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FERGUSON COMMISSION MEETING

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RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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JANUARY 20, 2015

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WESTVIEW MIDDLE SCHOOL

17

1950 Nemnich Road

18

ST. LOUIS, MO 63136

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20

5:27 p.m. to 9:03 p.m.

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Reported by Suzanne Benoist, CCR, CSR, CSR-IL

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3 FERGUSON COMMISSION

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5 CO-CHAIRS:

6 Rev. Starsky Wilson

7 Rich McClure

8

9 MEMBERS:

10 Rev. Traci deVon Blackmon

11 Daniel Isom

12 Scott Negwer

13 Bethany A. Johnson-Javois

14 Gabriel E. Gore

15 Brittany N. Packnett

16 Rose A. Windmiller

17 Rasheen Aldridge, Jr. (not present)

18 Grayling Tobias

19 Becky James-Hatter

20 Felicia Pulliam

21 Sgt. Kevin Ahlbrand

22 Patrick Sly

23 Truman Robert "T.R." Carr

24 Byron Watson

25

1 (Whereupon, the hearing began at 5:27 p.m.)

2 CHAIRMAN RICH MCCLURE: Thank you all
3 for being here. My name is Rich McClure, I'm one
4 of the co-chairs of the Commission and on behalf of
5 Reverend Starsky Wilson, my partner and fellow
6 co-chair, and the commissioners here tonight we are
7 delighted that you're here. Thank you for coming
8 here, thank you for being interested in education
9 and child well-being and we're looking forward to
10 learning a lot tonight. We'll have folks coming in
11 so please make them welcome and we do have a full
12 agenda so we appreciate your participation and your
13 willingness to be here to help us learn from you.

14 As has become our custom we are very
15 pleased to open our meetings with an invocation and
16 tonight we have Mariah Jones who is an 8th grade
17 student here at Westview Middle School and we are
18 really delighted Mariah is here and she's going to
19 come and provide our invocation.

20 Mariah.

21 MARIAH JONES: Thank you.

22 Lord, please bless us with a peaceful
23 and successful meeting. We ask for safety of the
24 leader of the Commission and its members. Please
25 fortify the members with wisdom, motivate the

1 teachers to be devoted in the midst of all that is
2 going on. Give them the necessary patience to help
3 us succeed, help my peers to connect to positive
4 influences, help us to develop into strong
5 community members and leaders through working with
6 the Ferguson Commission. We ask for peace for
7 everyone affected as well as safety for all. Amen.

8 CHAIRMAN RICH MCCLURE: I'd like you
9 to please join me in thanking Mariah, but also
10 thank her family who's here in the back row with
11 her, thank you Mariah and thank you Jones family.

12 We're very pleased to be hosted here
13 at Westview Middle School and the principal at
14 Westview is Mrs. Valeska Hill and she's come to
15 offer greetings so let's show appreciation for the
16 kind hosting they've done for us here at Westview.

17 MS. HILL: Good evening.

18 Let me try that again, the people
19 behind me were louder than the people in front of
20 me. So let me try that one more time.

21 Good evening and welcome to Westview
22 Middle School. Okay. Turn to someone and say it
23 is a great day to be a Ram. Again, the people
24 behind me were just a little louder than the people
25 in the audience so let's try that again. It is a

1 great day to be a Ram.

2 Again it is our pleasure to host this
3 wonderful event. It is our hope that the
4 designated group, they're able to come together and
5 make some magnificent recommendations so we can
6 move forward as it relates to the issues that we've
7 been faced with. We at Westview Middle School are
8 going to keep on keeping on and we know we can only
9 do that with community support so again thank you,
10 we know you could have been any other place but
11 instead you chose to fellowship with us here at
12 Westview Middle School.

13 Again, on behalf of Superintendent
14 Dr. Spurgeon and Riverview Gardens School District
15 we appreciate your attendance and we hope that you
16 learn something tonight that will make a difference
17 in tomorrow's youth.

18 Thank you.

19 REV. STARKY WILSON: We again thank
20 Mrs. Hill for the opportunity to be here today and
21 we thank young Mrs. Jones for her invocation as
22 well.

