

Community Listening Session Notes 07-18-2017

John Read (00:00-4:15): Sixth large and open series of listening sessions the superintendent has scheduled, but there are many more than 6 that occurred in the last couple of months. Their original purpose was to put on hold, the development of the strategy for the district and to pause and engage more of the community in more of an understanding from you as to what the district needs to do more of less of different. Originally for the purpose of creating a strategy to the board, the board of trustees, at the end of this month, but it's become clear to the superintendent and I think it's fair to say really there's more time needed to do more of this to digest what's been listened to and heard and to synthesize it into a comprehensive strategy so what will be presented to the board at the end of this month is a plan to complete that strategy at some future date. So these sessions have plenty of running room with which to influence the course that this district takes over the next three years. My name is John Read I'm the chief executive for the TCCC if you're interested in the work that we do, I've put some of our reports in the back, but tonight I'm here for the 5th time as the facilitator of this discussion and so first of all, I want to welcome each of you community leaders to this session, and I know the superintendent is anxious to hear your views. She will frame the subject shortly and orient you to the topic headings behind but the greatest value that we've seen come from these sessions is not what anyone of you or anyone in the audience might offer as a comment or the occasional criticism, but rather when there is a building and an enriching on what one person says by others of you around this table. So, I want to encourage everyone in the room to be listeners, to pay attention to what is being said and build react comment on what that is, because it will much more deeply inform the topics that we have. There are very few ground rules here. I think the value in this engagement comes in the superintendent's listening I know from prior experience that she will make comments when she feels like it, but by and large this is a listening session for her and her colleagues. Joe Williams is now a veteran of these sessions, and we ask you to be respectful listeners, to be attentive to what's being said, to be concise in your comments, to forgo the opportunity to grab the mic and make a speech, unless those comments bear on what the future can be. Rhetorical questions don't help that process, questions of concern, questions that are leading, questions that open up the dialogue, they would be very helpful and welcome. So I'd like to begin by asking those around the table to introduce themselves, say a bit about your role in the community, and then I'm going to turn it over to the superintendent to introduce the topic. So if we could start here!

Lilly Spoon (04:16-04:43): Hi, I'm Lilly, I'm a student at James Island Charter High School, in my 1th year. Personally, I'm just a student, just someone who wants to see the whole process improved, and I've noticed a lot of things need to change and a lot of things have changed, so hopefully we keep that ball rolling.

Melissa More (04:44-04:57): Hi, I'm Melissa More, I'm with an organization called We Are Family, and we provide support and resources for LGBT youth, as well as professional development for agencies and educators.

Darrin Goss (04:58-05:12): Hi, name is Darrin Goss, I'm the president and CEO of the Coastal Community Foundation, I also participate in the TCCC, and am a Charlestonian who graduated from Charleston county public schools.

Jane Riley Gambrell (05:13-05:33): Good evening, I'm Jane Riley Gambrell with communities and schools, I'm the executive director and we work in 25 schools in Charleston county providing drop out prevention, case management, services for the underserved population.

Fran Welch (05:34-05:58): Hi I'm Fran Welch, I'm dean of education, health, and human performance at the College of Charleston. We work in partnership with the school districts, and Charleston is the largest school district, we can't do our work with teacher education if we're not in partnership with the district, so we see ourselves as part of the work of Charleston County school district.

Linda Dennis (05:59-06:10): Hi I'm Linda Dennis, I'm with the Backpack Journalists, we're an after school program and a summer camp program teaching writing, and filmmaking, and storytelling here in the Lowcountry.

Gerrita Postlewait (06:11-06:20): I'm Gerrita Postlewait, thank you all for coming tonight, I look forward to hearing your comments, feedback, suggestions, idea, and questions.

Joe Williams (06:21-06:22): Hi, I'm Joe Williams, executive director of middle schools thank you all for being here.

Jennifer Coker (06:23-06:27): Hi, I'm Jennifer Coker, executive director of alternative services and programs.

Julia Rug (06:28-06:39): Hi, I'm Julia Rug with Winks for Kids, we're a nonprofit afterschool social emotional learning program that's been in Charleston for 21 years, and we work across elementary schools across the district.

Robin Berlinsky (06:40-06:50): Hi I'm Robin Berlinsky, I'm with a nonprofit Engaging Creative Minds, and we do arts integration programs during the school year, and STEAM programs in the summer.

David Berk (06:51-07:24): Hi I'm David Berk, by profession I'm an architect with LS3P, but I'm also president of the Rhetoric Club of Charleston and we're involved in a number of schools that do literacy programs, backpack buddy programs, rotary readers, we offer teacher of the year and student of the year and student of the month/teacher of the month awards from schools as well, and also happen to serve on the board for communities and schools.

David Mack (07:25-07:44): Great to be here, I'm David Mack III, member of the the SC house representatives representing Charleston county and Dorchester county, and also chair the

education committee on the Charleston County legislative delegation and have a strong interest in public education.

[JR: Superintendent?]

