

Moderator (00:00:00) Thank you all for being here today. Uh were going to do things a little bit differently today with our section. Uh, we will make it a little more intimate and normally we have the large table out and we kind of sit around the table but since we have a smaller group we just wanted to picture everyone seeing each other and you know hear each other. So, the first thing we would like to do before we get started is because we don't have any name plate. I ask you to please state your name and the school that you are from and we will go from there. Start with you.

Panel Member (00:34:): okay, I'm Laura I teach fourth grade at Mount Zion

Panel Member (00:38): I'm Lindsay Garcia and I am seventh grade at Northwoods middle

Panel Member (00:44): I'm Tristan [inaudible] I teach at West Ashley High School French and Spanish

Panel Member (00:46): I'm [inaudible]I teach at upper Montessori Hershey elementary

Panel Member (00:50): Jen Mongold I also teach upper Elementary Montessori at Hershey

Panel Member (00:54): I am Sydney branch I teach first grade at [inaudible]

Panel Member (01:01): [inaudible]first grade [inaudible]

Panel Member (01:04): Vanessa Kleckler, [inaudible] fourth grade.

Panel Member (01:11) Laurie Carol, theatre at Wando high

Panel Member (01:19) Mia Pace I'm a _____ teacher at Mitchell elementary

Moderator: (01:21) And I am joe Williams and I am going to the best today [inaudible]. Um so thank you all for coming today. One of the reasons we wanted to bring you all in was to uh if you look you know in front here are if you can see on this side uh we have some goals we have highlighted out of our outline to be a part of our strategic plan. And with that being said we really wanted to give you all the opportunity to come in a given some input as to some things that may be missing and some thing you want to include under those goals that are already started up top and when you look at those goals that are up there is there any one in particular that you see that kind of stands out that you say hey you know I think that is one that I really would like to talk about I have some input I have some things that I would like to add.. ideas. Yes?

Panel Member (02:19) number three the supporting to learning for teachers and students

Moderator (02:24): Supportive learning for teachers and students. Can you give us some more details as to why that one sticks out to you?

Panel Member (02:29) Um because I feel like we don't have that support now to get out children to where we are asked to get them. For example, to have them all read on grade level by third grade. Um I teach first grade and we get 24 students in our class this year by ourselves. We don't have an aid or assistant or any help like that and reading academy has been taking away a very small point of our day

and this year it got knocked down to 10% or lower. Were the only ones who made it in the map on the map scores.

Panel Member (03:02) for the entire school

Speaker 1 (03:02) right so she our reading teachers had to work with first graders all the way through fifth grade so that has not been many children who got the resources they needed

Panel Member (03:14): [Inaudible]

Panel Member (03:17) Um and we feel like we need that full day and also with math we don't have help with math. If our children aren't getting evaluated and being places with an IOP of 5 or 4 there is no help with them. We can have reading groups we can have small Phonics groups I was lucky this year and had a volunteer everyday come in and mainly I had the children read to them because with 24 students I can't have them read to me 10 minutes a day like they should it will take up too much of my day. Oh, thank you. that's a big challenge we have as teachers and we don't the resources to help our children. We're watching our children slip through our fingers and we can't help them no matter how hard we are trying. This year I was walking through the hall and the same day we had a first-year teacher crying because she was overwhelmed and a seventh-grade teacher crying because she was so overwhelmed. We are trying to reach and help the students we just don't have the help and the administrators don't have the help either. So, to me that is a very important one. I think if we can help if we get more school physiologists in the school with us the whole day that will help tremendously because we ran out of time by the end of the year. Our school physiologist we have her two days. We share with another school. It's not the other schools fault but she needs to be there every day. One day she is there is a lot for meetings so she doesn't get to be with the children she doesn't get to come observe in the classroom. Again, the children are slipping through out fingers

Panel Member (00:04:47): [Inaudible] 850 student's population so very large school to have a psychologist as just part time.

Moderator (00:04:59) so I heard a reading interventionists or teacher physiologist. Does anyone else have anything they would like to add to number 3. Pass the microphone

Panel Member (00:05:10) um just really agreeing with you guy I teach in a high poverty school and of course that comes with more mental health need and our guidance counselor is wonderful but she spend the last month and a half of the school year solely focused on preparing for testing so for the last month and half of the school year she was not able to pull any of her small groups and I feel like that is when we are expecting the most of our students academically but they were missing all of their mental health support during that time. So, I would love to see more mental health support so that they can achieve academically.

Speaker 1 (5:44): [Inaudible] social worker and I know we discussed in our [inaudible] meeting. We were talking about a social worker there. We have one social worker there for forty-two or forty-seven elementary schools here. They can't get to everybody. They can't get to a very small number of people that were needed to help with getting parents involved. We are in a pretty good school but we have parents that you never see we can't, they don't come in they don't return phone calls and if we have social worker maybe that social worked can help us get in and get that parent in because our guidance counselors are doing so many other things

Joe (00:06:29) I should have referenced our conversation with we want you to be open handed so you know. You are free to speak. Anyone else?

Panel Member (06:40) Do you want this?

Panel Member (06:43) To go along with the teacher support. Coming from my school. We had a lot of teachers who were out a lot and I think that is because they feel over taxed overwhelmed. It's just a lot of hurtles and challenges to overcome and then when the teacher aren't there we went able to get subs so we spent many many many days having to slit classes which is putting thirty to thirty-five kids in a class. Not enough seats. Some having to sit on heaters and floors and its like how do you conduct an effective learning environment in that situation and you know all the sudden having to last minute put the honors students with the other kids and you know vice versa. It just makes it very very challenging when you don't the support to either have the teachers being wanting to be there or having subs cover when they are not able to be there.

