

CCSD Parent Listening Session on July 11, 2017

John Read (0:00-4:10): My name is John Read, and I have been asked by the the superintendent to help facilitate these listening sessions. This is not my first rodeo, we've been graces with the presence of teachers, and students, and principals, and business leaders, and all of that has been just practice for the main event which is to have parents with us and to speak with each other and for the superintendent to listen on what are the things that are most important things to consider when creating the new strategy for CCSD. For those of you sitting around the table, thank you for being here. I want to emphasize that for this session to be of value, it needs to be a listening sessions for everyone. Because the comment that you may wish to make, or the question that you may pose, is going to be much richer and fuller if those of you who are listening, can help build on it, or comment about it, or offer a different point of view. So my job here isn't just to point fingers to who is going to go next, it's to try to encourage an engagement between those around the table in a way that enriches and informs the next 3 years of strategy for the district. The superintendent is here, Joe and Kim are with her. And their job here primarily is to listen, and we will go for an hour or so, before turning to those of you here, and giving you the opportunity to ask questions or make comments as well. Having had some experience at this, doing so has some risk, because the dialogue is really among parents to inform the strategy. And there are those who probably have something else they want to say if I may be blunt, this is not the place for that, because in doing so, it's a form of disrespect to the parents who are here to engage their thinking. I'm not going to traffic cop this, we're going to fall on people to speak as they wish, but I please ask you to be respectful of the parents who have made themselves available this evening for this important work. What I'd like to do next, is ask those of you around the table to introduce themselves, what qualifies you as a parent, meaning you've got children, and maybe what relationship you have with schools in the district. I have 3 children and 5 grandchildren, those are my qualifications, I evidently am also the CEO for the Tri County Cradle to Career Collaborative, and if you want to know more about that there's books in the back which you're certainly allowed to take with you. Following that, the superintendent is going to introduce the topic, and identify the things that are behind you and in front of you, and perhaps guide your comments initially into that work and then I will sort of help do the same thing. Undoubtedly, there will be some quite specific things that will come up that probably won't be answered here. That's the parking lot, when it gets said, I will capture it and write it down, that allows us to move on, and I will commit to you that whatever question was posed will be answered by a date certain before this session closes at 7:30. With that, why don't we start on this side of the room, and identify yourself and your qualifications.

ShiMei Everette (4:12-4:20): My name is ShiMei Everette and I have 2 children in elementary school, they have to go to school at Meeting St Elementary at Brentwood.

Reverend Ken Wright (4:22-4:40): My name is Reverend Ken Wright, I have 3 kids in CCSD, two go to Military Magnet, and the other goes to AC Cochrane, and I'm also the chairman over the student improvement committee at Military Magnet.

Charmaine Wilder (4:45-5:08): My name is Charmaine Wilder. I don't have any children that I gave birth to, but I am an advocate and work with a lot of children throughout the community

Tamatha Vandross (5:09-5:25): My name is Tamatha Vandross and I have 4 children, they all have graduated, I have one that's about to graduate from college, and have a 13-year-old going into 8th grade at Charleston Math and Science.

Francis Marion Baylotte (5:27-5:56): My name is Francis Marion Baylotte. I attended Styles-Point Elementary, James Island Middle School, James Island High School and the University of South Carolina. I went on to get a degree in developmental psychology from Johns Hopkins University. My mother spent a whole career teaching in a public school system and now teaches in a private school. I have 2 children, one is 7 one is 10, and they both attend Ashley River Creative Arts Academy.

Kim Williams Odom (5:57-6:28): I am Kim Williams Odom. I am the mother of 2, one is a graduate of West Ashley HS, and is now a college student. My other daughter will be going to HS, but collectively my children have attended title 1 schools, and also other schools, and I sit here proudly to be one the title 1 parent advisory council.

Clifford Fulmore (6:33-7:23): Good Evening, my name is Clifford Fulmore. Gabriel is 30 years old, Shantel is 25, Dante is 24, Helene is 23, and Anissia is 18, and I believe that qualifies me as a parent. So this year, my wife and I became empty nesters, yet the 4 out of the 5 children attended Burn's Elementary. Two of them already in their career. Helene is in Florida in Grad School, and Anissia is a sophomore at Winthrop University. I continue to volunteer at Burn's Elementary for what is now the past 15 years.

Jennifer Coker (7:24-7:31): I'm Jennifer Coker, executive director of alternative programs, but I also have students that have been in CCSD.

Kim Wilson (7:33-7:42): My name is Kim Wilson I'm executive director of secondary learning and I also have two grown children who have jobs. [laughter]

Gerrita Postlewait (7:43-7:52): Hi Gerrita Postlewait, I'm a wife, a mom, a grandmom, and I happen to be superintendent of schools here in Charleston county.

Joe Williams (7:53-7:55): I'm Joe Williams, executive director of middle schools.

Cynthia Ambrose (7:57-8:06): I'm Cynthia Ambrose, deputy superintendent for learning services, I'm a mom and waiting for two children to be employed. [laughter]

Sarah Fitzellen (8:08-8:40): My name is Sarah Fitzellen and I have 2 boys, one is 7 in 2nd grade at James B. Edwards, and then I have one that's 15 who has high functioning autism and is a sophomore at Wando High School. I have also been a mentor for ESL students at North

Charleston High, and a mentor with kids who were refugees who came over from the Congo this year, and are students at Lance Elementary.

Robert Parkman (8:41-8:51): My name is Robert Parkman, this is my wife Nicole Parkman, we live here in Charleston county and we have 3 children who will be attending CCSD very shortly.

Emily Willhoyt (8:51-9:06): My name is Emily Willhoyt my daughter is a rising 1st grader at James Island Elementary, where I am on the school improvement council and secretary of the PTA.

Racine Clark (9:07-9:30): My name is Racine Clark I am actually a parent of 2, I have one going into 9th grade, and one going into kindergarten, so I'm getting a wide range of all of it. I'm actually in my 3rd year of being an employee of CCSD and working in the school, in the middle school at that, so I think I qualify on both ends.

Eric Jackson (9:31-10:09): Good evening, my name is Eric Jackson. I'm a father of 3, I have a graduate of Burke High School, a graduate of Porter Gaud he's attending [inaudible] this fall, and I have a 7th grader. I'm also a chairman of the Burke SIC, the organization is apart of Cradle to Career and I'm also the founded of a nonprofit organization called R3 Inc. which stands for real talk, real action, real results, and we do a lot of community work, working with the youth in the community.

John Read (10:05-10:16): Well thank you all, that's about as rich and varied body of experience that anyone could ask for, Superintendent. And I think with some opening comments from you, we'll get right to it.