Gerrita Postlewait (07:45-14:05): Thank you. I won't say a whole lot more to the introduction that John Read has provided other than to say that our strategic planning effort started about 18 months ago and we have wrestled with how to differentiate between a work plan that carries forward work that has to be done and needs to be better organized and what is truly strategic. What makes a difference in the way the organization thinks about its mission and operates organizes and executes the work. How do we think about the evidence that we will accept that as a public entity, we are adding value to children and their families and the community? This is a big question it's a hard job to do and thus far in our work we've sorted the issues that have come up, the suggestions and idea, into 6 buckets those 6 buckets are what's displayed on the screen. The first has to do with teaching and learning generally how to we ensure that when students leave us, they're all ready to step successfully into the next right post secondary endeavor, whether that's the military an entry career, two or four-year college, or career certification, what does readiness look like because clearly it is not the acquisition of a HS diploma anymore. The first bucket is where we're wrestling with what that looks like and what we ought to be doing in response to what ready really means. The second bucket is about using data. What kind of information do we have about the well being of our children. Not just achievement tests to show how they performed on a particular day, but what are the indicators that students are well off when they're with us that this is a safe and nurturing place for children. The third is about supporting our teachers so they can support learning. Supporting our children, the kinds of opportunities and extra services that they may need in order for them to be able to succeed academically. Within our budget in our mission, and that's hard for us sometimes to draw that line, what is our mission and what's clearly outside of it. The fourth is how do we manage our resources. We hope it doesn't offend anyone but we're not talking about people as little pawns on a screen, but our people, our employees are our greatest asset in terms of serving children. So how do we support our employees better and how do we use the fiscal resources wisely. How do we make every dollar count how can we be answerable for the return on investment for the expenditures that we make? Fifth, is about communicating, getting information to the public but receiving information from the public as well, both internal and external publics, how do we listen how to we convey and how to we make it easy for people to access the information they need regarding Charleston county schools. And finally, there's sort of a catch-all bucket that has to do with community priorities as you know probably they're wrestling with where to put a stadium to serve districts 1 and 2, and district 4 up in N. Chs we're trying to figure out the best place to put the new career tech center for advanced studies. District 4 we're working with the county to collocate a library on school facilities, on John's Island we're working on a strategic plan for the whole island, here on the peninsula, how do we create a pk-12 feeder system and so forth for each of our 8 unique districts. So that's what that 6th bucket is about. So, we put those up there not to confine or constrain your thinking but to perhaps as conversation starters. As you think about what you'd like to offer this evening in terms of feedback, insights, and ideas, if you think you have a category that's missing we'd be interested in hearing about that too. So basically, our mission is to ensure that every

student who comes into Charleston county public schools is better off when he leaves us than he would've been had he not been with us. To ensure that every child who exits from our system exits productively and positively into some opportunity that this country has made available for all of us, and for too long we have let too many children go through our system underprepared to take advantage of the opportunities, and it has perhaps not contributed to the inequities that exists, but it hasn't done anything to ameliorate the huge inequities that exist and opportunities in access income and outcome. So that's our value add, we're not organize well to do that that wasn't our original mission as a public education enterprise in this country. So we have to think about how to reorganize to make sure that every child succeeds and that we're answerable for that as children move through our system. So that's enough of an introduction and invitation to all of you here around the table and in the audience to speak up speak out and be head. Thank you.

John Read (14:06-15:42): In the first session we had teachers, and when confronted with the framing that the superintendent provided, it won't surprise you to know hat they migrated directly at communicating and there was a lit of discussion and debate about more, better, where, how that sort of thing. I'm struck by knowing the credentials of those around the table, I'm struck by the almost 360-degree view that you all have of the district, of teaching and learning, of the children who are served by the district and what they need. Many of you are providing support services to help close the gap in what schools can do, what parents can do, and what still needs to be done. So, I'm going to invite you to come at the strategy under the support learning rubric, and I wonder if you might want to share your perspective from the work that you do on what this district needs to do in the next 3-5 years to make what you see better. And, I will wait a full 60 seconds through silence before somebody says something.

Fran Welch (15:44-19:23): Well, I'll begin because I'm on this mission to make sure we have enough qualified well performing teachers and we're not on a good path there. And I think about this almost on an hourly basis everyday because if teaching is a great job, we shouldn't be having too much difficulty finding people to be teachers. Because we have more people who are teachers than most anybody else, so we've got a problem there ad it's getting worse rather than better, we have many fewer people going into teaching these days, a big part of the problem is salary, I don't think that's the entire problem, I think a large part of it is the perception of teaching as a profession and I'm committed to working partnership with the school district to make teaching more attractive and to have more and diverse persons going into teaching. I look at this as a problem because we don't have sufficient numbers, but I also look at it as an opportunity Because this is an opportunity for us to diversify the teaching profession, if we seize the opportunity. And tell people all the time, even when I'm standing in the grocery store, have you ever thought about being a teacher? It's a very serious problem, and it's going to be very hard, frankly, to meet any one of those goals, or to reach what folks would love to have in our district, if we don't have folks who are highly valued, and highly regarded going into the classroom and getting more of them.

[JR: You've talked to a lot of teachers who work here, you've trained teachers for the district you've talked to teachers who've retired from it, what in addition to compensation is needed to make this a great place to work?]

I think the perception of the teachers and that they are highly regarded that they are seen as just very important within the community not just within the district, so I would say that to the community as well. I think having the community to say we've got some of the best teachers anywhere in Charleston county and we're proud of our teachers, and I know we have a lot of recognition programs and that's wonderful but I think having that sense of going to work everyday and knowing that they are contributing and making a significant contribution and they do, they do, but I think the perception isn't always there.

David Berk (19:24-21:41): I wanted to comment on that too. I have three children in CCSD schools, two in middle school, one in elementary, and they've been through every level from the youngest all the way up, so I've experienced awesome teachers, and they have been great for the kids, and I've experience the moment when my kid got the teacher that's not awesome, and it's scary it's sad and I want to do something about it, and I get so upset, but I know that there are things I can and can't do and I'm not going to go jump up and down and scream at a principal just because I didn't get the best teacher. But when you walk into that first day, the meet the teacher, and I've had a couple of elderly teachers for my kids, and one of them was incredible, you could tell she was very nurturing she had about 3 or 4 boys that were all in their 30s, she'd been around a while, you could tell she was great, she just was very engaging with the children and the adults, and I went into another one, with one who was about to retire, and the 1st thing out of her mouth was something along the lines of, I could've retired two years ago but it had something to do with how she was going to get more pay if she stayed longer and I'm thinking, why is that the 1st thing out of your mouth to the parents who walked into the classroom? The parents want to hear that you're here to nurture their kids to be their parent away from home. So to me, that's what I'm looking for, that kind of caring environment that I did get from some teachers, but not all of them.

[JR: And you've worked in your fair share of organizations, what is it that drives a different comment in those situations? You're looking for an organization whose culture is exhibited by how the teacher presents herself.]

I would say it clearly it's somebody who likes what they do and exudes that, and somebody who genuinely cares about not just the result on a test, but the success of the child. In every way.