Panel Member (07:46): I feel kind of loud too so we will go with the microphone. So under supportive learning some concerns that have arisen just through conversations at our school is especially with the younger or newer teacher that may not have the correct training or experience to deal with some of the challenges that come with our schools and some of the ideas that come up are to bring back a mentoring program that they use to have at our school so we realize we had the adapt process and when you are a new teacher to the district or to the state all together you have to go through the tips and the induction and those things but your mentor is typically someone that is not in the classroom it's an admin it's a lead teacher. I had an instructional coach who was in our building twice a week I believe and we were wondering if somehow if we could be partnered the newer teachers could be partnered with people who have shared experiences and can help with not only behavioral management and time management because we are faced with having to do so much with so little resources and so little help but even on the same grade level. I have heard people say you know we use to have a program where we would be trained. We were paid extra for my time but we mentored people from my grade level where there was special Ed where there is a classroom teacher or maybe a special area relation arts teacher. So, I don't know how that fits into the conversation but maybe if people felt a little more supported maybe we could take some of the stress off the teacher or provide some input of someone who is in the classroom

Panel Member (00:09:27): I actually have

Moderator (00:09:28): I was going to say and thank you for bringing that up, bringing that up because of the things that you know we want to make sure you all understand as well is while we ask for your suggestions we also consider you all to be a panel of experts, so if you hear someone mention something or you have an idea or something that your building or maybe some solutions to some things that would be very beneficial and we would be grateful for that as well

Panel Member (09:52): Um I was a first-year teacher now going into my second year and at my school we were prepared with a mentor that was another teacher which would have been wonderful If those people actually had the time to mentor us. The theory was there behind it but you know we would pass in the hall and say hey how it is going, great okay bye. okay later. You know it just wasn't actually there wasn't time build in for it to actually happen. So...

Panel Member (10:28): going along with that we had I felt even more so thing year that so much extra things put on us that didn't have to do with the kids. We didn't have time to sit down as a grade level and plan. We, every several of Monday we had to, we sat down with the reading specialist and that took away our team planning times since that's was the only day we all had social area at the same time. Uh so there was a lot that just, we didn't get one together as a team and we were in a situation where I has, I was coming into 4th grade, same school but different grade and we had two new teachers in the same grade level as well and you know it was really tough just to get, no one really knew what each other was doing because we didn't have the time to sit down together and plan so all those extra things we get emails about constantly that we have to submit this or you have to fill this out and send this in, it really takes away from our time to do that we need to for the kids. And that, it's frustrating to be overwhelmed with things that for us are not our main priority because our main priority is doing what we need to do for our students

Moderator (11:50): Does anyone else have anything they would like to add? That would be a little more on your plates that would take you away from the work of teaching?

Panel Member (12:12) [Inaudible] to go along with what she was saying, I feel like a lot of times, we...I know one thing when I had to start, was a spreadsheet for when I met with my small groups. And, when we got the spreadsheet, it was said as something that you had to do. But, then there was no one to, kind of, come and get it or, you know, check behind us and make sure that it was actually being done. I felt like a lot of times we got paperwork or we got handed things that we needed to complete but whoever we were supposed to give it to, or whoever was supposed to be there to support us through it, never fell through. And, a lot of times, as educators, we already have things that we use to kind of track what we're doing, or track what we're doing in small group and track data sheets, and I get that. We want to be consistent throughout the building. But, if five out of thirty five teachers are doing it, where is the consistency in it? And then, we get evaluated based on certain things that we are supposed to be doing but necessarily not doing. And, for me, I don't feel as though it is fair. I am spending so much time trying to track 5 or 6 kids the way that the school, or the district, wants me to but then no one ever follows through with me. But, then I send countless e-mails about a student that I am concerned about that are two or three years behind and no one ever comes in and says hey "here's the plan that we need to do for this child." And, when I do all of my paperwork, it's not necessarily the way that it was given to me and I have to back track and go back ten months and give them data that I was doing for this or I was doing for that. And, I just feel like it takes away not only from what I am doing but it also kind of puts a lot of pressure on my students as well. because, I feel like oh we have to get this done today. Or, I have to meet with red students for four or five days out of the week. I have to meet with my yellow students for three days. But, my green students, I only have to see you for one day; i'll see you Friday. Like, it really just makes me feel like I am putting them on a schedule and I don't want to feel that way. I want to meet with all my children every day and get a chance to be one on one and have conversations with them every day. And for me, when I get a paper that says okay meet with your five percent students for 30 minutes, I feel like, oh okay, 30 minute is up, I will see you on Wednesday. I don't want to feel that way. And, I know they don't want to feel that way either.

Panel Member (14:55): I feel like we can all agree that class size is the ticket. And, I think that that has just been put way down low as you've stated. Primary grades for the district were really high this year and yet, we have the pressure of, your kids have to meet their MAP goal. Well, we've got to lower class size. And, we've to have people in the classroom to help us. I am happy that the clock model is gone. Because, I can tell you right now I was really frustrated that, we were spending money having evaluators come in the classroom because anybody can create a model lesson. You walk in my room, ok, I am going

to have a model literature lesson with you. You don't know how many days I have been at school. You don't know how many hours I spend at school each day. It doesn't say who I am as a teacher. You haven't talk to any of my parents, any of my students. And, I just feel like if I am going to make a real difference, you have to give me the tools and not so many kids in my room. I have a very limited space. And, I love my students. I and had a wonderful group of kids and wonderful support of parents this year. And I felt very blessed. But, not everybody, you can't compare apples to oranges. I am at a very good school. I know that. And, if I am struggling, I can't imagine someone in an intercity school.

Gerrita Postlewait (16:20): And how many students did you say you had?

Panel Member (16:26): 24

Gerrita Postlewait (16:33): 24? And is that a Montessori classroom? No, Drayton hall.

Panel Member (16:40): Anyone want to add to that? Class number, size? Did that affect you?

Panel Member (16:44): I can. I mean, I teach foreign language and I have had 34 before. That's not teaching, that's drill sergeant. And, that's something in support of learning. I can't comment on the elementary level but I can comment on the secondary level. That the disciplinary plan, it's not working. I am sick and tired of seeing my students in the newspaper. It's not working. It needs to be revisited. The fact that my administrators do not have time to process all of my referral's. The inequity of the administrators across this district in the high schools. I have 1700 students at my school and there are only four administrators. One does purely special ed, and is funded through special ed. But there is another school that has twice the number that has 17 administrators. That is not fair to my kids. And, they all have secretaries. That's not fair. And, that is not equities among the district. There are other schools that are getting more administrators that are getting half of the numbers that we do.