Gerrita Postlewait (10:17-15:09): Thanks! What we want to ask you to think about tonight are ways you can help us think strategically about what we can do better, to respond to the needs you observe among your children and the children for whom you advocate and whom you support. We've bucketed the ideas into 6 categories that are displayed on the slide. 1st, we'd like you to think about teaching and learning. How do ensure- what does it mean for children to be ready, to step out of CCSD and into their next productive endeavor in live. That's the purpose of a public school system, to prepare kids to be able to step out of a k-12 experience with the assurance that every single one of them has more life options than he or she would have had had they not been with us. So that 1st bucket is really about thinking of the system that we went through, the system that exists today and how we can use the resources at our disposal, working with people who serve children to make sure that more of them leave us ready to engage in the opportunities that our country provides. The 2nd is, how do we get better, what kind of metrics or indicators should we be looking at, it's more than test scores we know. We have to give lots and lots of tests, except the MAP test is required by the federal and state governments, but that alone doesn't define the richness of human experience, so what other indicators should we be looking at, or should our board adopt to say these are the fair measure of the well being of the children who are in CCSD's care. The 3rd is just what we need to do to support leaning, what do kids and families need in order to come to school and be able

to participate in the learning opportunities that are provided there. More and more and more of our children are coming to school with basic needs that aren't met. How do we think about the school district's role in working with other community organizations in supporting the needs of learners and the people who are serving them? The 4th area is managing resources. These are the human beings in our system, and the money. How do we make sure we are using our resources in ways that we have evidence- make a difference for kids? How do we match up what works, and make sure that the kids who most depend on public schools to get it right are in environments that are working for them- communicating, communicating isn't just giving information, it's listening and processing and understanding, in terms of what it is we're all brought together to accomplish? And then finally, there are priorities that are unique to certain communities, if you live on John's Island, and you're involved in schools there, you realize that there are some things that your community wants to accomplish that are probably different from the things that N. Charleston wants to accomplish or the peninsula, or district 3 or McClellenville or Hollywood, so that last category is sort of a catch-all. So that we're responding to the unique needs that may exist our tremendously varied communities from time to time. John will probably give some opening questions, but he'll try to get some feedback from everyone regarding all of those areas. Your thoughts about whether we have- is there an area that's missing that needs to be added or whether we have identified the main 6 buckets that we need to be thinking about to serve kids, so that they leave us with the preparedness that is essential in today's society. That's what we're trying to do. Thank you for being with us tonight, I appreciate the inconvenience the time, I know you probably all have babysitters at home or someone is with your kids while you're with us.

John Read (15:11-16:29): So there are plenty of things that a strategy can do, but what it always must do is take the upper right hand box called managing resources and drive resources, people and money, toward those things that are most important, those things that are most needed. And what I'd ask you to think about getting this started, is what do you need from this district as a parent, what do you need to know about your child when she comes home from school, at the end of a semester, as she progresses through school. What do you need, as the primary educator of that child- what's missing that can be brought forward by the district to support what you need? So, we're prepared to start anywhere, and I can wait 45 seconds to a minute through complete awkward silence, shuffling my feet. Ah! Robert, have at it.

Robert Parkman (16:30-17:40): What is the Charleston school board doing to make the schools more inclusive for LGBT students? [JR: What do you think they should do?] I think they should have a comprehensive training program for all staff, I think they should follow the guidelines in title 9 that were set forth by the Obama Administration, and the national Association for Pediatric Doctors to start. [JR: The underlying thought is that there's some evidence in your experience that that is not the case now, or that you don't know. You do know, and that is-] We have a 7-year-old transgender son- I'm asking you, what are you doing to make it more inclusive. [JR: I'm not with the district, so I conduct the question. I think in this context, what I want to do, is turn that into a proactive statement, and I ask others of you with experience, or interest, or a point of view about it- the comment that Robert has made to jump in.]

Sarah Fitzellen (17:45-18:37): Now, I don't have any history with this at all, but I do know that it surprised me when I first moved here that there was no sex-ed for kids until they got to middle school, and that they did get to middle school, it was all abstinent based, and that was very surprising to me. And that kind of goes on the same note there that we're really pushing away anything that's different, or talking about sexuality at all, or that this is who people are and that it's okay that children are born a certain way and when they're elementary school and they identify one way, that we're not embracing them and we're not giving them protection.

Emily Willhoyt (18:39-18:51): Turn that into we need sex-education in schools, real sex-ed, not just abstinence, all of it, and teach it early. [JR: Comments? Silence is not consent]

Sarah Fitzellen (18:54-19:00): My son is 7 and he heard it on the playground in 1st grade, why are they not teaching it until middle school?

Clifford Fulmore (19:01-19:37): I have a quick question, the question is for Robert. As a parent, what is it that you two are doing since this is a first time experience- what are you two doing within the district or within the school to bring this issue out front? So that way, parents like myself can understand.

Robert Parkman (19:39-20:46): I'll gladly answer his question. We started a nonprofit organization called Alex's Journey to raise awareness and to start a summer camp that is inclusive to LGBTQ children. So we've been on the news several times to talk about the bathroom bill etc. We advocate to LGBTQ youth because we feel that when LGBTQ youth aren't supported at home and at school and by society, there's very suicide rate, up around 46%, so what that means is that 1 in 2 kids are committing suicide because they don't have access to a bathroom or they do have access to an independent bathroom, might be in the nurse's office or something or sometimes it's on the other side of the school, so they're not using the bathroom all day and they become sick from it, UTI's and things of that sort, so it concerns us heavily and that's why we're here and want to know if they Charleston county school system will address this issue.

[JR: I'm going to parking lot this issue because I think you've asked the question in a way that really warrants a response.]

Francis Marion Baylotte (21:07-21:28): While he's doing that, I just want to say that I think children from your son's generation are teaching us. We have a lot to learn. I don't think we have the answers. I think it's important that we're supportive of his journey and let him tell us what to do.

Robert Parkman (21:29-23:03): I appreciate your statement, and I take note with one thing you said, is there were guidelines given out by the federal government, however you feel about that, and you may agree with me, the American Pediatric Assoc. said that those guidelines in title 9, the word sex does include, should include sexual orientation and gender identity. So when we don't know what to do with our kids at home when they're sick, and we go to see the doctor, if the doctor, the American Pediatric Assoc., are telling us this is how we interpret title 9, then

why aren't we following those guidelines? And better yet, even if you don't agree with this politically, or religiously, or any other reason why you don't, if title 9 didn't expressly include sexual orientation and gender identity, it did include discrimination. Period. And for the people in this room of color, African Americans, you should take note of what I'm saying because years ago it included you, you fell into a marginalized category, and to some extent, you still do. And we're fighting for you as well. No one should take a backseat to anyone because of the color of their skin, their gender identity, their sexual orientation, because of where they live, because of the social class they were born into, because of how much money they have in their pocket, or anything of that nature. So I feel if it's good enough for the American Pediatric Assoc. why isn't it good enough for the Charleston county school board?

Kim Williams Odom (23:17-25:03): Thank you. So also in response to what we would need from the district as parents I think we need clarity up front, as to what to expect regarding our child's development at a certain age. Because of course when you become a parent, you don't have to pass any particular tests except for pregnancy tests, and then there you go, you're a parent now, and you put your kids and school and you're not exactly sure what should be happening during that school year. What should be happening with the curriculum up front, not as you're going along, but kind of giving you a cheat sheet up front, as to what you should expect out of kindergarten, what should you expect out of 6th grade, or 11th grade, and so that when you have that information, you can help your child that period. [Not report cards] Understanding what the curriculum is going to be I know that the state already has something that is a parents guide- it's like a lay version of standards for grade levels, but to get that snapshot directly from the school about what they anticipate teaching in that grade for middle and high school, what they anticipate teaching in that course that's beyond just giving a syllabus so that the parent can arm themselves with information and be able to help that student through those things. Not just show up with this assignment and feel like you're inadequate to help because you don't know what it is, but if you knew in advance, then you can help prepare that student, and be the best advocate.

ShiMei Everette (25:04-26:20): Along the LGBTQ comment/question, there should be curriculum for that also. There are clubs and things- I came from a district in Miami and we had clubs, we had sensitivity training, the staff were supposed to go through the training, as well as the group of kids who were apart of that group so that everyone could be aware of it. As far as the regular sex education, you do have to find the perfect limit that is appropriate at each grade level. And as far as the other things about what's happening at each developmental stage beyond the sex-ed part, there's a book called Yardsticks, and if you haven't read it, read it. [JR: Is it a school publication or a book, what is that?] It's a book that basically outlines what's happening with our child at each age.