[JR: [name of someone] and Jane, you've worked with a lot of teachers in CCSD over a period of years, did the teachers that you worked with like what they do?]

Jane Riley Gambrell (21:52-23:44): I think so, one thing that I wanted to add when Fran was talking about the teaching profession and being able to recruit teachers. I am a product of the college of Charleston and began my career at Buist before it was a magnet school, and I had the shortest history there, I was part of the 10-day count, and ended up at Sanders-Clyde which was the best thing that every happened to me. But what I was thinking about with teachers and the perception, I think that young educators know that there's more needed than just educating a child, and for those young educators or middle age educators, to know that there are those supports in the school to help them be able to focus on what they want to be focusing on, the academic success and academic performance. But to have those supports there to help them with the children who have social and emotional issues. So I think that's part of the perception too, that why would I want to get into this profession it's more than- I can't

take on all of this. But I think as a community, we can help be able to attract great professionals that want to stay in the teaching career for a long time.

Robin Berlinsky (23:46-24:33): So I want to add onto what Jane said, the happiest teachers I see, and I also teach at CofC, so I have a lot of hats, but the happiest teachers I see, and the most productive teachers I see are in schools where the principals support them. Where the principal is trying a new idea or the principal is recognizing a teacher who may go above and beyond or share ideas and that taps right into what Fran was saying. It has to start within the school even before the perception piece, and the principals that really get excited and brag about their teachers are the schools where I see the happiest most productive teachers.

Melissa More (24:34-26:16): So I have seen sort of the other side of it where I work with the students I work with kids who- a lot of kids when they go to school go they go to school with a lot of trauma, and then when they get into school they get re-traumatized and re-traumatized by teachers who aren't trauma informed or they don't understand things that are based on identity, whether that is based on an ethnic identify or sexual orientation or gender identity, the kids are being traumatized over and over again and having more armed police officers instead of having social workers or people who can help counsel or deescalate those situations is a problem and it doesn't churn out the most successful students when they're in that environment, so I think putting more resources into trauma informed professionals whether you're training you're teachers, or bringing in outside support and doing a more restorative justice approach, and I'm glad to see Jennifer Coker here because I know that is your thing, restorative justice, but I will say if there are any teachers or any district professionals who would like to learn how to deal with sexual orientation and gender identity, we offer trainings on that and I know other organizations who offer trainings on that. I also have step by step instructions on how to change names in Power Teacher if you have transgender students in your classroom and you don't know how to change the role or the things that display on the board, here are step by step instructions on how to do that. But I definitely would like to see a more trauma informed approach.

[JR: Two kernels here that I think have emerged is teachers and principals seem to be important in the equation we might kind of build on that, and the training and preparation of teachers in all aspects of what a child brings to school is an area for the work.]

Linda Dennis (26:37-28:53): I'd like to touch on a little bit but go a little more directly to the teachers that I know who are worn out, not because of the academic side, but because they deal with behavior also. And I know the time I spent at Sanders-Clyde, we spent 3 months on social skills and how to greet someone just the basics they're not getting at home. And while a teacher is not supposed to raise the child, I think in the training and even in the district, I think we need to acknowledge that some of these kids come to school without milk to drink in the morning and don't even know how to make eye contact with you, which is key to self esteem, so I think teachers are trying to teach but at the same time there are other issues, and I think that kills the morale quicker than any miscommunication. I really think if we could figure out a way- if we built teams, I'm all about teams, I mean I want my kids to be a team, and I think that once they are joined in a team I think they're hard to argue with. I think teachers are doing a lot

right now the teachers that are calling us looking for part time jobs right now are frustrated because of the behavior. They want to teach, they don't want to spend 80% of the day correcting a child from misbehaving, but yet that child isn't getting any training at home, some of them don't, so I think we have to put on the table right now the issue of some of these kids come to school without milk to drink or without any social skill training, so teachers, we're losing them because they're really being asked to do a lot more than they're trained to do. I'm not being critical of what you [Fran] are doing, but I know that I dearly love the 3 months we spend with kids teaching them how to shake hands or eye contact, because when you watch them go from being ashamed to being I'm me and I'm proud of me, and I think Dr. Postlewait has seen some of our kids come up to her and introduce themselves to her, and it just- they didn't learn how to write from that but they did gain self-respect, and I think teachers are feeling the brunt of how do we deal with this.

Lilly Spoon (28:54-33:22): So, I'm going to talk from a student's perspective, everyone else here comes from organizations, teaching, I'm going to come from the desks. I look at my fellow classmates, I completely agree, we're a little rowdy, riotous, we don't behave very well, but some of us still want to learn. That is where it comes in to where I think more classes need to have a TA to redirect kids while the teacher still teaches. Because I've noticed, a lot of the ones who do want to learn, are even more frustrated when behavior happens, because those whole motion stops to a grinding halt and they have to restart it, it's very frustrating for students as well as the teachers. So, going on that front, I say communications between teachers and students and teachers and parents is imperative if anything. But to make matters a bit worse, I'm a kid who's worked since I was 14, I work construction I work I'd say now I'm planning on going back to school with still working 60-80 hour weeks. I barely get any sleep but I have bills to pay, so that's how it is. You have kids like me who come into the school and they didn't get offered success they didn't have options, they just had requirements and I think that's a partial minority but it's still a portion of the kids that come in. Kids that like- someone was saying that some of these kids don't come in with any social skills whatsoever, that was me, I'll be completely honest, I have a hard making eye contact with anyone to begin with that's something I struggle with, but I still have other skills sets, and working on those skills sets I think would benefit them a lot more than trying to help start where no one else has started. [JR: You're obviously well spoken and thoughtful, what did you find in school that helped you develop the disciplines that you have and what is it that we need more of if that's a replicable thing?]