Panel Member (17:55): it's not fair for the children, I have a child at my school who has had to stand up to the teacher because of the respect. While that was nice, next time need no to do that, try a different way. He's tired of seeing people, kids, disrespectful. And, again an administrator can't do anything. I am the contact for the discipline teacher alliance and there's supposed to be a survey coming out soon for the teachers, that we can all fill out. So, we know to help out and make things better for them. So, please fill out those surveys when we get it. I think it is supposed to be coming out any day now. I did ask during one of the meetings, why we went that way and someone else might be able to shed some light on that. Because, again, like you said. We have our management, I ask why we all have to do exactly the same thing. Each school is different. Elementary school, high school, middle school, we're all different. Mrs. Bran's class to my class, even though we're teaching first grade. And, kids are going to react in different ways. Students are going to do different things. And, we need that. Again, I will say we need more help. I asked about ISS. And, ISS seems to be kids walking behind the principals. They're not going home. They don't need to go home, they are don't need to get suspended. They're not getting anything done. But, they don't need to walk behind the principal because they are still not getting anything done. They're not in the classroom. They're getting a break from the classroom the other kids are getting a break in the classroom. But, we're not changing the behavior, which I understand that is what PBS is about. Trying to change that behavior, which teachers understand that. We want to do that but we don't have the resources to do that but we need more help in the classroom. And, the administrators need more help when they can finish all the referrals. And that's how a lot of teachers felt and we would put them in 360 and nothing is happening.

Panel Member (19:47): And it sends the message to the other kids, that hey let's join in.

Panel Member (19:54): I hear my kids talking about fighting all the time. It's crushing. That is how the reverting fact of solving problems. It needs to stop because they have no fear.

Panel Member (20:06): Even at an elementary level, when... our vice principal said, I don't remember the number, it was a ridiculous number of bullying contracts that they had this year alone in fourth grade.

Moderator (20:20): Can you pass the microphone? We want to make sure we don't miss anything that's all.

Panel Member (20:27): So, she told us the number of bullying contracts she had in fourth grade alone. I don't remember exactly what the number was but, it was astonishing. The kids, it was, it's just scary looking at how young they are. And, one of the things that they're lacking is social skills. We have virtually no time to teach them social skills but they are solving problems by fighting. Their games, many of them, are games where they are hitting each other or kicking each other. It's just constant. Every day at recess there was constant problems with physical activity. I mean, things that you would never think a fourth grader would even know to do. It's just crazy and we don't have the resources to address those problems. We're not getting the parent support to help us out with finding a way to fix this behavior. And, oftentimes, things just go by unresolved because we don't have the time to get on 360 and put these things in. So, it's like, well you must pick and choose what you're going to do with this limited time. And a lot of things just kind of skate by.

Moderator (21:50): So, I heard you mention social skills and not having enough time to teach the social skills. But, I want to pose the question to our circle, and ask, you know how do others feel about the social skills. Is that something that is important? Is that something that you feel I would be beneficial? Would it help and why?

Panel Member (22:15): Well I feel very strongly that, in the arts, what we teach is 21st century problem solving. And that is collaboration. Everything that we do is collaboration, especially at the high school level. And, it is definitely social skills. The kids are working together. It's problem solving. A lot of theater. And, it is scary to arts teachers that, you know I was looking at the other ones over here, managing resources and community priorities. Some of the most successful historically schools in this district are school of the creative arts, Wando had very robust arts programs. And, I think because of the arts and the arts infusion it can feed into a lot of what you're talking about. And, we are scared because we are not hearing arts as part of the conversation at all. We don't have an arts coordinator at the downtown level anymore. And, historically as... I'm getting off the subject here. (Laughing)
As teacher and as principals become more concerned about test scores and about those things. Arts teachers, and doing the reading, we're not opposed to doing that. What we are supposed to be doing is working together to create curriculum, so planning that uses arts to infuse and to inform and teach skills through content. And, that's what we would like to do. We don't feel we have the time necessarily to do that. But we also are very fearful that, as test scores become the primary thing that the arts become not and we don't and I taught freshman repeater English for a few years at Wando with Mr. Wilson as my principle at the time and we would take kids who the same kids that you have by the time they made it to high school and were not reading at their grade level and we would double up their English so they were in English class which is what they were bad at for three hours a day of course they quit school of course they didn't want to come they were miserable and the arts kind of engaged them in that and we

were also concerned you mentioned the cot my classroom doesn't look like any other classroom my kids are its kind of chaos somedays because they are learning social skills and sometimes that isn't pretty you know and that's me managing them and helping them through that but the only way to learn that in a somewhat controlled environment is for me to help them learn that because otherwise their still doing what they do at recess which is not effective

Panel member (25:04) can I speak

Panel member (25:04) yes

Panel member (25:05) she was

Panel member (25:06) that's fine

Panel Member (25:07): I just want to I'm probably going to play devil's advocate I necessarily feel as though we don't have we cannot not teach social skills I feel like that is something we have to teach. I feel like it's like saying well I'm not going to teach you I know you said first grade for kindergarten I'm not going to teach you how to address them when you want to use the restroom or I'm not going to teach you how to line up or I'm not going to teach you how to get your tray at lunch I feel like social skills is something that we cannot afford to not teach them because if they don't know it then there is no effective instruction that is going to take place if I am constantly managing you all the time I can't teach you so the first three or four weeks of school it's all management. It's all this is how we sit this is how we speak to each other this is how you get my attention and something that I've learned this year cause I am on the PBI's team at my school is that we can't treat behavior like a onetime thing and also as a mother like I constantly say this is how you sit at the dinner table this is how you sit at the dinner table this is how you sit at the dinner table so for us if we feel like we have to if we feel like we have to have small groups for reading and math we have to have small groups for social skills it's something that we have to do everything single day and on the first day Naquan is not going to learn how to sit down and read he's not going to learn how to be with his friend and have a disagreement and not smack him upside the head because that's what he sees at home. And another part of that is too we have to stop being afraid if parents because this is something that's generational this is something that you see all the time so when you're with me for eight hours you're not going to instantly change that behavior because it's something you see all the time and your mom and dad resort to arguing and fighting and hitting each other when they get upset so when you get upset over a block or a Lego that's what you're going to do but I also have to advocate for the student against the parent it's not always advocating for our student against the district sometimes we have to sit across the table from parents and say hey I know you do this at home this is something that you can do and um and we have parents and partners at our school you know which is 10 out of 500 parents but at the end of the day they also need have to have conversation with each other and say hey I know this I how you handled things but try it this way try breathing exercises and this is the same thing for us as teachers we don't always handle things like were supposed to we don't always have rational conversations with each other with our spouse or with our friends and I think to expect that from five or six year old's or even teenagers it's kind of its not impossible it's something that we have to reteach social behavior it's not a onetime thing