23 We're glad that all of you are here.
24 My name is Starsky Wilson, I'm to serve as co-chair
25 of the Commission and more than anything else I'm

1 really excited by tonight's conversation quite
2 frankly because it is an extension of a
3 conversation that we began on January 10th with a
4 vibrant and vital group of young people on the
5 campus of Florissant Valley Community College.
6 Tonight we focus on educational inequity and child
7 well-being. This issue was ranked among a list of
8 about nine different disparities listed in the
9 executive order that created the Commission.
10 Education was listed at the top and so we have
11 ordered our work since that very first meeting on
12 December 1st to function to prioritize those areas
13 that the community has prioritized to gain
14 community input on these issues and then hear from
15 those who may know, maybe be able to provide us
16 with some recommendations on the way forward and
17 path forward for our community.

18 The young people that gathered, just
19 about a little under 200 of them, on January 10th
20 at the summit discussed what they need to be safe,
21 supported and healthy in their homes and their
22 neighborhoods. That information will be set as
23 kind of ground work for the beginning of tonight's
24 dialogue as well by some of the facilitators who
25 were with us in that meeting. We will have the

1 opportunity to build upon the momentum that's been
2 building around educational issues throughout our
3 region, we'll hear from those who are experts in
4 the areas of child well-being but more than
5 anything else I think it's important that we will
6 begin with the voices of young people reflected
7 into this room for you from that January meeting.

8 We invite all of you to be a part of
9 the open mic session, we will as is our custom have
10 a period where we'll have an open mic and have the
11 opportunity for your voices to be heard in this
12 meeting from this mic to the entire group. We'll
13 also have the opportunity to break out into smaller
14 groups to have dialogue within those sessions as
15 well to continue to amplify the voices of our
16 community. We will also on tonight's standup
17 another working group around these issues of
18 educational inequity and child well-being. We have
19 been guided throughout our meetings and sessions
20 quite handedly by Rebeccah Bennett from Emerging
21 Wisdom with support from Lurna Godwin and the team
22 from Vector Communications. They are currently
23 making it through the aisles getting to you some
24 important keypads to make sure you get one in your
25 hand but right now I want to transition to Rebeccah

1 Bennett who will give us guidance on the way
2 forward. Please welcome her as she gives us
3 leadership.

4 MS. BENNETT: Good evening
5 Commissioners.

6 Good evening everybody.

7 REV. STARSKY WILSON: Rebeccah could
8 I interrupt you for just one second? I forgot to
9 do two things.

10 First of all we are missing, one of
11 or commissioners is ill and home today so we're
12 going to invite your thoughts and prayers for Kevin
13 Ahlbrand who is not with us but we also want to
14 lift up that today Happy Birthday is in order for
15 one of our commissioners, Reverend Traci Blackmon
16 celebrates her birthday today. So we let folks
17 know at the last meeting that gifts were welcome so
18 if you have them you can see her at the end of the
19 meeting.

20 Rebeccah.

21 MS. BENNETT: Well, I have a birthday
22 in two weeks, can I get some gifts too?

23 Good evening everybody. We are
24 thrilled and delighted that you are with us this
25 evening. You will have noticed that you received

1 keypads for some audience polling that we are going
2 to be doing this evening. Some of you have been
3 through this before so if you have please provide
4 coaching to your neighbors, if you have not been
5 through this before though this is an opportunity
6 for us to get oriented. This keypad, raise your
7 hand if you've used one of these before. So many
8 of you but not all of you. You'll notice that the
9 buttons have numbers and letters and so what we'll
10 do is when you see, you'll look at questions,
11 they'll give you options, when you see the option
12 that most closely approximates or resembles your
13 answer you simply click that button. Okay? If you
14 make a mistake and you decide that you want to
15 change your answer just push another button, this
16 will cancel out your previous answer. Everybody
17 with me? Okay.

18 So what we're going to do is get
19 started by doing that audience polling, we'll have
20 a practice question that will ask you what your
21 favorite color is and we'll talk to you about when
22 polling is open and when polling's closed and then
23 we'll go into the demographic questions and
24 activities.

25 So Ms. Jarrica if we could begin.

1 So our very first question is a
2 practice question. What is your favorite color?
3 You will note on the right-hand side there's a red
4 box that says polling is closed so if you would
5 push on the clicker right now nothing would happen,
6 it's not registering. So wait until that's green
7 and it says polling is open.