Personally speaking, and I can't speak for everybody, but I can speak on behalf of my personality and growth from school, but the school environment that I've gone from I attended 3 elementary schools, 2 middles, and so far 4 high schools, I attended W. Ashley then I went to Liberty Hill, then from there went to Daniel Jacobs, from Daniel Jacobs I went to James Island. I was a trouble student but I'm also part of that bullying spectrum where I don't take anything from anybody I'm not there to be picked on I'm there to learn. So when it came down to that, it as a big problem for me, and I still see it as a major problem, yes they have clubs for different groups now, but the teachers and staff aren't very supportive of it in my opinion because I see it as you know, I'll speak on behalf of the LGBT kids yes we have a club for it, at least at JI Charter, but we don't have support for it, only a few select teachers will even notice us for that.

Most of them will just disregard it entirely as if it's not there. But again, that's a minority of an issue, it's still an issue, but it's not a major issue.

[JR: No I think it's worth raising. The fact that there are organizations around the table- many of the organizations here work with schools and sort of get bolted on the sides of those school to provide those supports but are not necessarily feeling an integral part of the school, and I think that's a little bit of what you're talking about.]

Julia Rug (33:23-38:09): So as an organization that has been working with youth, elementary school age students specifically in out of school time after school work but primarily our focus has been on social and emotional learning. Everyone ya know in the community has been talking about. Education is different today and what's happening is we're seeing the students come after school and they've had a horrible day or they've been hungry all day or in trouble all day, and there aren't opportunities for them to find safe spaces or nurturing caring adults who are willing to say we're willing to wipe the slate clean and start again. Outside of the work that we do and the things that we work toward in terms of kids developing their own skills, we are separately working toward the adult development, and whether you're an educator, a principal, an administrator, a youth worker we're finding that adults, we don't possess these skills, and we're not able to model and to then develop a culture and environment in which students are coming to where they can see these skills modeled and emulated. I don't think it's a matter of whether it's a home life or in school or out of school or they're missing it or not getting it there I think it's all of our jobs, whether you're a parent, a mentor, a big brother or sister, or whatever it is, it's our responsibility. So the research and some of the research we've been involved in and seeing this work across the country in other school districts and just to share this there being some bold measures being taken saying we are going to reevaluate and relook at what education means today for kids. It's not just the academics which are very important, but what are the other factors that can help with academic engagement. Knowing that there are factors such as your ability to stay focused, to lesson behavioral issues during the school day, your desire to come to school because you have a sense of belonging where you are with your friends and classmates, and teacher. Do you have a relationship with somebody in any environment whether that's in school or out of school time where you have built this trust relationship and you know how to communicate and empathize? So what we're seeing is that there are school districts that are developing non-cognitive social/emotional learning standards, whatever you want to call it, it's all based on trauma informed being cognizant of cultural identity, gender identity, ethnic identity issues to say that there needs to be an awareness. And some of the research we've seen across education preparation is that there's a lot of work around relationship skills with students and social awareness not as much on teachers with their self awareness and self management. How are teachers themselves identifying what their strengths and weaknesses are, how they're dealing with their own emotional triggers to be able to manage a classroom of students. But what we're seeing is basically that it starts with adults to be able to impact our culture and climate and that they're providing the foundation for where it starts. In the school system it would equally be the principal as the teachers.

[JR: I think we and I have been to 5 of these sessions, but the # of skills and capabilities that we name that teachers should have are legion, I mean it's remarkable all of the capabilities that that person should have and it's no wonder because they have the care of our children for most

of their young lives. And that meets budget constraints and legislative scriptures and all manner of things that are in the way, so one way or another the strategy has to reconcile all of that at a time when the pipeline of teacher prospects is drying up and we're seeing teachers leave. So on the assumption that the general assembly has all of the solutions to those issues I wonder if-]

David Mack (38:14-43:32): This has really been very good. I also host a radio talk show, so I'm used to hearing things and one of the things I always say with challenges such as these is that here is no one answer. When somebody says all we have to do is blah blah blah that's no. No. I know the world is much more complex and yeah some people say we need to have a neighborhood school that children can walk to, but typically you just can't do that anymore. When I was a boy you could but you just can't do that anymore. So some things that were said I think just tremendous pieces to this massive puzzle, one thing is I always say leadership creates a culture and there in lies how important the school principal is it as mentioned in terms of encouraging teachers, being the leader, speaking to parents, I've heard parents say they go to some schools and say the principal won't even talk to them they'll just walk by and won't say anything to them and the principal has to be that leader that creates that culture to say we want your child here and is excited about the opportunity for your child to learn. That's key. One thing I always say about teaches and my parents are retired educators, teaching to me is one of the most difficult jobs on the planet. I do a lot of public speaking and public speaking basically drains you, doing a radio show is mentally draining. Watch teachers 5 times a day talking to the same people, most of them don't want to be there, and you have to motivate them, stimulate them, inspire them, so many of them do it, that's why they're in the profession. So, anything that we can do to an I'm very interested in hearing from teachers even as a legislator, I love talking to teachers, make me smarter tell me what I need to know in terms of public education because that is the building block. What was mentioned earlier, that we have to in essence build these children up. It was said by some folks that poverty now is different than poverty so many years ago. There are children now who are coming to school hungry, there are children now who move 3 or 4 times during the school year because their family was evicted, there's children that are coming to school whose electricity has been turned off. All kinds of things from a very basic standpoint you ask how does a child learn. Abuse in the home with the economy there's families moving together, x amount of children are being sexually abused now more than ever, so all of this- you have children coming with all of this baggage all of these challenges not to mention African American kids in the school to prison pipeline that we hear so much about so all of this we have to work on. The last part relates to this and this is why and you know this is the proverbial preaching to the choir, and everyone here has a strong interest in public education but we're going to really have to touch other folks in our society because a fact that I think should scare everybody even if they don't have any interest in public education is that it's predicted that in the next 15-20 years we're going to have a shortage in airline pilots in this country and in the world, no think how mobile we are, how much apart of life being able to get on a plane and fly not only within this country but around the world, A shortage of airline pilots, and we have children coming to school everyday with the God given ability to do all kinds of things including being airline pilots, and when they're not being taught and when they are not being motivated that thing that's within them whatever that may be carpenter, brick layer, plumber, doctor, lawyer, no matter what that may be- teachers, no

matter whatever that might be, if we don't find a mechanism to touch that and bring that out, we as society will lose. So I think all of that is important so I think this is a very good beginning but I think one of the things that I'm excited about is the on going dialogue and ongoing effort, I think us just coming in and us getting the chance to really see each other, and connecting, and know each other a little better, and meeting some people for the first time, because we're going to need all hands on this plow to move this thing forward because we've got problems.