Panel member (28:03) oh good. Um I'm at monastery school which trying to do monastery protecting the fidelity of the monastery philosophy and methods is very challenging and public setting though it is very exciting and Jen is we both teach upper el at Hershey and we very much value arts because monastery is all inclusive um there's not we try not to be so isolated when teaching things also social

skills very important we do spend weeks just going over procedures and um how to do all those things and to be peaceful peacefulness is a big going about the room peacefully and whatever and all those kinds of things are very important to us they are taught in the primary grades and on up to us um so all of that is very key and we follow the whole child and that is part of the child on how he or she interacts with others and the environment and so when you think about all of that we always find ourselves in kind of an odd position because I don't think the district really knows what to do with us all the time and I get that. Because first especially with evaluations with testing and to make it even more complicated Jen and I teach fourth fifth and sixth grade combined so sixth grade is middle school typically but in monastery world its upper elementary so sometimes the sixth graders kind of get lost in terms of curriculum and testing and where do they go what do they do um and then there's just we teach just three testing grade levels four subjects each and a lot of people don't really understand that or get that and then some people do and they're like woah but we love it and we love our kids but we follow the child as educators were told to differentiate our instruction where is the differentiation for teachers when it comes evaluations and where is the differentiation to schools we were the first public Hersey was the first public monastery school in North Charleston we have not been renovated yet the other three that came later have beautiful brand new buildings so in our building we struggle with that piece too so we feel like we our children deserve that piece you know the new the bright shining bulging and the resources as well as the other monastery schools so differentiation needs to work for all of the us at each level student parents, teachers buildings all of it. Would you like to say some other monastery things while we have the floor?

Panel member (30:47): I think just touching on the arts and social skills and teaching the whole child I think any educator you want to educate the student and help the students and be a successful adult and prepare them and I know I there are most days where we overwhelmed with just the content and getting through and running out of time and looking at oh these kids are good will meet with them tomorrow or I have to meet with this student today AND IN OUR SETTING WHEN WE HAD EVALUATORS COME IN THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THEY WERE necessarily LOOKING AT and you have kids doing this and kids doing that and sometimes it was chaos too but it was controlled chaos and we knew what they were doing um we had some struggles with people understating that on our evaluation systems so I think when we're looking at evaluating teachers too and communicating them on how to be a better teacher I'm open to being a better teacher I want to be the best teacher I can be but that will look different at all schools and all grade levels and all subjects and finding a balance in communicating those expectations and how that's viewed.

Panel member (32:00): I'm not sure of your aware but the social skills on the primary report card are at the very end of the checklist where the academics are first and the social skills at the end we all know they're not going to learn if they don't have those social skills you've got to have that first so I think that needs to change and also I'm taking a class called integrating the arts in the classroom right now it's up in Ashley excuse me school of the arts and amazing absolutely amazing and the research that goes along on with how to improve our students is all connected with the arts if we don't have it and were eliminating it and putting funneling money other places and I just don't I just think that were over testing these kids I think a map test is fine but at the your level I mean I know our fourth and fifth grade students were tested from three or four weeks we couldn't go to recess we have to stay quiet in the halls you know these kids need play um it was I just felt very ineffective their tested out and it's the end of the year they're not going to perform well and then were looking at that data to see and another thing I don't agree with is telling a first grade parent that I don't think your child is cut out your child isn't going to be capable of going to a four year college program they have to settle for something else and I don't who am I to make that decision for them by looking at test data when they're six years old

when they just flipped through a test. But anyway I do want to say I would love to see some of you dry Postlewait yourself even to go up to the school of the arts this week and to take a look at that smart program that smart camp that going on it's a mazing those teachers are doing fantastic things for the kids and we walked around today as part of our lunch break and just to go in and see the theatre and kids playing steel drums and electric guitar and um how they're integrating it with academics math science and social studies and the I'm looking around and I'm seeing all these open chairs where we could have students and I understand that there was computer glitch that it didn't get out to all the students that some schools only had one or two that qualified where they actually had about fifteen um so it could've benefitted twice as many students that are in there now and as an if I had a parent of a young child anymore I would of wanted them apart of that program

Panel member(35:02): um and also I was lucky enough and one of my sons went and it does cost a lot of money it's not offered to everybody and it is with again with the arts all of our children need it and Ashley creative arts is a wonderful school and all of these art integrated the magnets school are but kids can't get in they can't get in charters schools the kids that need it the most are left out they don't have the parents to advocate to sign them up to get them into a program that's where the district needs to come in and bring it into the classrooms with us to help us do it more with every subject math and reading and social studies and science you can do art in all of that and that helps everybody especially with behaviors it can help with all grade levels all the elementary middle and high school and to the , take a step back and to go along with what Sydney was talking about the map and the testing at the end and teachers being evaluated I have a situation not a situation I run into a young man in my class that was high functioning autistic this year he came in not talking to people, a lot of us.