[JR: I think Kim is talking about almost an understanding of what is the curriculum of these classes that my child is in, and what should I see, whereas you're talking about the development of a child, and both are important for sure.]

Robert Parkman (26:21-26:56): I was a police officer for 5 years, I was a firefighter for 15 years, I responded to the 9/11 attacks on September 11th. When I was of course in the police

department as well in the fire dept., where you don't really deal with the public that much, you're just paid to go into a building and put a fire out, we had diversity training, we had sensitivity training, why aren't teachers who deal with children who are soaking up everything they hear in a learning environment, why aren't they getting training on LGBTQ and diversity and sensitivity training here?

[JR: I would put that as our proactive statement of need, that that training, creating that kind of culture of inclusion in the classroom and in the school is really the direction for a strategy.]

Racine Clark (27:15-29:48): In reference to what Kim is saying, being in the school and being a parent as well, I remember my daughter coming home with a sheet saying they're going to do- you had a choice- sex ed or some other class completely opposite. And it was only for a week or so. So I think it was something that- we're so fast paced in the school and as a parent and there's things coming home and there's things that you're dealing with as far as the child's emotions but there's never enough time that is addressing certain issues. Middle school, we were dealing with emotions, suicide thoughts, we were dealing with all of these things that come up, and not only as a parent I'm dealing with my own situation as far as working, paying bills, I have to make sure I'm coming down to her level to make sure I know where she's at mentally. So in the school system it wasn't something that guidance was really dealing with ya know when it came up it was new and everyone was rushing, and I think it's yes, training is a must, that they must have, but also it's also something they need to take time to address certain issues and not just- we dealt with that this week, sweep it under the rug, move onto something else.

[JR: You've been on both sides if I remember. How about how much time as a teacher you have to give that individualized attention to what can be really sensitive subjects.]

Now, I'm not a teacher, I work as staff, but from what I've seen, there's not much time, there's only so many days in the curriculum that you do address that you need to- there's all these standards that must be touched before next report card or the end of the year so there's all of these things. And also as a parent, I'm hoping it's not at the end of the year, where my kindergartener or my pre-k kid and she's saying well he wasn't reading yet, well I wanted you to tell me that 6 weeks ago, not now when it's the end of the year when everybody else is reading but him. That's as a parent. I was like okay, I do my part.

Eric Jackson (29:50-30:43): I would like to say for this issue, maybe a partnership of some sort because we got kids reading at all grade levels, we got kids not being able to read period, we got kids going into 9th grade reading at a 6th grade level. So, when you're trying to get the school to handle all of these issues, why not get the school to partner with your [Robert's] organization so that teachers can kind of learn all that stuff, but the teachers can focus on teaching and getting the basics of the school atmosphere down pat and maybe that can be before school or after school program that deals with these issues, because that's going to take a lot of time, and you don't want to breeze over it, you want to get deep with that issue.

Clifford Fulmore (30:43-31:50): I'd like to add to what Eric said- and I think it may also draw back to managing resources because I think a lot of times when we say managing resources, we only tend to go right back into funding and money. And there's issue, and I'm thinking

managing resources- if we have Boeing up the street, and we have MUSC down the street, and there's different industries the district ought to be tapping into to mine those resources information-rich resources, like you said partnering with nonprofits, but also partnering with MUSC to break in that social work aspect of the department or social services. Just trying to add to that.

[JR: The partnership idea would extend beyond the nonprofits who bring a kind of expertise into business and health and other sectors here. Robert?]

Robert Parkman (31:52-33:40): I agree with both of you and I know that training costs money and money is a big reason why a lot of things don't get done in a large bureaucracy like a school system or any type of government. I was just telling the gentleman over here that I read a book recently about a gentleman who was born in a very meager household and he rose up to become a lawyer, and when he said at the end of the book, the real reason he climbed so high was because his grandparents who were extremely poor instilled one thing in him and that was education. I feel that you can't find all the money in the world to train everybody, but it starts at home in your own household. I implore all of you parents here to speak to your kids, speak to kids about marginalized people and communities, about minorities, and people who are poor and born into a bad circumstance, single family households, where a single mom might be working around the clock and you have a latch key kid basically raising himself from when he's only 6-7 years old. If we did, and I don't like to say our "job" as parents, but if we did our part as parents and spoke to our kids in a gentle way and explained these things to them then we would need all the funding and we wouldn't need partnerships with corporations and it'd be more organic and grassroots, and may not even be having these conversations. There certainly wouldn't be such a high suicide rate.

[JR: Let's talk about that.]

Tamatha Vandross (33:41-34:55): I just want to make that point that- we're talking about all these people in diversity training and sensitivity training but as parents, we can teach our kids diversity and sensitivity, and let them know that I guess tolerance, because everybody is different, and when you don't teach that at home, then that starts bullying. Because they're going to talk about things that are different. As far as sex education goes, that's my job. That's not the teacher's job to teach my child sex education. When my children first start asking me questions, that's when they need to know. I don't sugar coat it. I let them know. So when they go to school and get their information, they bring it back to me, and I can tell them if this information is correct or not. And school is politically correct, so they're going to use all the fancy words, that's not the words that are used in the streets. So, they need to know those words. And they need to know. So when my kid steps into that classroom, my kid knows that hey you don't bully anybody, and if you see bullying you stop it because hey we're all have something that's different.

Emily Willhoyt (34:58-36:17): I think what they're saying is absolutely right that as parents we do that, but I think every parent here who is actively involved is going to do that without us telling anybody. But those parents, and there are so many that aren't involved, don't care if their kid is reading at the proper level, or don't care if their kid learns sex education or diversity

training or any of that. That's where the school has to step in. And provide those sources for the parents that aren't here.

[JR: I think this is good engagement. Let's just talk more about the parent's role in teaching and learning in setting a culture and instruction and character development is primary. The school is also being called upon to deliver some of that character development- what needs to happen in a strategy to bring parents and their child's school closer together so that the school is a place welcoming to parents, and they feel that way, and the parents find in the school things that they need to help their child grow. What about that?

Sarah Fitzellen (36:18-39:03): Well I'll tell you that being in Mt. Pleasant is very intimidating, very intimidating place to live if you've ever tried to volunteer in a school over there- my son begged me to volunteer in his classroom, he told me all of the parents come every week mom you're the only one- so and I don't think that that's the case in most of the schools and most of us are working parents, we have moms and dads working in every household. So how are you going to get in the class room from 7am-3pm and help your kids school. How are you going to do that? Unless you're going to take time off work and go to your kid's class and help the teacher, when are you going to get in their and help? But you know there's kids in every single class that can't read or need help reading, and what's a really good thing is coming up with great ideas or sending stuff you can help with. And this year- one of the things I've mentioned to the school because we have -we've lost our reading specialists in the schools, and I don't think people realize this but with budget deficits last year, they had to cut the reading specialists in the schools at a time when kids aren't reading up to standard. But you know what would be great?

If the 5th grade kids came it and read to the 1st grade kids and help tutor them. That's free. If the national honor society kids came and read to the kids in 9th grade, you know that's also free too. The more that we use those kids of innovations and things and you go to the PTA meetings and sit down with the principal and use your ideas, and you speak your voice, those things are important and they help. A teacher that sits in the classroom with 23 crazies 6 year olds running around her everyday. She's worn out. But you know if you can send that extra box of Kleenex or that extra ream of paper which doesn't cost that much, that's a godsend to that teacher.

[JR: Do you think the ideas that you're talking of- the one's you mentioned- do you feel like you can walk down the street and into the school and be well received by the principal or guidance counselor?]

Well it was more of a "we'll see what we can do next year" but now the principal is no longer there, so I'm going to have to throw it out again.