Darrin Goss (43:34-49:04): Thank you. What I'd like to offer to what's already to been said is to go back to something Fran was talking about earlier in regards to the teaching profession and how we support teachers and I'm just thinking out loud about the centers of gravity, if the centers of gravity for educating a student is the interaction between the teacher and the student, if that's the most important interaction regardless of where that student comes from, and the classroom teacher is that person that has that influence, what would happen as you think about your strategic planning process if we put the teacher and student interaction and primarily the teacher as the center of gravity for all of the strategy that we develop around managing recourses, communicating, improving and so on and so forth. So spit the narrative from how do we do the ancillary things on the outside to what is the most important supports, tools, recourses, that the teacher needs in order to be effective with that engagement with the student. Then work our way around the circles outside of that. So, as I think about it as a person who actually employs people in this community, we say that talent and people are the most important asset. I think we started the conversation that way tonight. So I'll just offer up a couple of the things that may be challenging to I don't see your CFO here, but frankly housing and real estate is very difficult in our community, I don't know what the average teacher salary for a starting teaching or if you're going to recruit people in but competitive wages are one thing, but hosing, transportation, subsidies, things that actually provide the additional financial supports that doesn't require a teacher to have to work a part time job or have to hustle in the summer to make ends meet so that they can actually be the professionals that we say that they are. The other thing I think is really an investment in their professional development, and really partnering with other professionals to actually provide that support. There are people who would I think gladly provide some of those resources, training, community folks, that could work alongside teachers to provide those types of supports. And then finally, I think that we can do a great service to our teachers and again if they're at the center of gravity by saying you're a teacher you're meeting the requirements that we've set forth in the evaluation and so forth and so on, and you've probably already do that, I just don't know enough, but incentive pay, bonus pay, the kinds of things that in the private sector we do when we have top performers, and I'm not just talking about the COL increase, but the kind of things that actually support replication of people doing the job we want. So we reward that kind of behavior for teachers. I'm a big advocate for saying put the teacher at the center of this strategy and figure out how we create a situation where Charleston county schools becomes the destination for teachers who want to be in a great work environment with adequate financial support and other support in a supportive situation where the principals and everyone else supports them.

[JR: Darrin, do you mean all teachers or just the good ones?]

I mean every teacher. I know you did some things around this year with title one schools and getting teachers to go there, I think that's wonderful, but I wouldn't- I think every teacher, and

in much the same way that I'd look at employees in organizations I've run, should be evaluated have the opportunity to compete for these incentive based on where they are and what they're doing in the performance. And it doesn't have to be all or none, it can be a scale, but certainly should reward the kind of behavior we want and do so on some gradual continuum that says you may not have been here but you did a great job and we want to reward that.

[JR: I think that puts a premium on resolving the rather contentious range of issues surrounding how teachers are to be evaluated because presumably a teacher-centric strategy has the purpose of those teachers serving students well that needs to be resolved.

Melissa More (49:05-52:11): I'm going to throw some numbers out- I know nationally that the statistic that African American students make up about <20% or <10% of our student population yet they make up 80% of the kids in the school to prison pipeline. LGBT youth of color specifically, lesbians of color are 40% more likely than their counterparts to be in the school to prison pipeline. That's the kind of evidence to me that these kids are being punished more severely and more often for slight things than other students might not be punished for. Right? They might not be kicked out, expelled, or suspended or put somehow-

[JR: By virtue of their sexual orientation?] Or ethnic identity as well. There are certain markers that target a student, or makes students a target. And I know from kids in the group that I run who are in the school district who have talked about being bullied by their teachers being called names and being called out in the classroom in front of other students, which caused other students to bully them which leads to another horrible statistic the high suicide rate among LGBT students. I see it on a daily basis. Another statistic is the kids who are kicked out or run away from home because of their identity, and they get kicked out and rejected, I have managed 16 runaway and homeless high school students this year. And actually one of the 16 was a middle school student. And they're going to school and they're trying to learn, while all of this outside baggage which of course the school can't- you can't really control what's going on outside of school, but you can control the bullying happening in the classrooms. And a I would like to see some mechanism for these kids who are being targeted by their teachers and I have gone to principals, and the principals have sort of said to me well I can't do anything until the student comes to me, but the student fears retaliation from a teacher if they were to go complain about it, and they're afraid to complain about it, so I would like to see somehow some grievance process that has some accountability tacked onto it. We've also, say you have a supportive parent- I'm thinking of a set of parents right now- we went to a school to speak with the principals with teachers because they had a transgender child who was going to come to the school. We offered the school free training, free, and like I didn't get paid to do this you know when I do these trainings but they refused it, they refused training for the teachers that were going to be working with the student and since then they've had the school nurses to call the parents to tell them what horrible parents they were for letting this child be who they are, they had teachers misgendering the child in the classroom in front of other kids and I would also like to see the resources that are available to these schools being utilized.

[JR: Okay, that's clear.]