8 So what's your favorite color? You
9 have a number of options: A, black; B, brown; C,
10 blue; D, green; E, orange; F, purple; G, red; H,
11 yellow; I, white and J, other. So we ask you to
12 select one. Polling is now open. We have about 15
13 seconds remaining.

14 All right. We had 101 responses and
15 almost one out of every four, little more than one
16 out of every four of you said blue is your favorite
17 color, one of six said purple and one out of six
18 said red. So you got the hang of this, fantastic.

19 All right, we're going to go through
20 the others fairly easily. Jarrica if you would.

21 In what geographic area is your
22 primary home or residence located? A, St. Louis
23 City; B, St. Louis County; C, St. Charles County;
24 D, Jefferson County; E, Franklin County; F, St.
25 Clair County; G, Madison County; H, Monroe County

1 and I, other.

2 Polling is now open. Please make
3 your selections.

4 Okay. Polling is closed. 64 percent
5 of you, almost two-thirds of you said you are St.
6 Louis County residents and nearly one out of three
7 said St. Louis City residents.

8 Now we'd like to know in what
9 geographic area is your primary work or where do
10 you attend school. So we asked A, St. Louis City;
11 B, St. Louis County; C, St. Charles County, D,
12 Jefferson County; E Franklin County; F, St. Clair
13 County; G, Madison County; H, Monroe County or
14 other for I.

15 Polling is now open. You've got five
16 more seconds.

17 So almost six out of 10 of you work
18 or go to school in St. Louis County and almost
19 three out of 10, a little more than three out of 10
20 in St. Louis City and then the rest are spread.

21 Let us continue. With which gender
22 do you identify? A, female; B, male; C, other or
23 D, decline.

24 Polling is now open. Five more
25 seconds.

1 So six out of 10 of you in this room
2 who are voting are women, roughly four out of 10 of
3 you are men with some identification as other.

4 Let us continue. How would you
5 describe your ethnicity or race? A, white; B,
6 black or African American; C, Hispanic, Latino or
7 Spanish origin; D, Asian; E, American Indian or
8 Alaskan native; F, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; G,
9 other or H, decline.

10 Polling is now open. A few more
11 seconds.

12 Okay. So again roughly six out of
13 you identify as African American, little more than
14 three out of 10 identify as white and six percent
15 of us in the room identify as other.

16 Let us continue. In what age group
17 do you belong? Select one. I should note here
18 that your responses are completely anonymous so you
19 can be truthful. Are you A, 21 and under; B, 22 to
20 34 years old; C, 35 to 44 years old; D, 45 to 54
21 years old; E, 55 to 64 years old; F, 65 and over or
22 G, do you decline to respond.

23 Polling is now open. You have about
24 five more seconds.

25 So we're pretty evenly split here.

1 The largest number, one out of four, is between the
2 ages of 22 to 34 but we also have a large number of
3 55 to 64 year olds and 35 to 44 year olds so fairly
4 wide distribution.

5 Let's continue. Now this is the
6 fifth meeting of the Ferguson Commission and we'd
7 like to know if you joined us for previous
8 meetings. So if you have participated in no
9 previous meeting A is your option, B if you've
10 attended one meeting, C is you've attended two
11 meetings, D if you've attended three meetings and E
12 if you've attended four meetings.

13 Polling is now open.

14 So almost six out of 10 of you have
15 not attended a meeting before but the rest of you,
16 four out of 10, little more than four out of 10
17 have attended previous meetings.

18 Great. So our polling activity is
19 now done. These clickers or keypads will not open
20 your garage door, they will not change the channel
21 on your television so we will come around and
22 collect them. Lest you have a useless piece of
23 equipment at home.

24 Anybody else have a keypad? Great.
25 Looks like we've collected them all.

1 All right. So for those of you who
2 have attended a previous Commission meeting you
3 know that it is our custom to share with you what
4 the insights were that came out of the previous
5 meeting. Some of you joined us in the past so no
6 doubt you've participated in the small group
7 discussions or those sorts of things, some of you
8 may not have so it's always a good thing for us to
9 do to reflect on the wisdom of the community that's
10 emerged from earlier sessions. So our last session
11 was on January 10th and it was a youth summit so
12 what we'd like to do now is share with you what
13 came out of that youth summit, it certainly is a
14 way of not only informing you but it's a commitment
15 to our principles, one of which is transparency,
16 breaking down this community input. You can also
17 find these documents and presentations on our
18 website. So this is an opportunity for us to share
19 the youth summit polling results and discussion
20 findings and I'm going to be joined a little later
21 in this conversation by our youth conversation
22 leaders that actually led our small group
23 discussions.