Eric Jackson (39:04-40:59): I think we have to take different approaches at each areas. So if you got a parent who's working a job as a single mother, let's develop a program that fits that parent. If you got a child who comes from a mother and father household, you need something to fit that parent. What we try to do is try to box all these parents into 1 system that isn't working for every parent. I think we have to be real, we have to- the schools aren't diverse, some of those low income parents aren't going into the schools even if you'd pay them because they don't feel comfortable. So let's work on diversity, let's be real strategic with what we're saying. Let's say we want more African American male teachers, we can partner with

organizations- so say we need more LGBTQ training, let's look at these teachers who specialize in that and recruit them. We want better for our district, let's go after the better type and you're not going to draw them in with \$35,000 a year. Period. [laughter]. So we need \$51,000 a year to compete with the teacher's that are going to these areas that thrive there, let's get \$51,000 a year! [Clapping and excitement] We can't keep smoothing this thing over like it's going to change, we got to get real, see what it is, and we need more diversity. Period. The students that feel [inaudible] is African American males. We need more African American male teachers.

[JR: So you'd put that high on the list of priorities for strategy? African American teachers?] Male teachers. But I'm going to say African American teachers because our kids [inaudible]

Clifford Fulmore (40:59-43:01): I'd like to jump in here and go back to what you just said, because it really struck me what you said before everybody clapped. So you're saying more African American male or male teachers? And when we come to these settings and with parents, it's always either or, why can't we get what we want and make that the priority so therefor when we come together, then Clifford is with Francis, I'm not either or debating that Francis should get over what Clifford should get. And then next thing you know we're debating not about the issues that are impacting our children, but we're talking about crumbs on the table, who's going to get what piece of the cake and what crumb. We can- and I believe if we get this right what we're asking for and work with the district on it, then we can get what Mr. Robin and Ms. Nicole is asking for, not just for their own children but for every child in that area. We can get what Ms. Tamantha is asking for what she's asking for. And it doesn't mean that we break it down to so while we don't need diversity training in this area, no we just need diversity training, and if you need it in that area, you get it in that area. If you don't need it, listening to the young lady in Burns elementary, bringing a box of tissue or paper or whatever, that's not going to help the situation. But it's going to help the situation in the school, so I don't need to fight against what your needs are, but we can put it all together and say okay let's go for the whole pie. [clapping]

Francis Marion Baylotte (43:05-43:24): I have kind of a different topic to discuss at some point, maybe in a few minutes, and that's standardized testing. And what our plan is in the future for that because it seems to take up a large chunk of our budget, and I'm not sure what it's presenting to us in terms of useful information.

[JR: I want to go back to Tamatha, did you have something to add?]

Tamatha Vandross (43:25-44:32): Oh I was going to add about volunteering. That is a strategic point. You need to volunteer in your child's school. But I understand that all parents aren't able to all volunteer. That's why we need to get back to the community thing. We need to get back to it takes a village to raise a child. The community needs to wrap themselves around these children. But we as neighbors as a community are so afraid to talk to each other or don't want to take advice from one another. So we're on this island all by ourselves. And on this island and on this island, both of these parents have the same problem, but they don't want to share. We just need to get back to the community thing, just getting together as a community.

[JR: It used to be that the school was the center of the community and the place where parents and families got together to talk about Kleenex or other things supporting each others. Those are good days in education and probably- we're going to get to the test question in a minute. Robert then Emily.]

Robert Parkman (44:33-45:38): I just wanted to piggyback on what Eric said about teachers making \$32,000. The country of Finland leads the world in education. They pay their teachers, and hold them in the same regard as doctors and lawyers. They're professionals. I feel that plays a big part in their success. If a teacher who is teaching in Mt. Pleasant, and lives in Mt. P, she can't afford probably to pay her rent. But if you can't afford to pay for basic necessities, how can you expect that person to be successful in the classroom and teach kids? And like you said you're almost a psychologist as well, these kids are yours for 8 hours. If you're a parent, and a kid comes to you, you're probably going to do your best to help them, but if you're not at 100% yourself, you're not going to be able to help that child.

Emily Willhoyt (45:39-47:12): I just wanted to piggyback on the volunteer issue, I live on James Island not in Mt. Pleasant, so we sort of have the opposite problem with getting parents in, and we're all working parents and I'm on the school improvement counsel and the PTA because nobody else is showing up. And I would just like to see more whatever programs there are in place within the schools or within the district to reach out to volunteers in the community, retirement homes, businesses, things like that. We need to expand those drastically because the schools are still set up as if they were 40 years ago with parents being able to volunteer, and we just can't because we're working, we can barely- I mean getting here at 6 o'clock was hard, right? [agreement]. It's hard, so we just need to rethink our volunteer structure and amp up those programs.

[JR: Sometimes it seems that tests trump teaching and learning in the schools, there's a test for everything, as if it weren't enough to have to put calipers on your children, the state in its wisdom sees value in changing those tests pretty much every year, so that no two look alike. If it's difficult for the teacher or the superintendent, then it's impossible for the parent to figure out what those scores mean. So I don't want to steal your thunder, so have at it.]

Francis Marion Baylotte (47:13-48:30): As a developmental psychologist, I have to apologize because we invented these tests. [laughter] And I'm just wondering if we can say that maybe we can take them back, or take a break from them for a minute. One thing I want to know and had a hard time finding out is how much we're spending on them every year. Where is that located? Is that deep in some report? Where can I find that number?

[JR: Money spent on tests?]

Yeah, maybe take a break for a year and spend that money on something else. Like teachers.

[JR: I can tell you, there is very little latitude on the part of the district]

I know, but we can take a leadership role this is Charleston. Another thing I'd like to think about in that context is how we considered year-round school. [clapping]. And I'll say this right now, I think I spend about \$5-6k on summer camp, and that's something I think we should think about and discuss.

Reverend Knight (48:33-53:47): I just wanted to piggyback on responsibility/accountability. It all falls on the parents. And we understand that we as parents may not have the time, but I find the time in my busiest day in the world to give to my child. There's never a day I don't spend time with my child. So it's not that you don't have time, we have to make time we have to make time when we want to go or do things, we find time to do that. So when it comes to our kids, we always want to lean on somebody else to do for our children. We need to go back like they said the village, take care of your responsibility at home. I have 2 daughters and a son, if I spend 3 hours just talking to them, finding out what they want, what they want to do I'm a mortician, and I don't have that time to just be sitting around piggybacking on somebody else to do for my child, and this is the same thing I see at the school. You have a responsibility, the teacher is only there to teach your children, they can only do so much. The little bit of money that they get is not even worth it. Every year at the end of the school year, I cook for Military Magnet staff, out of my own pocket. Just to show these teachers I really do appreciate the hard work that they're doing for our children. I didn't say just mine, I said our children. We get the same feedback everywhere, yesterday evening we had a meeting, I am apart of the board for the Brotherhood, for the Cooper River Assoc. The conversation came up, and we came to the decision that you know what, we're going to step back into the schoolhouses. And start helping these schools, and give them what they need. These young girls and boys need to be loved, and need to be loved by somebody who isn't going to take advantage of them. Because they're being taken advantage of- we can sit there in the school but we have problems right in our homes. The problem is right there in our homes. Let's be realistic, accountability and responsibility, we got to learn accountability and responsibility for what we do how we raise our children. These children need us. I'm on my way to Columbia tomorrow, Military Magnet is in Columbia. I'm a veteran, and I'm on my way up there to spend time with our children. It takes time off of the job. My mother my father did it for me, and I'm doing it for them. So it's not about- I have to bring 8 kids back here on Thursday for volleyball camp because the parents are not able to. I don't mind doing what I can do to help the children.