Lilly Spoon (52:32-55:40): I guess to start off, one thing that really bugs me, and a lot of other kids that I've been taught with over my years, treated as though the teacher doesn't want to do

their job, and that plays a big part in it. However, when a teacher has a grudge, or opinion that affects the workflow and teaching, personally in my opinion it's the same as healthcare. If you come to teach somebody it shouldn't really matter to you what their race, religion, anything about them, you are there to teach to improve this person this child anyone who comes to learn to help them learn. I believe this is how it should be, some people agree some people don't agree, but at the end of the day, how are kids supposed to learn when a teacher brings their own baggage, their own issues and problems with them to the workflow and then dumps it on the kids, because I had teachers blow up in the classroom and absolutely go ballistic on one kid having an outburst. And I've seen teachers break down and cry because they can't make ends meet because of their pay. So there's a lot of problems revolving around teachers and the students. But I guess it starts with the teachers more or less, because I personally don't believe the students are the most important thing in the school because without teachers, there would be no point in going, it'd be an empty building. So to me, teachers to me are a lot more important than the kids, not saying at a value level, more at a system level, without teachers there who are wanting to do what they do, who are driven to do what they do, why should they go there, because if you don't want to do what you do, it's going to be a struggle, it's going to be absolute- it's going to be a challenge to being with just to do one class and you got to do 5 or 6 of them a day. Essentially you're going to be deterred not to do it, so I believe telling, less masking of what kids are going into, when you have that HS to college line, if kids say I want to be a teacher, don't say I've heard it before and I don't want to hear it again, that it'd be a wonderful fulfilling career, I believe it should be right out of the gate told what you'll deal with, how you'll deal with it, you know making sure they're ready to deal with it. Because I will admit, we as kids bring a lot of stuff to the table as well, we bring a lot of baggage- [JR interrupts.]

David Berk (55:41-58:00): So yeah, I wanted to touch on- Linda spoke a little bit on this but it was the idea of team teaching. This is a really interesting concept. I have spent some time in Harvard in in an organization called the Learning Environments of Tomorrow, I've been to two sessions there and that is a 21st century concept, and it's a really good concept because one of the things about the individual teacher in the classroom is that there's no monitoring, there's no one there to be a checks and balances. And I like the idea of the 21st century concept, because it not only helps the bottom, and I say the bottom meaning the most challenged in whatever situation they are in, but it also helps the top, people who are really successful, boredom leads to problems. I have experienced this on my own. My son was ridiculous, he was this math savant at the 3rd grade level, he was ready to do algebra, and I knew he was, we were getting him apps and stuff, but he was bored out of his mind in class, and was acting up, and I know that distraction made it harder for somebody else who might have been challenged by it, so if you could do team teaching, then the top 10-20% could be pushed even further, and you could have more success with that top 10-20%, the bottom 10-20%- and I don't want to say top and bottom because it's just the ones who are most challenged in whatever way or the other if it's because of grades, or their situation, or they're hungry, let's get those the attention the need, and that middle 60-80% whatever it is, they'll make it, they'll make it because they'll get the attention they need and they'll have the team there to support them and if that 40% get's to the top 10 or 20%, huge success.

[JR: So team working among teachers as a way to push for success and surround a child with a group, much like the male clinic for example.]
And I've heard MUSC has this as a concept too.

Linda Dennis (58:03-58:51): I think to David's comment and maybe I'm not that well informed, but I do believe there is a school in the district trying that in the fall, I believe Burke might have something going on over there that they're already there with the team approach. I've sat in on some of those team discussions back when we had the strategic plan. It's very impressive the work that's in that school, New Tech, I'm very impressed with the way they put things together, and I hope it works because it should work. It takes students at their ability levels and puts them together, and I think we're already there. Parts of the district [someone coughs making her inaudible] and I think it's a great way of approaching it.

David Berk (58:52-59:21): What I like about it too, is that it's not reaching to a test. It's teaching for a desire to learn, and I think as a parents I get frustrated the last few days of schools after the testing is done and all the teachers figure out what to do with the students, and they're bored, and again, my kids are like I don't want to go to school. But they do want to go to school till they're learning. So let's just teach them to the last day.

Melissa More (59:22-): Is it okay if I ask representative Mack something? What can we do to get the ball rolling on improving the comprehensive health education act so that we can start teaching real evidence based sex education to our kids because it's ridiculously horrible, Sex education in our schools is terrible and our schools are completely shackled by the comprehensive health care education act.

David Mack (59:51-1:02:17): I agree. I really do. One thing about me, I am sometimes too transparent in what I think to be a politician but I agree with you 100%. One of the things that of course when you're dealing with political process with politicians you're trying to be the straight family values conservative but again it's more important than ever now than ever and one of the things that I have said many times, if a person doesn't think they have a 10/11/12 year old today, and they've not seen child birth they're fooling themselves. The Internet right now- they can work it better than we can. So the time has never been more important to get quality information ahead of- because what you want children to do is make good decisions, and you can't make good decisions if you don't have good information, it's just that simple. So, we just have to elect more people like me I guess! [laughter]

[JR: I have to go to the people behind me in the next 5 minutes and go to them so if you want to go into teaching and learning this would be an excellent time. Oh you'll get to it later? Okay. We welcome questions from those of you who have them, we'd like them to be addressed to our panel of experts to either build on something that one of them had said, or offer a new idea. Please in doing so, be respectful of both the time and of the horsepower that's around the table. So if there are any questions from you all, feel free to ask, and if they're aren't, I'm going to go back to these folks and get them cranked up again.]

Roger O'Sullivan (1:02:18-1:04:10): I'm Roger O'Sullivan and one of the local constituent board members. I think everyone recognized in and out of the school system that you have teachers

of different quality and different levels in the school systems. And most school systems, and I've been part of a few of them, to be principal then everybody else, and yet within that cadre of teachers, there are really good ones who can provide leadership skills to others. And we talked about this afternoon a team concept, and it could be teams within the whole team that could profit from the capabilities and experience of the superior teachers who would be a team leader among a group of teachers either within a school or within a system. I don't know that we take full advantage of the talented teachers to provide inspiration and leadership to the others either within the school or within the system. Is there anybody of knowledge that direct us to an outcome like that?

[JR: Good question, team working has its own somewhat less formal but still has its own structure of leadership within it. And I think you're suggesting that there is a way to draw master teachers-]

There should be recognition, whether it's financial it might be some sophisticated way of recognizing, [inaudible no mic] teacher A should have the recognition of leadership teacher and subordinates to that that somehow collect periodically and grow following teachers A.