Panel Member (36:00): He came in not talking to people, a lot of us, wouldn't raise his hand, terrified to go to music every Monday, had to wear headphones. Tuesday, he was worried about going to art because he was worried about putting on his own art shirt, he wouldn't get his lunchbox, these little... but by the end of the year, he didn't need his headphones anymore, he wasn't worried about music, he came out laughing and singing, he went to art, he made friends, he raised his hand, he was swinging in the swing by himself by the end of the year. For those of you who know we were doing reading levels, A, B, and the bottom, he was a P by the end of the year. We're looking at a 4th grade reading level. We do, first grade, we do the, for our SOL, we do the aims web, and we have thirty questions adding and subtracting, single digits, double digits, regrouping. We have over 48, 38... 48 points you can get, but the highest he got 48. On his map scores, he was 4% and 11%, so someone was looking was at my MAP scores, and then they're looking at that young man then they're going to say ooh. She didn't do a very good job of teaching him. He didn't pay attention. It's not that he's not intelligent, but he's not able to take that test. We had him put in small groups, he got (inaudible) but even with the small groups he still did not do well. If we unplugged him and he had read it out loud and then read the question, I guarantee it he would answer it. But why put that child through 6 hours of having to do bad, when he has already showed us with his aims well, with his reading level, but you know to me those are bigger accomplishments, not the MAP scores.

Panel member (37:48): Years ago I taught theatre in preschool, so 4/5 year old's and there was a student that I think was a great example in talking about the whole child in Montessori who, we'd bring in hats, we don't bring in hats anymore, head lice, (laughing), but back in the day and the kids would pick up and I had like a captains police hat and go who would wear this hat and these were kids who had seen, been exposed to a lot of books, so someone would say a policemen or an airline captain or blah, blah, blah, and I had one little boy whose mother was actually a teacher there who never said much of anything, and I thought well theatre is just not his thing, right. And then after about the third week doing this he

came up to me one time and said ya know after not saying a word and said I thought of who would wear that hat and he had this entire scenario of who would wear that hat in that situation, but he couldn't come up with a discrete fact. He could only come up with a whole story and a test would never have measured him being able to but he had this entire vision in his head. He absolutely understood.

Panel Member (39:00): Well going along with testing, I too feel that we are over testing and drowning these kids in tests, and I don't think that it's a very good representation to show student learning and progress. We have a very large percent of EL learners, English learners, I think it was about a third of the entire 7th grade were ELs. And ya know for instance, there was one test I gave, and the kids were learning about bacteria and how bacteria can be helpful and harmful, and there's good bacteria in your gut that helps you digest food and even though this student couldn't necessarily write it in a sentence, she drew a picture of bacteria with a smiley faces and a slice of pizza, and so I knew she understood the concept of it ya know but on a test and they're expected to test the same as everybody else, ya know she wouldn't be able to answer those questions and it wouldn't show that she had actually understood the concept. So just another example like you guys were saying of it not really showing. I mean I think we do need to have some way of kind of getting an idea of where kids are at but there's got to be a better way than what we're doing. So, I have other things but...

Panel Member (40:20): So, I want to apologize, these really aren't questions they're more of suggestions, and it goes along with what we're kind of saying. We realize that our students must make growth, we must show that learning, but we're put in situations where we feel our classes are over-crowded, our time management is lacking because we must spend the first 6 weeks of school teaching children how to do these things. These are purely suggestions that have been discussed at my school, ya know, kind of just as ways to kind of maybe do something that makes a little bit more sense, and so when we talk about this process of ranking teachers or evaluating, what we really want to do is we want to ensure that across the board, our students have the very best and I kind of feel like the people sitting in this room are kind of the very best, and we work really hard and we do a good job. And so, with the talk of EVOS and all these things that have come down, the question then becomes how do we, how do we pull that together, how do we show that our kids are learning even though it's not traditional. It's not you know, we know our students are making growth over here but you can't perform here and God forbid you make them take 6 hours to take a test, I mean that's just really unreasonable and I don't think anybody at a district level office would say that that's okay, or at least I would hope that that's what it is. So, kind of in our mind, could we go use the system that has been given some thought to where we are today, so we're looking at teacher evaluations, the COT and we're looking at an SLO, and you know there are some changes coming down through you know the system because it's been a little tricky to actually manage that. And then with the student growth measures, is there a way using some teacher input and ya know some good statistical things, that we can create a system where it's I don't want to use the word weighted because that sounds very scary, but we create a system where we give more weight to what the teacher has control over. So, if we were to break it down into numbers, could 50% of the evaluation be your COT, because that's the one thing you know you can control. Anytime your kid takes a test, we can say with a certain amount of certainty, this kid will pass, this kid is going to come close, ya know we can't always predict but we do know ya know what's going to happen, so if we have some system where we are held accountable for what we actually do, and then we have the smaller pieces, so our SLO would carry a lower weight but the SLO does show growth, and I think we're all learning how to incorporate that in our teaching and then we do have some outlying student growth measures whether it be MAP, or some, I don't really know how high school works so I completely apologize but I know that there are ways that you guys have to show that as well and maybe if those aren't the right numbers statistically, we come up with different numbers we make some sort of

rubric because what we don't want to do is we don't want to, we don't want to hold teachers accountable for things that have no control over (that makes sense) and we also don't, and one of the things that I keep hearing is that ya know, and I've heard from people who are self-contained Special Ed teachers, who send their kids out, I've heard them say well if you do this they won't take my kids. And to me that's crushing. I currently teach in the computer lab so I see everybody, I used to be a classroom teacher and I would gladly take those kids on because I knew I had support. But if we were to do something where the greatest piece that we had control over was what we were rated on the most, and then we did look at those because we can't ignore them. We can't ignore them. But, people would not be afraid to take on three students with a pretty big IEP or ya know a new teacher who has, a new teacher who has legitimate concerns, whether it be 24 to 26 kids that she really was not prepared to deal with or a population that they weren't prepared for, like you were talking about or even having the skills to talk to a parent. We can't control what happens to our kids. I mean we can all sit around and tell stories about who didn't show up and who's on a truancy plan. So, if we could come up with something, and even if it's not a percent measure because that scares people sometimes. Our rubric, where it's kind of like a sliding scale because the challenges at every single school are going to be different, not only socially but behaviorally and academically. I mean when you look at what you two do, God bless you. I don't know how you click, I don't know how you check off all the boxes. You know and just your (inaudible) I really don't know how you do it. So, if we could create some kind of system under that number two, the improving, how to we train people to use this information and make good goals. And then to piggy back on that my question becomes, when we put this into place, whatever it may look like, whatever ya know we choose it, whether, I know we're going to three tiers, ya know the SLO, the observation, and the student growth. Can we put it out for an initial year, because sometimes when we say we're going to do this, everybody panics, and you get to the end of the year well that was terrible, I don't know why we ever did this and it really becomes, it's almost like a mind game, it's like oh we're stuck. So, if we could put a plan in place that includes district perspectives because I mean you guys look at it all the time. But teacher input and principal input and say okay, here's the plan, it's an initial plan. We're going to work this plan and at the end of the year we can give feedback. So, when we did our SLO for the first time, I made a 1. And it was kind of like ooh I don't really think I knew what I was doing, and I even asked my principal, who's going to look at this and she was like mmm, I mean she didn't know.