[JR: What do you think you need from the school that you're not getting?]

The school is doing what I need them to do for my children. Its our kids that are in the school that are disrupting the school. Any time you have to stop a class for 5 minutes and you got 20 kids in that class, you multiply 5 x 20. 100 minutes of learning just went out the door. So I just want you to know that we can't lean on the school for just- do your part. I talk to my girls, like this young lady said, we can't talk these big words to them, we have to tell them, we go to the hood, and let them learn what it's all about. They're not going to learn all this professional words, it's good to learn these words, but when you go to the hood, I invite you to the hood where it's really going on, and you can sit down and talk to somebody on the corner and let them know about life. Let them know about the struggle you had to go through. I used to walk to school a mile and a half, so I'm here today to let you know- and I understand this meeting is supposed to be what can we do to better the schools, and yes-

[JR: Let me go to Racine, thank you reverend]

Racine Clark (53:47-55:20): Now reverend, I hear you, and as an employee and I see the parents that do come, and I am a parent, so we can't go back to the old school. We're way past that. This new generation is different. What we need, we lost. We need parent advocates. We

lost that. I know 2-3 individuals that were working hard in schools, getting parents in, we had momentum, and then it was like oh no we can't do that again. So now we're back not 1 but 12 steps back because we have parents that we can't bring them in and we have none. No volunteers, attitude galore, the kids giving it to us, the parents giving it to us. So I hear what you're saying as as parent on both ends, but the bottom line between all of this is budgeting, that starts that, then we can do partnerships, then go in with the volunteers, then we can address issues like what he's talking about, the LGBTQ, and be able to address all of these issues, but it starts with the bottom line with budgeting what is important to the parents. [JR: But you're saying that advocates when they were in place did some good.] Oh my god yeah, because it helped the teachers and took the stress of the teachers' backs.

Robert Parkman (55:20-55:52): Reverend, I applaud everything you're doing for the community, and I don't doubt that you're doing a lot, but everyone is different. Everyone's situation is different. Not everyone has- not everyone is as good as you maybe. And I agree that it does start at home, but these kids spend an awful lot of time at school. And they need to be supported there, and educated properly there.

Sarah Fitzellen (55:53-58:46): Can we go back to standardized tests? I am concerned about teachers being evaluated in whole or in part by students' test scores. I said in the beginning, I have a student who has high functioning autism. When he started at Wando, they told him that he wouldn't be able to be in regular integrated classes that he wasn't going to be able to do it. Of course we fought that decision and at the end of 9th grade, he had 5 As and 2 Cs and he did not pass either of his end of course exams, and he's never passed a standardized test. Never. So I want you all to know that every single teacher he as ever had, as been amazing. And has helped him progress to where he is today. He was nonverbal, he did not speak until he was almost 5, and it bothers me very much that this is something that we are doing to teachers. [JR: So just to be clear, there are 2 types of tests there are tests that are rear-view mirror tests called summative where you're looking at whether the kid achieved proficiency on a state mandated test. And there are other tests that measure progress, how much progress has a child made- your view is both of those tests have no part in evaluating a teacher.] I think that the evaluation of a teacher should be cumulative of their body of work. I think it should be more than just a child's test score. Especially a child that's in a high school who goes through many classes and sees many many people- how are you going to score them on a child's test score. I think teachers will be- they'll receive incentives to avoid students with health issues, reluctant learners, students with disabilities, English language learners, students suffering with emotional issues, and other problems in schools. They will push them aside, and they won't get the education they deserve. [JR: There's a richness to the experience of a teacher that gets applied in teaching that goes well beyond the metrics. And there are students with vastly different qualities and capabilities, and you want that teacher to be evaluated on the basis of all the challenges that she confronts, all the challenges she has, is what I'm hearing.] That would be wonderful, I'd love for them to be able to teach more than what's on that darn test.

Eric Jackson (58:46-59:48): I think that you cannot evaluate a teacher that teaches at Buist Academy the same way you would a teacher at Sanders-Clyde. That would be unfair. So my suggestion, would be to use the teacher evaluation to make them better, and when the district shows that you support your teachers, you can recruit other teachers that would want to support your district because right now it looks like you're really going after the teachers, and it might not be that way but that's the way it looks. So let's support the teachers then support the schools that can support the community and then we'll make Charleston the place that people want to come teach. If you say we want \$51,000 a year teachers, the community will support that once we start getting the results. We have to be more supportive, and not just judging of the teachers.

Shi'me Everette (59:50-1:00:36): Okay so is it to my understanding that their only going to be read just based on the test scores? Aren't there other things involved? It's not just the test scores correct?

[JR: Yes.]

What percentage is the test score, what else are they being rated on?

[JR: What should a teacher be evaluated on?]

Testing has to do with it, because you didn't do your job as a teacher to make sure that child got that skill, then you didn't do your job. So that should be part of the rating system.

Francis Marion Baylotte (1:00:36-1:01:12): I think that you should ask the parents of that teacher at the end of the school year if they should get a raise. My son's teacher, Lisa Trott, should get a raise. Ask the other parents.

[Shi'me: I don't think that should happen, that would be a problem at the end of the year – if you had a problem with that teacher during the school year at some point and it didn't get resolved, that would be an issue]

Like if you're trying to settle a personal beef with a teacher? [laughter] You're right.

Eric Jackson (1:00:14-1:03:05): ...doing well or maybe got sick during the school year and missed a lot of days, bombs on the test. Should I be evaluated if that kid bombs on the test. Any test you're talking about since we're only holding test scores as an evaluator-

[Shi'me: What did you do as the teacher or administrator of that school to make sure even if that child was sick, they still got their lesson? What did you do?]

[Sarah: Or what about every child who has a disability has to take the same tests are not even in the class.

[Shi'me: The question should be what else can we do as far as standardized tests to accommodate those children with needs.]

[Sarah: Well my son wasn't even in science or social studies class in 8th grade, and he took the tests, and so if you're going to evaluate his teacher on those [In High school?] No in middle school when he was in 8th grade at Moultrie, he had to take the same social studies test for those ready tests, and he wasn't even in the class. Because it was mandatory that everyone takes the test, you only have so many opt-out, and you have to be very severed to the opted out. So those test scores are- in our district, we have so many people with special needs that are still taking these tests, and they are not having the curriculum and those scores are going

against us, so if you look at the schools who have a number of children who have special needs that do not have the curriculum before them, you're seeing those scores as part of-

[Shi'me: and the question should be, what are we doing with the curriculum to accommodate those needs of those children.

[Sarah: And they're not even giving them the curriculum before they see the tests.]

[JR: Let's run a little further]

Clifford Fulmore (1:03:05-1:06:04): I would like for the district to remove ineffective teachers and principals in schools. What other system that the district develops that comes down from state or federal, to the point is to ask remove ineffective teachers and principals that aren't doing what they're supposed to be doing for our children.

[Shi'me: And that's part of the rating system also, how well is your teacher functioning in those schools. It starts with the principals also in the schools how well are they doing with their teachers on weekly/daily basis to make sure they have good functioning teachers in there. Is there constant feedback, are they in the classroom looking and seeing what they're teachers are doing.]

[Racine: And is there also someone checking behind them because then you have issues with the principals or administrators because if you have a teacher who is asking for support, support, support, support, now we're getting new year teachers because we're having a hard time filling these. And if you have new year teachers who need support or need certain things to come to them because they're here to help but if they're not getting the support they need, of course they're going to fall by the wayside, of course you're going to deal with the main issue of discipline in the classroom, then all of those things bring our test scores down.]