David Berk (1:04:11-1:05:00): I was going to comment on that. So the specifics of that that I saw at Learning Environments for Tomorrow were things like principals asking teachers of all grade levels what they feel the most confident in if you felt really confident in English or math or science, or whatever subject might be. The point being, there might be a teacher assigned to 6 grade math, and they're not the best math- they're all capable of teaching, yes, but if it's more challenging for them maybe they're better focused to do something they're better at so that the team teaching environment can get the one who is more math focused, even at an elementary level, teaching more of the math, or even coaching some of the other teachers. So just the concept of teachers helping teachers.

Julie Rug (1:05:01-1:06:44): I was just going to say, and I'm not sure what the situation here is in this district, but I do know that some districts don't allow for that because of teacher unions, and because there is a structure of feedback and evaluation process that occurs, so that it can only come from some supervisors. I do think that one way of addressing something like that though is if there is a school environment of feedback and continuous improvement that that's a goal for the school for the leadership. And that leadership includes the principal, the assistant principal, all the teachers, the guidance counselor, every faculty member within that school environment and regardless of position and title, if there is a shared goal that we are all looking to improve our work, so there is peer sharing of knowledge of resources or opportunities to sit in and learn from one another's teaching styles, and share lessons and challenges and things like that. But I think it's about the way it's framed, my understanding is that with many school districts, there's not an evaluation tied to like bonus structure that could happen, but if we were to relook at that and reframe it in a different sense to build that it would be really feasible and a good idea.

[JR: You haven't gone very far from a human capital strategy, it's been a teacher-centric strategy, about teachers and principals what they need to be trained in, how they should be encouraged and supported in working in teams- this has been a pretty clear set of messages I would say.

Linda Dennis (1:06:45-1:07:54): We actually work with other districts now and we're most successful- we don't even agree to do anything- unless we're in a team situation with teachers and with students, because of exactly how you described some strong- and I can tell you right now the success we've had- and we're actually doing some data on it right now- show how it works and the topic we're studying is the Vietnam war, it's a very high political piece right now, but we're actually collecting data, and what we've found is that there was so much misinformation that when we got everybody together, suddenly the light bulb went off, oh wait a minutes, I thought this oh no I thought that, so we're getting ready to do a couple year project to show that bringing teachers together, students together, and even veteran together who were actually there, in a collective environment does work, and we're involved in a project now that will show that it works because that's the only way we can function as a group, as an after school program, whatever we do, we have to be a team.

Robin (1:07:55-1:09:02): It's interesting, and I'm going to say this as a teacher, educator, but I read a lot of business books because I learn a lot from people who have created businesses, entrepreneurs, and I'm reading a book now by Danny Meyer, called Setting the Table, and he is the guy who started Shake Shack? And it's interesting what you just said that we're teachers centered, and the center of gravity I love that visual, I just read a chapter where he was talking about his success and really where it all came from was they valued their employees. He started with his staff, worked with his staff, built his staff, he encouraged his staff he created a culture where he rewarded positive- if someone had a bad meal, they wrote down why and next time got a free dessert, just focused on how you as an employee can make the experience for the customer so much better. And they do it because they work on their staff, and it just popped in my head as we've been having this conversation- it's in a lot of business books it's a business model and it's a successful model that works.

David Mack (1:09:08-1:11:47): I think that that's very critical what you just said because one of the keys now is how do we get our young folks to operate in this environment. I remember back when I was in elementary school when I was in 5th grade, our 5th grade teacher came in one day with a check book and she taught us how to write a check, and stuff that some students graduating from high school know how to do now, but in 5th grade, we knew how to write a check. She brought her own check book in, started on the board, and you know- and teaching other life things I think one of the questions I think in terms of people within the school system that they can guide us on is how much creativity can they put in within the structure of a lesson to make students functional today. Because teachers have always taught students how to sit up, how to speak, how to make eye contact, how to shake hands, different social skills, how to go to a job interview. And you hear stories now about how people go for a job interview and they're in there and their phone rings and they answer the phone in a job interview. It's just certain general things in their ability to do things that teachers taught us, and I'm so impressed with you as a student [points to Lilly] and I tell folks all the time when I was in HS and college, I am so glad they didn't have Facebook or cell phone cameras back then, but it is a challenging thing. I think the other challenging piece of it when we talk about the creativity that we have to remember is the budgetary constraints, if we do team teaching, what schools are

going to have it, do we have a criteria where it's low performing schools, do we have the criteria as it relates to poverty, how do we put those resources in place because I think the idea of having a team in place is great for a lot of different reasons in terms of again getting our young folks in this society to be able to produce, I think we have to put that on the table as well.

Darrin Goss (1:11:53-1:15:05): Yeah Representative Mack, to that point about resources and constraints and budgets, and we so my approach is what is equitable in terms of how we resource the kinds of things we've been talking about today, and it really goes back to teaching and learning, and Dr. Postlewait, you raised a question earlier, what does readiness look like and the key words up there to me are across schools, across all schools and again I think just because I'm a big proponent for organizations like the school district, wrestling with these hard issues of equity and how you're going to manage the resources, and the management of those resources in everything that lines up behind that, really has to be about to me what does that support look like to teachers and students across all schools, and what are the hard budget decisions that have to be made to ensure equity in those places, and I think there's no- so I look at a budget two ways as a constraint so this is what I have vs. walking in and saying this is what we need to do and then what are the nice to haves and then how do I go out and raise the additional resources to get done what needs to get done. SO defining what readiness looks like, and not only for the student, that leaves our school systems, but what does readiness look like for the teacher that is in that classroom and are we unleashing a ready teacher with all the things we talked about, preparing them to be successful in that relationship between student and teacher. And in my mind, and I'm an old army officer, everyone lined up behind the people at the tip of the spear and every resource and every strategy was really designed so that the infantry men, the persons on the ground, had every resource they needed to be successful, because if they weren't, nothing else really mattered because there's going to be a breach in all the other issues. So that's the issue. The other issues that we hadn't really talked about that I didn't see show up here and it's an equity issue, is about disparities in performance which I think really requires us to look at resources and teaching through an equity lens is a big performance gap between students of color and poor students and their white counterparts- and I know that's something we talk about all the time, but I think if it's not addressed in your strategic plan, and there's not some intentionality about how we're going to close that gap, then I think we missed the opportunity to really frame this work going forward in that way.