Panel Member: (46:34) We do feel like we do a lot of things that aren't looked at.

Panel Member: (46:38) And I get that, but if we have this idea that it's an initial year that as we go along we can fix the problems because every school and every teacher can't be treated the same way. I mean ultimately the end goal is the same. We want excellent teachers producing a good, ya know we want children to come out learning the skills they need. So, if we could have the idea that okay here's the game plan, let's work on it. Ya know did this take too long, did this even make sense and when we get to the end of the year we can tweak it based on everyone's experience and then move forward with the actual plan.

Panel Member (47:16) Something that I think is missing in the whole plan is not understanding who's responsible for what. I want to know who's responsible if there are teachers in my school that are not achieving what they should be achieving with their students. Should there not be somebody at the... If we're accountable for the students what the students do, who's accountable at the upper level to make sure that teachers aren't doing what they're supposed to do. I don't see that. Another thing that I would like to say too, is when they're teaching and learning, I, we talked about the socio-psychological needs of the students, and I think there needs to be more than effective activities that need to occur in the

classroom. I could say that about the high school, I mean I teach a French and Spanish so the beauty about it is, the administrator just comes in, oh he's speaking a language great, bye.

(Laughter)

Panel Member (47:53): I can say that at the high school I'm working in, I teach French and Spanish, so, the beauty about it is administrators come in and say oh he's speaking another language, great, bye. So, it's kind of like, he seems like he's doing, they're all doing stuff.

(Laughter)

Panel Member (48:17): (Inaudible)

Panel Member (48:20): Well, my assistant principal was a former Spanish teacher so but I have had other ones come going oh, oh good job man. But, um, so, I have a little more liberty with the standards because ours are so much broader but I mean I will tell you that, we're all guilty of this, there are those where we walk in and we're just like I'm going to get through the day, I'm going to get through the day and there's always one day some kid is going to ask me a question that has life skills. And I will have ninth and tenth graders like will ask me about student's loans and I go and talk them about all the student loans for an hour and a half. I'm talking to ninth and tenth graders about numbers for an hour and a half and you could hear a pin drop because it's something that they hear about every single day and its real life. And they want to know about these things and we are really doing an injustice to them not offering an effective, affective curriculum. And, I know that we did have, what was it? Excuse me, it was overcoming obstacles but the thing was I think what happened was I'm going back to responsibility. I don't think that it was really communicated well to schools of who was going to be responsible in that school to make sure that is implemented correctly and how are they going to be held accountable. Because some people might its guidance, some people might say the assistant principal, I mean I think that needs to be clear and that needs to be added into learning and teaching

Panel Member (49:54): Thank you. So, going back to what you were saying about a plan for evaluating teacher's um this was my first-year teaching so my S-O-O was assigned to me. And I'm not super informed about it but, to me, it came across as your goal improving reading and writing, go! Of course, like that's what I want to do, I want to see all my students improve in reading and writing. I think if we can make it more deliberate if I could have my goal be ok you have 4 ESL students let's make your goal improving their word recognition skills. You know, something that is much more deliberate, much more focused, I think that would help me grow as an educator and it'll be more realistic for my students.

Panel Member (50:40): I'm trying to see where my comments fall under. (inaudible). The past two years I've been learning a lot about um the stereotype threat and social biases and, um, what's another point I wanted to make? I'll start with the stereotype threat first and that's something, if you haven't heard it before, it's pretty much um like for African American students they already go into tests with certain anxieties because they're African American. For girls, they sometimes go into math classes with certain anxieties because they're girls, for boys they go into reading and writing with certain anxieties because they're boys. And that's something that falls under the stereotype threat and I feel for teachers, we all should know about, it's something we all should know about because I've just learned about it and I feel like when I began teaching like 5 years ago and I started with English language learners so about 90% of my classroom was Spanish. So, I immediately went out and got Rosetta Stone, Spanish for Dummies, like I did all these things so that I could do the basic commands in Spanish so I knew, at least, how to get that

management under control. So, I feel as though all educators need to have this class in biases because sometimes we come into the classroom or students come into our classroom and we assume how the student will behave or what the student will be able to learn based on their socioeconomic status, based on their parent's education, based on if we had a sibling there before, we automatically assume oh you're going to be like your brother or sister. And I feel as though that plays a lot into how we teach the student based on our perceptions of them and it ties a lot into the testing environment and I don't know where it came from but it really starting to bother me that the classroom and the schools are bare during the testing time. Like it just makes me feel like the students are walking into a prison and I hate to put it that way but it makes me feel like everything is bare, nothing is there, nothing's on the wall like there's no encouragement around them. Like I feel as though we should be able to hang a banner or I feel like we should, at least, put pictures around the room of people that are important to them so when they're sitting at the desk they can look up at a picture of their mom or their grandma and say I'm do my best for this person. But for the wall to be bare, I feel like it raises that feeling of oh I'm not going to do well.

Panel Member (53:27): This is true.