[Shi'me: So a system needs to be in place so that feedback and communication between the teachers and administrators happen on a weekly basis, and I know what happens at my school on a weekly basis with me, I have a point person, we have a set time, we check in weekly, what's going well what's not going well, and that's how we push everything at our school.]

[JR: So I think Eric said earlier that the purpose of an evaluation should be to help the teacher improve. And the person in the best position to help that teacher improve is the principal. If the principal is well trained and capable, then that relationship sits.

Emily Willhoyt (1:06:05-1:07:17): I fully agree. Part of the problem at my particular school just part of the reason I'm here is we have so many students and not enough administration because they're deciding not to count our [seedy?] kids as students. So we have 50 or 60 something like that- puts us in a lower student bracket we have like 500 kids and we don't have a vice principal, but since we don't count our [seedy?] kids we'd be a lot closer to getting that. They're cutting our art, our music, our PE teachers to part time. Because they've decided not to count the [seedy?] kids as students even though they are participating in these special areas. This is not okay with me. Or anyone at my school. Those kids are students. The administration, every single teacher, every single staff member is affected by how many students there are whether they're 4 years old or 10 years old. This is not okay! Please fix it.

Sarah Fitzellen (1:07:18-1:08:49): I've spoken to many teachers throughout the years. I'm very close with the teachers who work with my older son. Part of that, being in contact with them

constantly, and I've seen many of them come and go, a lot of fresh new faces right out of school excited to be a new teacher. And then they don't make it. Three or four years in and they're worn out, and don't have the support. And they can't afford to keep going. I've asked them a lot of times, what can we do better? And they're not having a mentor. A mentor/teacher above them to help guide them. And they're completely underwater with paperwork. We paperwork our teachers to death. And even if they do have a mentor, when are they going to have time to do that? After school teachers get paid their hours til 3, then have to go home, and grade papers and do all the paperwork. When are they going to have time to be a mentor to a newbie teacher who really needs their help right now, so they can integrate and keep going because it wears them down, teaching, teaching to the test, the paperwork, following guidelines. That's what they need, a mentor to keep them going.

[JR: Too much- not enough administration, not enough time in the day for teaches, too much paper work too many tests.]

ShiMei Everette (1:08:50-1:09:34): I agree with the teachers being worn out because they need a mentor. We have a two teacher system at our school where we have a lead teacher and a fellow if it's they're 1st year teaching, they're not teaching the classroom alone. And we don't have anybody in classrooms alone. They're learning from that lead teacher, they take over half way through the year or at the end of the year, to build their skills and the teacher in that classroom critiques them on a weekly basis, we talk in our 03s and find out where their weaknesses are, where they can do better. And it's not a meeting of you're not doing this you're not doing that, it's tell me what you need.

Kim Williams Odom (1:09:36-): I'm here because 15 years ago, a parent advocate in a rural school invited me to come to a literacy program with my baby. And parent advocates are key in helping the teachers. Parents, even busy parents even parents who have a couple of jobs who really do want to be there even if it's at night doing something then sending it to the school. They don't know that the school wants them unless the parent advocate or liaison engages them because the teacher is too busy, or principal is busy, it's the parent advocate who really reaches out. The title 1 planning team helps to give that voice. The school improvement counsel is supposed to help give that voice. And so there has to be room for parents to have a forum to be heard and know that their engagement matters because we all came out. And it has to matter that we did that. So the money has to flow back to parent advocates and liaisons, not just through title 1 dollars. But that's one way.

[JR: *opens floor to audience and asks them for their participation]

Male Audience Member (1:11:35-1:12:30): Hi I've been here before, and the last time I was here I was told I was in the wrong forum to speak my mind and say what I had to say. Reverend, keep preaching brother. It starts at home, it's how we train our kids and make our kids do what they need to do to get educated and be responsible. Now my child was cyber-bullied, and I dealt with the school for almost 6 months. Everyday with the principal, I went the right route. I even came to the executive director of CCSD. Nothing happened. I want the answers to know in West Ashley High School, if that principal is still going to be at the HS, and what are y'all going to do about cyberbullying this year.

[JR: Have you gotten- I know you've been heard, is there a question here you need answered?]
Yeah.

Female Audience Member (1:12:31-1:13:44): Hi, I just a quick question for Dr. Postlewait. What are the teachers graded on? My child, 4th grader, is a straight A student, just got tested into the SAIL program. But when he took the MAP test he went down a point. This did not bother me, because I know what kind of student and what kind of child he is. What upset me, was the fact that his teacher might get ding-ed for that, and I don't think she should. So what is the grading system for teachers is what I want to know.

[JR: I think I can tell you that it's a very hot topic, and it's being working on and being resolved. So I'm going to exercise my right as the moderator and not have the superintendent answer that question but there will be an answer.

Female Audience Member 2 (1:13:46-1:14:32): My son goes to W. Ashley HS and I want to ask what are you doing about getting drivers education brought back to the high schools and you got a lot of parents that can't afford private lessons. It costs about over \$400 a lesson to teach a student how to drive. When I was in HS in N. CHS we had drivers ed. It's not in any of the schools in Charleston county and I want to know what we can do to bring it back.

[JR: *comments about noting it]

Female Audience Member 3 (1:14:33-1:16:18): I have a concern about student safety with the progressive discipline plan. And I know that goes under managing resources as well as teaching and learning. There must be a program from another city that we can model after for the severe behavior students. They need education as much as every other student. But their behavior needs take precedence for them and they take educational time away from non behavioral students. Parents who are afraid of sending their kids to school because of violent and repeat offenders. I also have a concern under managing resources, concern as a parent about leadership in school kind of being jerked around. Student support services I kind of feel like the emotional and social needs aren't being met. We need more mental health service for students in the schools. I know a lot of them have anxiety and a lot of things that aren't being approached. Please don't cut out the arts. I know there are students with 504s that needs are not being met. And I know somebody said something about paying teachers more maybe teachers can vote to give themselves a raise like the board can. [excitement and clapping from everyone]

[JR: That's the best comment of the night]

David Bell (1:16:23-1:17:13): My name is David Bell I have 2 children who go to Ashley River Creative Arts. One of my children is transgender and also special needs. Last year when we had the \$18M beget short fall, the school cut its special education teacher but they didn't- why are athletic programs still being funded. *Sarcastically-Why are we building \$14M stadiums in W. Ashley when we have how many kids made it to the NFL or MLB? But every kid drives a car when they leave high school we should be having drivers ed training, we should have arts, I'm not saying we should do away with those programs, but why aren't we cutting those programs?

Female Audience Member 4 (1:17:15-1:20:20): Hi everybody. Way to be here. I'm so proud to be in this room with all of you. And I want to thank you for moving the meeting from 11 am to 6 pm so that we could be here. That was huge. I want to talk about the PPT slide. What I don't like about PPT is that it's a rectangle and it forces your points to fit in a rectangle. It's an unfortunate box that we all live with in the modern age. I think there's a missing square on this diagram because you've put teachers and money in the same box. And last time I checked, you can't deposit teachers in the bank, and money is an object, a teacher is a human being. And I feel like it's important to consider 7 squares instead of 6 so that we can think about our teachers as one idea, and money and buildings and buses and parking lots, and all the things the board sits up here and wines about every month, is two separate ideas. I think teaching should be the 4th box, and money should be the 7th box. The other thing I wanted to suggest is that when the plane is crashing, you put the mask on the adult before you put it on the child, and what I want us to encourage all of us to do, as parents, leaders, superintendents, is to get- we have an identified patient in Charleston County, and it's our students who are not able to go into the military, that's our identified patient. 3rd graders who aren't reading at a 3rd grade level. Our problem is not our kids or the ability for them to learn because children learn. The problem is the grown ups serving the children. Not the teachers, but those who are trying to serve them by not serving them, and the parents, and the community of people who are saying eh I don't really care, and those of us in the room care, but there's not that many people in this room. You put the mask on the adult before you put it on the child.