24 So we do something with the keypad
25 results, we document and each week we can see or

1 each meeting we can see what the gathering of
2 attendees or community attendees looked like. At
3 our last meeting we had 144 people in attendance,
4 roughly six out of 10 were residents of St. Louis
5 County and roughly four out of 10 were residents of
6 St. Louis City.

7 Also we asked people again where they
8 worked or went to school and again roughly six out
9 of 10 were residents of the county and a large
10 group either worked or went to school in St. Louis
11 City, so about three and a half out of 10.

12 We asked about gender, again almost
13 as in this room six out of 10 were women at that
14 session as well and three and a half were men,
15 roughly, out of 10.

16 So two out of our three attendees
17 were African American at our last meeting and
18 roughly two out of 10 were white and then we had an
19 array of people who identified in other ways who
20 also participated in our meeting.

21 Nearly five out of 10 were under 18
22 so this was great, remember this was a youth
23 summit, so roughly half or almost, yes, about half
24 were under 18 and eight out of 10 were under 35 so
25 we really had a large group of young people, that

1 was the focus of the meeting.

2 And then when we asked about whether
3 or not they had attended a Commission meeting most
4 had not, roughly eight out of 10 had not.

5 As with this session we typically
6 begin after we do the update in terms of what came
7 out of the preceding meeting. We had an
8 opportunity for community input fairly early and we
9 started with a youth open mic session and then we
10 had small group discussions for youth that were
11 really mixed on family and homes, they were focused
12 on schools and they were focused on communities. I
13 should say that there were older adults that were
14 in attendance but the target demographic was 14 to
15 24 and we asked them not to participate in terms of
16 the conversations but if they had some input or
17 insight they wanted to make they could write their
18 thoughts down on cards. We wanted to protect that
19 space for the young people to control it and to
20 guide the discussions. So we've got some
21 presenters who are coming but I'm going to get us
22 started.

23 From the youth open mic we heard a
24 number of comments but there were four types of
25 comments that came up most frequently. We heard

1 about police brutality and harassment, that black
2 youth are often negatively stereotyped and police
3 unfairly target or routinely disrespect them. We
4 heard that race relations was really important and
5 that St. Louis is divided, separate and unequal.
6 They wanted a region, they were aspirational, they
7 really wanted a region where black lives matter,
8 where young people were unafraid and where society
9 felt fair and equitable. We asked them too to just
10 share with us their thoughts and part of what we
11 got were a number of comments that were about the
12 impacts of the crisis that emerged and so we heard
13 that young people had missed school because of
14 delays in response to the crisis early on and that
15 a number of young people had gotten into trouble
16 trying to express themselves. So what they really
17 want to do is be heard and sometimes when they are
18 not they engage in other types of behaviors that
19 capture the public's attention, and then the last
20 sort of bucket of comments that came up frequently
21 in the youth open mics was about youth activism and
22 involvement and we heard the young people had
23 really been at the forefront of our recent protests
24 and so they should be acknowledged for their
25 courage and their activism and that we really need

1 to do a good job of listening to their voices and
2 valuing their opinions and perspectives in our
3 decision making, in our system reform and community
4 reform events.

5 So that's what we got out of the
6 youth open mic. I'm now going to invite Brittany
7 Farrell to come, she was one of our facilitators
8 for our family discussion and she's going to give
9 you the insights that emerged around families and
10 homes.

11 MS. BRITTANY FARRELL: Hi, good
12 evening. So I facilitated the family and homes
13 portion of the youth Ferguson Commission a couple
14 weekends ago and the question was what do you need
15 to be safe, supported and healthy in your homes and
16 families. And the number one thing was this very
17 first one, encouragement and empowerment and what a
18 lot of the young people said was they needed adults
19 to tell them that they're capable of greatness and
20 to make them aware of what they were capable of
21 achieving, and the second common theme that came up
22 amongst the young folks that were in the room were
23 good communication and mutual understanding.
24 Family members need to talk and listen to one
25 another.

