



May 23, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Gonzalez and Superintendent Toledo:

We write this letter in support of your school district's efforts to provide SMART[®] health services to your students. Here in Pittsburgh, Reverend Taleeta Canady and I have endeavored to create an independent charter school that will be an innovative and respectful learning space for our city's most vulnerable adolescents and will prepare them for future success. We founded LIFE Male STEAM Academy (LIFE) in 2021 as an all-male charter school with the mission to increase the presence of African American and other underrepresented males in the STEM pipeline and prepare them to compete globally.

Our vision for LIFE was to establish an academy where barriers are identified and eliminated, and creative envelopes are pushed. With the strategic partnership of a SMART[®] Team since our opening day in October 2021, LIFE Male STEAM Academy is now realizing that dream. Our school enrollment has doubled since our founding, and our 2023/2024 enrollment is on a track for continued growth. With the SMART[®] Team working alongside us every step of the way, we have overcome the traditional barriers of opening a new charter school as well as the unprecedented challenges brought about by COVID and school closures.

When the traditional health systems in our city were not meeting our needs, the SMART[®] Team stepped up to implement an innovative way to provide the health services and care our students needed. The LIFE SMART[®] Health and Wellness Center with clinical operations provided by FAITHworks Health and Wellness (SFW), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is a cornerstone of our academy's *Whole Child 360* approach, which allows us to reach and address the deep underlying issues and challenges that serve as barriers to emotional health, learning, and achievement. ***Simply put, the LIFE Male STEAM Academy would not be where it is today if it were not for the SMART[®] Health and Wellness Center.***

The SMART[®] Clinical Team members with SFW are not just medical professionals; they also serve as mentors and guides to our scholars and their families. They serve shoulder to shoulder with our academic professionals with a singular purpose of preparing our scholars for LIFE and success in every endeavor. The clinical staff members do not remain in the SMART[®] Center waiting for students to come to them; they are proactive in approaching students and faculty, which builds relationships that demonstrate love, care, and concern. Our medical professionals and our academic professionals are one team.

We enthusiastically recommend SMART[®] as a best practice to integrate and improve health and educational outcomes. We wish you all the best in providing SMART[®] care to your students for years to come. Please contact me at dcanady@lifesteam.org if I can be of any further help to you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Darryl and Reverend Taleeta Canady, Co-Founders, LIFE