Panel Member (53:29): Right, because even moving from one house to another, I immediately put a picture up. If I, like when I moved into the house with my husband, something must be up on the wall because if it's not I feel different. And for them I know it raises anxiety, because for my kindergarteners, they notice everything. If I hang up a new picture, as soon as they walk in, they're like Mrs. Span when did you put that picture up or when did you hang up my picture with my work? So, for them to walk into a room for third, fourth, fifth grader for there to be nothing on the wall after they've been learning in this environment for so long, I feel as though it does do something to them. And I'm still trying to figure out where this fits in there, I feel like there's something that we can do, I feel like it shouldn't be bare and empty because I don't know. I just don't like that feeling for myself even being a monitor at one time, I just, I don't know that just my take. Oh, the arts, that's what I wanted to say, we're dealing with a different generation. My students learn so much through music, from their site words, I feel as though my students would have learned their site words without YouTube, I honestly, because that's how they express themselves. And I was at one conference where one woman said that she had a ninth grader that couldn't read, he was reading like on a third-grade level. But they did a project during Black History Month where he could draw using a rubric a picture of Martin Luther King and use words inside of his picture of why he was influential. Would he be able to read a passage and answer an 8multiple-choice question? No. Would he be able to read a question and answer an open-ended essay? No But he is able to draw and through the drawing he could use words, I think he probably used words like maybe from a speech he had copied but he could articulate it through the art and I feel as though that's something that a lot of them mentioned before we have to bring inside of the school so that parents don't feel like they have to go to this school to get that, I feel if we go to a school and we see what's working let's bring it to where we are so that our students don't feel as though they have to stand outside and wrap around a building to get a ticket to be the lucky winners to go to this school. Every school should model what the student needs so that they don't feel like they have to go to this school or my teacher, my student has to get this teacher to be successful. I just don't feel like that's fair to students and I'm sick of people saying and I had a comment on my Facebook today oh I'm going to leave Charleston County School District and go to a private school and I almost deleted that person as my friend. Because that's an insult to me because I'm a public school teacher and I will advocate for public schools but we have to advocate for ourselves and we have to stop being lazy and saying oh well go to this place or go to that place. Because I will never tell anyone, I teach at Charleston Progressive Academy and that's the best school for, to me. And I'll never say you know we're not doing it here so go to this school and I feel like a lot of

parents are doing that because they don't trust us and we don't trust ourselves. We don't have the efficacy that we need as educators and it's showing because we're losing out on kids and we're losing out on parents.

Moderator (57:01): We have time for, maybe, one more comment and we're right here. I know you're right here (inaudible) and maybe if we don't have anyone in the audience we want to make sure and see if we have any teachers in audience that would say anything but we would like to let (inaudible) get the closing remarks.

Panel Member (57:14): So, this last comment goes back to the evaluation process but it really falls under managing resources. So it's my understanding that if we were to proceed with the EVAS system that runs through the state and that's something we have to, not purchase, but we have to pay for to have that system evaluated and run and so my question is instead using that as the process for using those student growth measures and putting them through some sort of formula to kind of figure out the best the way to show that student growth, is there a way that we can come together and allow that happen through our Office of Assessment and Evaluation? I know that with MAP scores, as the MAP proctor, I print off reports for my principal and on May, whatever the date was that we finished, May 27, I'll just throw that out there, I can print a report for every single classroom that said the percentage of students that met their growth goals and I feel like if we're going to reign in some of our finance systems to make some of these things happen, then that's where it needs to take place. Now I will say I'm a bit ignorant, I don't know exactly what office does, you know, that might be a remark that's not even valid but maybe if we're going to use the systems we have in place, use the office to have the data because if the EVAS system does take a year to process all those numbers, my fear, as a parent, is that you have an ineffective teacher in front of kids for an additional year that we don't need to let go on. Kind of like you said, who's responsible for making sure the teachers, in whatever the situation is, if that teacher isn't performing the way we would like them to what have we done in a year's time other than kind of let them go when we could be providing better resources and support to those teachers.

Panel Member (59:24): That might be a coaching mechanism and not a punitive one. It just seems to me that everything is punitive and nothing is coaching. I'm sorry, but everyone here went through adept, it's a bunch of paperwork. I didn't learn much from doing it, I wrote 44 pages of stuff and I was overwhelmed (inaudible) teacher.

Moderator (59:54): So, do we have any teachers that came in after? That would like to speak before we have the final comment? Is your smile saying yes?

Panel Member (1:00:11): Sure. Thank you. So, I was here last week for the meeting as well. Some of the topics that were discussed, as I was taking notes, I was writing out my concerns as well. And the concerns about the extra things put on teachers this year, and the amount of Mondays you have to meet takes away from the teacher and grade level planning. I have planning one time per week that's how many planning periods I have. One day a week for 40 minutes. The kids were over tested, was one of the comments I heard. MAP does not accurately show all students progress. The loss of instructional time due to testing and accommodations, that is one of my concerns. I teach special education and the accommodations for testing that we were told were researched based and you trial and error, I was told that the amount of instructional time that it takes away from the classroom, is worth those MAP results. I can tell

you that, what I do in the classroom can give you a much better picture of what my students can and can't do. I can promise. Like I said last meeting, I have a 4th grader who is learning to read primary level sight words and CVC words. Doing basic single addition and subtraction, learning to write a simple sentence. So, he can't even write a sentence on his own. When he takes the SC ready and SC pass, on his age grade level, 4th grade, that does not show any progress that he has made. None. Because he can't read it anyways. And yes, he can have oral accommodation in 4th and 5th grade, but he still doesn't understand it and it doesn't make any sense to him. And so, one of my questions was about the 3-tier evaluation, and I don't know if EVOSS is still being considered as one of those. I know we had to put in our student's names, the and percentage of time we teach them for the MAP test and the SC Pass test, but my concern is that that will not show anything about how effective of a teacher I am. Because my students don't show progress that way. So even if it's 25% or 30%, it won't show you any progress, because that's not how my students are measured accurately. I heard somebody say all schools and teachers can't be evaluated the same, which I absolutely agree. Even subject areas. I mentioned at the last round table meeting, about special ed, and there was one teacher up there, and even though we're a small percentage of the population, we're still out here. And so I don't know how many of you teach special ed up there, none. We're not represented up there. So, piggybacking on the diversity and one size doesn't fit all, the special education teachers are out there and we don't feel represented, and we don't feel like the evaluation system is fair for us as well. [Moderator: Just so you know we have these meetings every week, and you're more than welcome to join the circle.]