Lilly Spoon (1:15:06-1:17:40): I would first like to say going through with this, I've heard a lot of good things, good ideas, good suggestions that I didn't even know were a thing. But I would like to say this very very affirmatively, we're not going to get what we want out of this. What we want is the child to go to school and come home happy with new knowledge, pass their classes with flying colors, go to college, don't get in trouble, I'm preaching to the choir on this one of course but what I think needs to happen however, is to get the ball rolling, and I'm pretty sure that's going to happen with this. I know this is a revision of the strategic plan [GP: It's actually a new generation] Okay that's good, sorry like I said I'm a student so I'm still learning and everything I ask I ask because I want to know-

[GP: No it's a great question and there's a lot of confusion. We have to submit a strategic plan to the state so that has to be submitted, but it's a work plan that keeps the current system in place it's not strategic in terms of thinking through what our values are what are biggest challenges are, and what we do intentionally to move more toward equity justice and human dignity.]

So it's more of a temporary plan to meet a long term goal?

[GP: What you're working on are the long term, are the strategies that we can work on now that we'd want to see some significant progress on within 2-3 years.]

My response to that would be 2-3 years is a long time to see progress, to be honest, that's 2-3 years, that's sophomores leaving high school that by the time progress and new ideas are being implemented. I personally would love to see this happening every 6 months where people revise, see things, change the way next school year comes. You know new things are being implemented. And yeah It'd be a lot for students, and teachers would have to be involved and agree up, but at the same time, constant change either means constant improvement or constant communication, so keeping that line open would be very beneficial.

[GP: Thank you, you're absolutely right, we need both.]

Linda Dennis (1:17:43-1:19:16): I just want to go back to what David was talking about. On the team environment- one thing happens when you put a team together, you have conversation you communicate directly. There's no rumors, everybody sits around a table and converse, we all talk about what our goals and outcomes should be and whether it's the students sitting there or the teachers, so I think team benefit while we all think what a team is, there's a silent benefit and that is they communicate directly. None of this email business and a rumor on Facebook, and that may have hurt this district. If we were sitting all together in a room, we can all say no that's not really what was said so I'm all for direct conversation in a team environment. And the teachers that we're working with are doing really well even though they didn't think they liked each other going into it and the principals and knowing they can sit in a circle and talk openly without being fired, not be- oh let's do it this way, no this works better. So the wonderful teachers that we have in this district, and there's a lot of them I've been in a lot of classrooms and I think that in a team environment it'd work great. Some schools are already doing it in other districts. And I know there's a union issues because I've heard that mentioned several times, the good news is, we haven't gotten involved in that yet. But I do like the idea of team conversation. No rumors, direct talk.

Fran Welch (1:19:19-1:20:48): So, I think we sometimes think of resources as just money. So I want to give a challenge tonight. I want everybody in this room to go back to wherever you are, and find somebody that you think would be a good teacher, and encourage them to be a teacher. Because I think that is what the problem is. I think we're not thinking about the power that we each have. And we do have power and we do have resources. And you know the resources the impact by saying that and you saying that has on a person. And I'm talking about all people, because what I said earlier, I really believe in, and if you find somebody lie you to become a teacher because that's part of the issues in schools, it it needs to be an environment of adults in the building who mirror the children that come to learn. And so if you could do that, I would think you very much. And if you need somebody to encourage them, I have lots of

business cards and I'm willing to do most anything to encourage people to become teachers. You think we're in trouble with airline pilots? We are in trouble with teachers! I'm telling you.

Gerrita Postlewait (1:20:50-): Sounded like a PSA to me Fran! And I appreciate it! Thank you all for coming. I think this is the 10th or 11th session that we have had, and we will continue the sessions throughout the year, there will be a point probably mid to late august in which we will come back and say this is what we believe we've heard. For example, processing on our feet this evening, I am taking away initially 3 big thoughts from this group: One is huge emphasis on a human capital strategy and that doesn't just mean going out and recruiting people and putting them back in the system. Writ large, how do we think about those who love children how do we get them into our profession and create conditions that are joyful and appreciative working conditions for folks. What all does it take to do that? That's one huge strategy. Probably the premier strategy from this group. Related to the success of the human capital strategy are indicators of student well being, and I've heard loudly from this group and others that we have to think in terms of indicators and evidence beyond things that can be responded to in a multiple choice, bubble in the answer assessment. So you've talked quit a bit about that, what it means to think about what we in education call the cognitive and affective domains. Third, fitting with that is how do we design a system that supports people to bring children to those results, because the current system isn't well suited for that purpose, we have it constrained in too many ways because we tried to make it operate better and in our attempt to do so we created too many regulations that have taken out a lot of the creativity that people need in terms of their own problems solving. So those are the 3 big takeaways from this group. Others will be processing this information and telling me what they heard and what it means. So it isn't left to me to decide what tonight meant but the next step will be to bring to our board, this is what we think we heard, this is the strategic ideas and then throughout the year at least quarterly, we will continue these conversations. Right now we have those conversations structured to occur among teachers, our other staff members, students, parents, and business and community members. Erica Taylor has been in charge of organizing that to date. But as I've listened, I've begun to wonder whether in addition to holding meetings with those groups identify pieces of work, like the human capital strategy that needs to have a mixed group of people because parents view and community members view and teachers view and students view points are important to have at the table because we have teachers who would have serious concerns with some of the things they've heard tonight and we have other teacher who would love to contribute to ideas on how to create teams, how to reward expert teachers and so forth, so we're trying to figure out how to organize that, so we have all the voices at the table around important work that has deliverables and timelines and progression points, so we know we're not just meeting and talking. Which we do well! [laughter] So I want to thank you again for coming and invite all of you in the audience and around the table to reach out personally to us if you have further thoughts and to assure you that you will be hearing from us. Thank you all.