1 Then we had guidance and supervision
2 with the youth saying that they needed direction
3 from their parents.

4 Awareness and acceptance was the
5 fourth most common, families need to accept
6 differences and families need to know their culture
7 and their history.

8 The fifth would be the loving and
9 caring which is love being the foundation in which
10 to build a family and then came truth and
11 transparency, families needing to be honest and to
12 share life's truths and then security and that's
13 physical, emotional, spiritual and financial
14 security.

15 The second question that day was what
16 should be done to build stronger, more stable
17 families? And the first most common thing with the
18 young folks was demonstrating respect so valuing
19 all members of the family. The second was
20 increased awareness and exposure, exposing the
21 young people to other cultures, mind sets and
22 values.

23 The third was maintain quality time,
24 spending time together as families to strengthen
25 relationships. A lot of young people said things

1 like going to the movies, having family dinner
2 together, they value that.

3 Providing guidance was the fourth and
4 it was to help shape the young's way of thinking
5 and help shape their choices and their decision
6 making, and the fifth was strengthen community
7 connections so connecting with neighbors and the
8 community, it takes a village to keep a healthy
9 family strong or to keep a family strong and
10 healthy. So.

11 Alexis is going to present the next
12 session that was at the last Commission meeting
13 which is schools.

14 ALEXIS: How's it going, good evening
15 everybody. My name Alexis once again, you all
16 responded, that's nice. So I led schools, and
17 shout out to the young people because they're
18 beautiful, just wanted to throw that out there and
19 the first question was what do you need to advance
20 your learning and success in school. One of the
21 big things was class discussions on various things
22 but most importantly education about Ferguson and
23 education about racism. They felt that a lot of
24 their teachers and a lot of their administrators
25 were too quiet on this issue and they wanted people

1 to speak up especially where they spent eight hours
2 of their day.

3 Another thing was school improvements
4 in terms of curriculum, career readiness and family
5 connections. Teacher involvement and commitment, a
6 lot of young people said that teachers weren't
7 speaking on it, they were quiet, they were timid
8 about it and when I spoke at Parkway North I was
9 told they weren't allowed to speak on it up until a
10 certain point when they had, they had to go through
11 a training so the young people wanted the teachers
12 and the administrators to speak up more and to have
13 more commitment on this issue because it's a big
14 deal.

15 Another thing was teacher
16 recruitment, training and more engaging
17 instruction, and the final one was teacher and
18 staff support of youth protests and activism. A
19 lot of young people were upset that they couldn't
20 do walkouts, a lot of the young people were upset
21 that they couldn't do die-ins or stand up for what
22 they believe in on an issue that's so controversial
23 and so important whether you disagree or not within
24 their communities.

25 The other question what was can you

1 do to improve your school success? One of the big
2 things, activism, and they want to get involved in
3 activism by making their voices heard and by making
4 their voices and issues also heard. They wanted to
5 do things like participate in school walkouts and
6 die-ins.

7 The second one was communication, by
8 sharing opinions, and they don't want to be
9 silenced even if their views are unpopular which I
10 think leads to better discussion, the teachers
11 should know how to facilitate that so these
12 discussions can be had whether we disagree or don't
13 because we all disagree and agree in life, right?

14 The third thing was good
15 communication makes people smarter which is true,
16 you know, if you know how to talk you get
17 somewhere.

18 Higher education, so learning about
19 college and various careers, research pathway
20 programs from high school to college and the work
21 force so that it's not always about school, right?
22 Sometimes we get thrown into the world and we can't
23 find a job without a degree. It's important for
24 the young people to know how to maneuver through
25 that and they're smart enough to recognize that's

1 the best needed.

2 The third was learn about scholarship
3 opportunities and perhaps because everybody can't
4 afford to go to college, right?

5 Student involvement and
6 accountability which means getting more involved in
7 school, whether that be extracurricular activities,
8 debates, walkouts, die-ins, protesting in the
9 cafeteria with signs. One young man said that he
10 wanted to be able to have his lunch period and he
11 wanted there to be like an open mic session where
12 kid's could come up and say what's on their mind
13 about school and then the kids would discuss it at
14 lunch and that's how they would spend a portion of
15 their lunch period and I thought that was fair.
16 Another thing was get peers involved in school
17 projects and activities and be accountable for your
18 actions.