Panel Member (1:04:51): So, coming from a school that does not have a good reputation, there's a lot of violence, actually quite scary, there were a couple times this past year I was quite terrified and huddling in a closet in the dark in Code Red. I think the biggest problem for schools like that is lack of communication and lack of trust between the parents, the administration, and the teachers. I mean we have no contact with the parents, not from lack of trying. We call, they don't answer, we ask them to come in, they don't come in. We had a situation towards the end of the year where we had multiple students with OSS for fighting, and the parents would drop them off at school, and turn their phones off. We had parents come in and say, "I'm sick of dealing with them, they're your problem during the school day." So you know, when you're in a situation like that, and I have 24 other kids to be teaching, and we have these kids who- it's the way they're raised. They go home they hear the fighting they watch the fighting. I had students tell me that they've seen people shot in their streets since they were 7 years old, how do you mend that, and how do you bridge that gap, and how do you say okay that's happening out their, but in my classroom, you must do x, y, and z, and learn mitosis and meiosis. And so, I don't have any answers, especially being a first year, so that's something I would love to see more effort some help put in to see parents in the school, to get the parents talking to the teachers, get the parents to somehow- and I know it's because they work two or three jobs, they don't have time to come in, they don't have a car, they can't get there, they have 4 other kids they're dealing with. I don't know how to make that connection stronger, but I feel like that's the main issue. My other big eye-opening experience, was I came into this school, and we had no related arts. We had gym, no related arts. No recess. These are 10-14-year-old children, they need to move, they need to think, they need to be creative. You

cannot tell them to sit still for 8 hours straight and cram English and math at them. And that's what we were told as teachers we do. We started doing the Achieve3000, hour of reading every morning, which, I think is a great program, and I think it did make a lot of progress which was awesome. But it's a lot to ask those kids to sit still and do and behave the way that we were asking them to behave. So, thank you to the district who said half way through the year, "you need related arts." But then the problem was that then we got one art teacher. We have 1000 kids. We got maybe I think we had a [] program? Maybe? We have no organized sports. And there's no music. So, it was said "you have to have related arts" but then we had no support with that. And I was next door to our poor art teacher, who was just the kindest, sweetest lady who tried- she tried so hard, she had 45 kids in the classroom. They would just beat the crap out of each other all day long, she didn't know how to handle it, she was in the PACE program so she never taught before. Someone came in to do her [], kids were fighting in the back, she was told "no thank you, we don't want you back, goodbye." And it was a huge loss. She was an amazing woman, who tried- I mean everyday she would be in my room in tears because she cared so much and wanted to do better. So, I think the related arts are such a huge part of it, especially when we have these kids that don't know how to interact. It's tempting as a teacher to say, "okay we're doing independent work on your iPads quietly" because then they don't fight and yell at each other. But that's not teaching them how to actually interact and work together. So, I think more related arts, and somehow getting these parents involved. We have to bridge that gap somehow.

Panel Member (1:09:50): Just a last closing remark, it's not the related arts, in not special area, it's academic arts, because they get so much out of that.

Gerrita Postelwait (1:10:10): I just wonder what to say that won't sound like platitude. Right? Because sometimes you can say things that sound platitudinal like but you mean it. So, we are trying to listen deeply to what you're saying and we look forward to the time where we can have dialogue about part of this, but these meetings are set aside to listen. It's hard to listen to a lot of what has been said, but particularly when for example we want to explain other than MAP testing we are doing the minimum that is required by the federal and state government. Do we think that it's unfair for some children to have to take those tests? Yes, we do. And are we working hard to get that changed? Yes, we are. But in the meantime, we are required to do certain things. However, on the real question that was raised tonight about assessments, what is really helpful, and how do we know we're making progress? So that our kids are able to step out of CCSD and into something that is beneficial to them. And how soon do we know that we have indications that what we're doing isn't enough, and we need more resources targeted in specific ways. But never would we have intended to tell someone, "your child isn't going to make it." What we intended to do was tell ourselves, at this rate, we probably have some indicators here that we need to do something different, and we may need to do it over longer periods of time. So, you can see how we strain wanting to get into discussions about how to do some of what you're suggesting. And how to separate those things over which we have some control, with those things which we need to learn to manage well. But tonight, I'd just like to comment quickly on this idea of looking at ADEPT which is the state required evaluation system for teachers- we started the process just got into it a little bit last month and having some

teachers come in and look at what we're required to do, and offer some suggestions. The idea that the spirit is within the parameters- the latitude that we have let's try these things, this is the best collective wisdom that we have about how to conduct evaluations and about how to use the results to improve. How to identify those who are doing-making outsize growth with kids, success with kids in very difficult situations. What are they doing and what kinds of supports are they receiving, so we can do more of that. It's the spirit in which we want to enter the conversations moving forward. The notion that we could involve lots of voices, craft an idea that we would pilot, that we would test for a year with everyone knowing we're going to come back and revisit it is a marvelous, refreshing, freeing kind of idea. So, these listening sessions are proving invaluable to us and we look forward to continuing them in the fall, and maybe become dialogue sessions. So, what I can tell you is, we're trying to take careful notes, and summarize what we think the key take away were, and we will continue these conversations. This is how we are going to do business moving forward. This isn't an isolated event. It's clear, we really have to have better- communication starts with listening not telling. And so, we're trying to start by understanding the perspectives of teachers so we know how to be more responsive inside of the parameters in which we're working and always in service of insuring that more kids leave our system with better life options than many of them have right now. So, thank you all for coming, we look forward to continuing the conversation with those of you who'd like to be here next week and the next week, the July 4th week, we're off but we will continue Wednesdays. Won't be Tuesdays but Wednesdays around the circle through the end of July. And when the school year starts, we're going to create some more structured ways to do this. Thank you all very much.