



WBUR News &lt;wbur.newsroom@gmail.com&gt;

---

## Chamberlain School's Response to DLC Report - wburnews

1 message

---

**Jackie Herskovitz** <jackie@teakmedia.com>  
Reply-To: WBURNEWS@burl.bu.edu  
To: "WBURNEWS@wbur.bu.edu" <WBURNEWS@burl.bu.edu>

Mon, Aug 15, 2016 at 11:52 AM

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE August 15, 2016**

### Chamberlain School responds to Disability Law Center Report

**School calls the DLC report *"a flawed, self-serving and biased document at odds with the reasoned determinations of responsible state agencies"***

**Chamberlain administrators available in Cambridge today.**

**Boston, MA --- Chamberlain International School ("Chamberlain") today responded to a report from the Disability Law Center which alleged abuse and neglect at the School.**

**"This report is largely devoid of specific time frames and relies in part on reports from unidentified individuals who, in many cases, have failed to report these incidents to responsible state officials," said Sarah Norfleet, Chief Administrative Officer at Chamberlain. "The idea that our school is neglectful and abusive is in complete contrast to the experience of the vast majority of our students and parents."**

**Chamberlain is a non-profit day and residential private school serving approximately 100 adolescents with educational and psychiatric needs. The School has been in continuous operation since 1976. The School is fully licensed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ("DESE") and The Department of Early Education and Care ("EEC"). The average Chamberlain student has had multiple psychiatric hospitalizations before admission. This year, 17 students of Chamberlain's graduating class (78 percent of the total class) were accepted to college. The other five students will enroll in other programs. Chamberlain students scored 100 percent on Language Arts on this year's 10<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS test.**

**The DLC is a private non-profit corporation unaffiliated with any governmental organization of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It is a "protection and advocacy" ("P and A") organization. P and A organizations were established by Congress in the 1980's and were designed in part to address concerns over inadequate state monitoring.**

**Eric MacLeish, counsel for Chamberlain, stated that he received an e mail from the DLC yesterday, announcing its intent to release its report to the news media this morning. "It was striking that the DLC, while alleging abuse and neglect, chose to release its report to the media and not to any governmental organization in Massachusetts responsible for the care of children," he said. "This is yet another attempt by a P and A organization to attempt to justify its receipt of taxpayer dollars by finding systemic abuse where none exists."**

MacLeish noted that, like many other residential treatment centers, Chamberlain is mandated to report any allegations of abuse or neglect to state officials including the Department of Children and Families. "From 2004 to the present, there were fifty-four 51A reports to DCF. Thirty three were self reports from Chamberlain. Nineteen were screened out by DCF, three were supported for abuse and seven for neglect. This report by the DLC, and the conclusions in the report were made by a group of attorneys that have no qualifications to second guess clinical decisions made at the School. If the DLC was truly concerned for Chamberlain students, it would have reported its 'findings' to state officials with the expertise and authority to address them."

The DLC's investigation's started in May of 2015, when it sent a faxed letter to Chamberlain, announcing that two attorneys from the DLC intended to arrive at Chamberlain and interview students. The DLC made it clear that it would not seek permission from the student's parents or guardians to conduct these interviews. When Chamberlain objected, arguing that parents should approve the DLC visit and that the DLC attorneys lacked mental health credentials, the DLC filed suit against Chamberlain.

In the Federal Complaint, the DLC made sweeping and now discredited allegations that sources had told the DLC that Chamberlain students had been placed in solitary confinement at the School (seclusion), had medication overdoses where students had ended up in comas and had been denied medical care following suicide attempts. These allegations were completely false and the allegations of the two sources purportedly relied on by the DLC for these facts had made similar complaints to state agencies which had been rejected. In one case, the EEC found that it could not support an allegation because "the motivation and credibility of the resident in regard to the allegations of sexual abuse are suspect." In the other case, the allegation had been made by the mother of a student who had lost all parental rights to her son and had been engaged in a bitter custody battle with her former husband, who supported Chamberlain.

"The DLC never pointed out these critical facts to the federal Court, despite the fact that state investigations were public record," said MacLeish. "These allegations were utterly false and simply a public relations stunt." When Chamberlain threatened to seek judicial sanctions from the Court, the DLC corrected the allegations in the Complaint.

"From the start, this investigation was result oriented and designed to discredit and defame the School and put it out of business," said Norfleet. "It neglected the wishes of the parents and the students. It is now time for the state government to act and disavow the DLC as a source for responsible investigations."

For further information, call Jackie Herskovitz [617 821 0514](tel:6178210514) or Eric MacLeish at [617 494 1920](tel:6174941920) or [617 817 1797](tel:6178171797)

**Jackie Herskovitz Russell**

[Teak Media + Communication](#)

840 Summer Street 305A

South Boston, MA 02127

O: [617-269-7171](tel:6172697171)

C: [617-821-0514](tel:6178210514)

F: [617-269-7179](tel:6172697179)

[@TeakMedia](#)

**Make it Matter. Make a Difference. Make it Happen.**