Male Audience Member 2 (1:20:27-1:23:30): Again, I'm grateful for the people that are in this room. I think knowing a lot of the faces that are here, folks sitting on the panel. I am a CCSD employee and I'm also a parent, and also a community advocate. One of the issues I see, and not just with this but this meeting, took so long to take place. This meeting has been a long time coming, and this meeting I don't think will solve the issue that we're talking about. To be honest. As an African American male, Eric knows exactly how I feel about the comments regarding black male teachers. It's not just black male teachers, it's black males in general. If you look around CCSD, if you look around the community, black males are an endangered species. And because of the way we're treated. It's always quoted that we need more black males, I am one, I struggle to get position in this district. One of the things that I noticed was one of the pitfalls that this district over took was dismantling the department of community outreach, taking away parent advocates, reducing the significance of student support/concerns specialist. Those positions help classroom teachers in schools help to manage the same behavioral disruptions that people have been talking about today. But for what ever reason, that was deemed unnecessary. We had two annual events, the boys to gentleman summit, and the girls summit. Those were the only two events that the district put on to acknowledge the significance of the diversity of students of color. My son went to a school in Mt. P, and I removed him from that school because as a little African American boy with dreadlocks, he was an anomaly. I also didn't like how he was treated by his classroom teacher and the lack of support I got from the principal. And what I see in CCSD, is that there are certain things that are invested in and I'll be honest I'm looking at Charleston county, we can all come together in this room but when we walk out this room, we're all going to our own different and separate communities. e can't ask for unity and diversity when we don't have it out there. And the

reality of it is, we invest in what we deem important. African American males and African American teachers are not important. Programs for diverse student populations are not important. And for me parent involvement was not important when they eliminated parent advocate positions.

Tara Lowry (1:23:32-1:25:02): My name is Tara Lowry and I was involved in the CCSD about 10 years ago, I was pretty active, and I found that board in CCSD was very hard to hold accountable. The question about what % of the test scores are applied toward keeping a teacher or not. You guys know that, you can answer that, there's not reason for you to keep from answering that question today. The fact of the matter is that we have a ton of parents over the last 15 years that have tried to hold CCSD accountable. So how can you expect the kids, teachers, and their parents to be accountable in any way if they community in general and the CCSD does not hold themselves accountable for their actions about what they can and can't do. We have a whole generation of HS students who are very hard to hold accountable. And I'm talking about [inaudible] they're hard to hold accountable too for their actions. And it does take a village to raise a kid, but it takes more than just everybody. If you want your kids and if you want the teachers and everybody in the community to be held accountable, you have to show it yourself. And it really does begin with you guys.

Female Audience Member 5 (1:25:20-1:29:47): To Robert, I want you to know that I'm an employee at CCSD as a parent advocate. And I have 2 schools and I know that we do need parent advocates, they need us trust me. I'm off during the summer, and I'm still getting phone calls from parents. They needs us. We did have have a training on sensitivity, and your topic you discussed. And it was a group of teachers I believe from Wando, and I do have the pamphlet and I did share it with my daughter's school because that's how amazing that workshop was. It opened my eyes because it was on sensitivity, the LGBTQ community and on diversity, and my daughter attends Porter Gaud, and of course diversity is a great issue. And in my household I have a son who is at a CCSD school, and I have a daughter who will be attending a CCSD school this fall. And I like to always say I represent title 1 simply because I attended [*lists school names]. I went on to college and I'm so thankful for the exit exam not being held for our students now in order for them to get ahead because I graduated with a certificate, and I went to college and when I got to school at SC State University, that august I went to my class I went in my dorms and here came October, I missed that exam by 1 point 1 points 5 points, just different points so me and my mother came back to Charleston and I went to night school, and I passed my exam and went back to SC State that January, and people laughed when I said I had the best 5 years of my life at SC State. And that's exactly what I had. But it's sad that we're still dealing with this. I have a son who went to a school for 6 months, he was top of the class in the MAP, top in reading, went to this school for 6 months, and now he's below 30 points in reading. What does that do to me as a parent. And he's not in a single parent household. He has a mother and a father he has a village, but what does that do for him being a little black boy, because that's what I call him, my only boy. But what I do as a parent, what we all can do, when we're in the car, going anywhere, I have his sight words with him, his math with him, because that is awful from him being right up here and then 6 months at that one particular school, and I transferred him out of that school in December and sent him to another school, because that's

disheartening. That's being a parent, but that's also what are we going to do about that because that's really disheartening. Thank you all.

[JR: commentary regarding ladies in matching blue shirts]

Tamatha Vandross (1:30:01-1:30:18): Our shirts are Charleston Rise. The rise stands for rising up to impact student excellence. We're trying to get into the schools, we're a parent advocate group, here to bridge the gap between parent teacher communications.

Phillip Burke (1:30:53-1:36:48): Hello everybody my name is Phillip Burke. I grew up in this school system in W. Ashley, and my daughter is in this school system, she goes to Buist in elementary school. I have a couple things according to what this meeting is based on which is the district/superintendent wanting to know what the parents want for their kids. First thing I want to mention are resources- like this man Dr. Fulmore mentioned, I think as far as resources are concerned for the county, if we don't have enough money for programs, the school board and the superintendent, you're in charge of getting more money. If we need more, need to ask the state for more money, need to get citizens involved, how ever it occurs, if we need more resources, it's not my job as a parent to go get that it's the people who are in charge to go get them so we don't have to fight over resources with each other. That's the 1st thing I'd like to say the 2nd thing is as far as tolerances are concerned in the school district, that comes from leadership. Leadership says as parents, we are the leadership in the household, in the school district the board, superintendent, you are the leadership as far as what we tolerate with each other. I've been here my whole life and this system I've seen in the school board, people interesting in their own political ambitions, standing up for their own political perspective, I've seen race fighting and stupid things in the school board my whole life, and what that's amounted to is we're still at the bottom. United States is in the middle as far as education is concerned, and SC is at the bottom. With that kind of nonsense, that isn't getting us anywhere. So, I'd like to see better leadership and I think that will have a big impact on what happened with tolerance in the schools. Also solving problems as they happen. We've had a lot of problems happen in the school system. Solve them as they happen. Like this gentleman back here said just resolve the problem. If there's a problem, just get involved and solve it. Other thing is as far as teachers are concerned, there's a lower teaching morale since your arrival, Ms. Superintendent. And it's based on what the focus has been on. And the focus as far as kids are concerned should basically be what can we do to improve their education. And I think looking at teachers and focusing on them as that's what the main problem is, that's where our focus is going to be this year, is completely the wrong direction. As far as holding people accountable, if we're going in the wrong direction, using poor systems to evaluate teachers, that's just incompetence. You should be held accountable yourselves as the school board, people who support that should be held accountable as well. I think as far as things are out there that can help kids, I heard a couple people mention things- raising salaries, we're the lowest paid state as far as paying teachers are concerned but we expect to draw like high level teachers, that ridiculous. Find the resources. As far as year round school, that's another issue, we've seen it work in other places, let's implement plans that work. Let's focus on things that have been proven to work nationwide and have been working internationally- in France they implemented systems, the new president came in that was one of his main agendas. Find out what other

people are doing and do the same thing here. Grading teachers on standardized tests, I think that's just ridiculous. To the young lady over here who was talking about standardized test and supporting them, the next thing coming down the pipeline from the state is Nikki Hayley (when she was in office) implemented a law that if kids don't graduate if they don't pass their final exam, as far as one of these standardized tests are concerned, they will be held back. So if a kid is having a bad day, they're going to be held back...and that is going to cause all kinds of problems. So you have to be careful about what you support, and find out what the agenda of those things are. Then as far as teaching are concerned in general, I think blaming over worked and under paid teacher isn't solving the problem. Then there's the diversity problem. My daughter goes to- in the higher level more academic schools, there's a big diversity problem. There's less than 10% diversity in Buist Academy right down the street. And my daughter goes there and I'm concerned because for a couple reasons 1, because I grew up in this community, and this is the best you can do? In my community to help a group of people on the bottom of the bottom of the bottom of the list as far as education is concerned. I think as a school board, y'all should be ashamed where we stand. I think getting serious about solving problems is what really needs to take place.

