, which operates in buildings owned by the foundation, had charged that the sale interfered with its expansion plans and in March 2005 filed suit to prevent the transaction.

Sen. Carper "provided staff and assistance to settle differences and to seek solutions between St. Joseph's at Providence Creek and Providence Creek Academy," said Charles E. Taylor, the academy's managing director.

Before a gathering of students, faculty, staff and officials

from both organizations, Sen. Carper praised them for their efforts, calling the agreement, "a small miracle, but a miracle indeed."

The academy plans to finance the land purchase through operating funds, fund-raising efforts and bank loans, Mr. Taylor said.

The 33-acre plot, in Kent County between the foundation's service road and the adjacent Hanover Foods facility, will provide a campus for several

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# Charter, landlord reach deal



Submitted photo

Sen. Thomas R. Carper, D-Del., serves as a witness Wednesday as St. Joseph's at Providence Creek board chair Joyce Webber, left, and Providence Creek Academy Charter School board president Joan Messick signed a land purchase agreement.

## Charter

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*new facilities for the academy.*

School officials hope to have the new campus complete by September 2009.

Mr. Taylor said the new school will include three buildings and athletic facilities.

Two of the buildings, he said, will be used for classrooms, while the third will house performing and visual arts space, a cafeteria and gymnasium.

Construction of the new school is scheduled to begin as soon as possible, he said.

The school will continue to lease its space on Duck Creek Road from St. Joseph's at Providence Creek while construction is under way and the academy and foundation will utilize the land until the new facilities are complete.

St. Joseph's will continue to use the space for community service programs during the construction period, said Marc C. Ostroff, the foundation's executive director.

As part of the deal, the academy agreed to purchase 12 school buses owned by Providence

Creek Services, a division of the foundation.

Mr. Taylor said the move would give the academy more control of its bus routes.

The academy secured a bank loan for the \$181,000 purchase of the buses, he said.

"In this situation there need not be any losers," Sen. Carper said.

"We just kept working until we had a winning outcome for the school, its students and the foundation.

"We knew the right thing to do was to find a solution that everyone could work with and grow with."

Dr. Nancy Wilson, the state Department of Education's deputy secretary of education, said she was pleased a settlement was reached.

"I am looking forward to taking a look at the agreement and seeing how it will interact with the academy's current charter," she said.

"I am very glad to see the foundation and school work together in a collaborative way."

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 Staff writer Curtia James  
 can be reached at 741-8247  
 or cjames@newszap.com*

## SAT

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