[JR: Closing commentary thanking parents]

Joe Williams (1:37:40-1:39:10): Just to let you all know, first of all thank you all so much for this. We truly call this a listening session because we truly want to hear what you all have to say but to address the question about continuing the conversation, we will be having listening sessions for each of the groups that we've already hosted thus far to include our teachers, principals, and scholars, parents, business leaders, and also community members, each 9-week period this upcoming school year. They're cabinets, in the 9-week period. That will be the process for continuing the conversations.

[JR: Joe, when do you think it will be possible to have something definitive about a continuation about this conversation?]

We are working on that, Erica Taylor from our communications dept. is working on that. We're hoping to have something out by the 1st of august for the entire year.

Gerrita Postlewait (1:38:12-1:52:24): So I'd just like to add my voice in thanking all of you for coming, for proposing a lot of different perspectives and insights and critiques, and for doing so so respectfully. It is something hard to listen to inaccurate information that is shared to not be able to jump in and say anything, but for tonight it was about listening. I do want to address the question about what % students test scores would count in a teacher evaluation. If you want to get online to SC Dept. of Education's website, and type in ADEPT, you will find the description of the teacher evaluation system that is in place across the state. It describes the elements of the teacher evaluation system. There are 4 main categories, none of them have to do with student test scores. Our board approved at the meeting in June the school district's ADEPT plan that has been submitted to the state. That's where you'll find that information. There's no specific % of test score. We have about 3,350 teachers in our system. Last year about 26-28 were on continuous improvement plans. That is a category that alerts a teacher that improvement has to occur in order to keep the contract status the way it is. This year, fewer than 28 are on continuing formal status. There are about 5% of teachers across the district who

are on some sort of support plan, which has absolutely nothing to do with their teaching contract. It's just a signal that some elements of those 4 categories of the ADPET plan weren't as strong as they needed to be. However, there was a train wreck of a communication problem around that this spring. And it will take us a long time to dig out of the hole we're in and I have accepted responsibility for whatever it was that went wrong in the communication. Whenever a board member asked about a program called EVASS, also look that up and read about it, board members were talking about 2 years of roster verified data. Which allows teachers and principals to go in and say but wait this student missed 35 days, this student wasn't in my classroom, this student was pulled out during special services, and therefore these test scores shouldn't count. If over a period of 2-3 years, we see that some teachers aren't growing kids at all, then we have to make sure we support those teachers. That doesn't mean they get fired. We're trying to move to the model that has an experienced teacher and a novice teacher in a classroom so that- there's a national teacher shortage, so we need every teacher, we must make sure that the teachers who are in classrooms in front of kids are taking your children where they come to us and they're growing them academically. If they're in 6th grade and come to us at the 3rd grade level, we want to know the child move forward at least a year a year. Then we need to think about how we use year round extended year programs for kids who are grade levels behind who need to grow more quickly. It is ultimately our intention to use the technology that is available to us today to say that in Charleston county schools for those 12-year-old who are reading at a third grade level how did our growth of those student compare with all the other 12 year olds in the country at the 3rd grade level, so that we aren't comparing children who come to school way above grade level with those who come to school not yet ready to learn. But we're looking across the country, but the question is who in our country knows how to take children of poverty who come to school behind who are not ready to learn and accelerate them so that they are able to read, access, retrieve, process, and produce information a critical skill if you're going to be able to take part in the freedoms that America's society offers. That's all we're trying to do. The question is how do we make sure that our kids who most depend on public schools to get things right for them to have before them teachers who can support their needs.

[Robert Parkman: I read this morning that the city of Charleston is the # 1 city for tourism in the world. There's tons of money coming into this city. Why are we as as state the last in the country when it comes to education, and why is a state like Massachusetts doing so well.] Taxes. So that's a big question about state policy, poverty rates, and history, and intentional denial of the right to learn. It's about a rich history of unfairness. That is exactly what those who work on behalf of children who are willing to admit we all make mistakes sometime, we all have bad days sometimes and we don't start demonizing one another because of that we come together and work through our problems and that has been the most heartening aspect of a challenging spring, is that there is a willingness to come together and to put what's valuable in the center of the table and to commit to a few strategies that we believe are the most important things to do and to do them well and to identify the outcomes that all of us would agree we're making progress with all children. We want more national merit semi finalist scholars in this district, we don't have enough of those compared to other in the state and country, and we want to make sure that our most impoverished children, and this is a

generalization, and this is a generalization that isn't fair, because not all children poverty struggle to learn, but often many of them come to school not ready to learn, how do we make sure public schools deliver on their promise to break cycles of poverty through education. That's our job, to love every child, and to say to every child who comes through our doors, when you leave us you will be better off for having spent time with us. That's what we do, we're not perfect. We will continue the conversations in a structured way because we need to get constructive as we move forward. We will make sure every school in the district is represented by a parent who will be invited to come together every quarter. We will listen for part of that time, but we will also lay out an agenda of work we want to get done. We've heard lots of suggestions about what should be placed in the budget, tri county is a uniquely situated situation in the state and the state revenue collection streams don't allow us to raise taxes beyond a certain very limited amount. It means that within our budget, we have to make some tough choices, just like most of us have had to do at home at some point in our lives. It will be conversations. We will take all of the information and lay out very rapidly before school starts some major strategies to say here's where we think the starting places are. Now parents, what role do you want to play in this work. We need to lay out the strategies for the year and say what do we want to accomplish in July, August, September, in October, November, December, in the 3rd quarter, January, February, March, and the final quarter April May June. It also means that our board has to agree to adopt that as their agenda so we don't get pulled off task by problems that occur that take us off track. You've raised some excellent points tonight and I hope you can tell the sincerity in the voices of the people who work for children on behalf of all the adults who are here to serve them. There's a program on the radio called fresh air, and I feel as though the process we're going through is infusing a lot of fresh air. We've uncovered some difficult/controversial topics, but that doesn't mean we don't talk about them. Always better to let fresh air in and see where we can find common ground around serving kids. The final thing I'd like to say is if you posed a question tonight, we tried to capture it, and Erica and her staff- [Erica Taylor: *72 hours for answers]

Thanks and I just want to repeat all the testing except MAP comes through the federal government- the state and we are required to give it, but we will lose our federal funding. So it's complex it's not as if we would want people to be as angry with us as they are because we work so hard trying to serve your children better with the resources we have in the time and place we serve, and the opportunities we have. I speak for all of us up here when I say we are sincere in our desire to improve the services that kids get so that more kids are exiting our system with life choices that will make a difference for them. Again, thank you so much for the time you've given us this evening. Next session won't be exactly like this, it will be organized into a parent cabinet where we choose an agenda that we have a sense of accomplishing things. Thank you again. Thank you Mr. Read, thank you Erica and your dept. for making all the arrangements.