19 One more, I apologize. Wait, is this
20 still me? Yeah.

21 The final question was what community
22 supports do you need to be successful and they said
23 they needed after-school programs and school
24 programs are getting cut because of funding. There
25 needs to be more community centers for youth

1 because they need places to go when they get out of
2 school, especially if their funding is being cut.
3 If they have community centers they don't have to
4 go stand out on the corners and get in trouble for
5 soliciting, loitering and things like that.

6 Paid student internships not only so
7 they can learn the value of financial
8 responsibility but so they can put that money into
9 their savings account for college that they can't
10 get, so they can start working their way towards
11 college.

12 School community discussions,
13 connections and actions. School community
14 discussions, connections and actions and school
15 should be a place for youth to talk about the
16 issues that matter and connect more deeply to their
17 communities. Once again people spend eight hours
18 in a building like this, they should be able to
19 talk about what's going on outside the window. And
20 youth-focused events so where youth can come and
21 it's just youth, things like Dare dances and I
22 don't know if they said that, that might be old,
23 but Dare dances and things like that, that's
24 important.

25 All right, that's it.

1 JESSICA: Good evening, my name is
2 Jessica. I facilitated the conversation about
3 community needs. So we talked about what do you
4 need to feel safe, supported and healthy in your
5 neighborhood and in your community. So the first
6 thing that they talked about, the main thing that
7 came up was positive law enforcement and citizen
8 relations. So we talked about communication and
9 that came up the most across the board.
10 Communication, communication, communication. They
11 want to be able to talk to police officers, talk
12 about what's going in their community. Respect,
13 empathy and forgiveness. They talked about the
14 need for forgiveness on both sides so young people
15 need to forgive, police officers need to forgive,
16 they talked about that reconciliation.
17 Improved media coverage, so they
18 didn't like how the protests were getting
19 illustrated in the media. There was one young lady
20 who worked for the newspaper at her school and she
21 said, you know, I'm learning all this new stuff
22 about how you're supposed to portray stuff and
23 you're supposed to just talk about the facts and I
24 feel the way they're portraying in the media is
25 unethical and if I know that then they should now

1 that. Right?

2 They talked about youth
3 accountability and better management of their image
4 and behaviors so they said we want to take
5 ownership over how we're being portrayed as well,
6 some of that falls on us as well. They talked
7 about reduction of violence and murders and they
8 want to break the cycle of violence and crime in
9 their community.

10 Next we talked about priorities. So
11 they said police aggression, brutality and
12 harassment by police. One of the ladies, young
13 ladies said, you know we just want them to smile at
14 us, you know, just show us that you care. We only
15 see them when there's a problem and we want to
16 build a relationship.

17 They talked about night life, they
18 said after 8 p.m. there's nothing to do for people
19 under 18 and they gave the example of the Loop and
20 they said, you know, the Delmar Loop. They said
21 the actions of a few, you know, we were all
22 punished by that and so they would like to see
23 where they have something to do after 8 p.m. and if
24 there's issues then that person's punished but not
25 everybody.

1 They talked about race relations and
2 interaction, again communication, they want to be
3 able to talk, and again they brought up how they
4 weren't really able to talk about these issues in
5 their school and they want to be able to do that.

6 Unequal access, education and
7 community resources so a couple of the kids had
8 gone to, had moved and gone to a couple of
9 different school districts and saw the disparity.
10 They said in one school I had all the books that I
11 needed, in the other school we didn't have any
12 books and so they want to see equality throughout
13 the districts.

14 They talked about stuff to do in
15 their communities, some kids in some communities
16 had plenty to do, others didn't.

17 Community pride and development. The
18 need to respect community assets, the need for more
19 retail development and amenities. So they talked
20 about we need to take pride in our community in
21 terms of parks, you know, when we have this public
22 space let's all chip in and make sure that we keep
23 that up.

24 Community safety, so again violence
25 is prevalent in the communities.

1 Then we talked about strategies and
2 interventions and so creating night life for teens,
3 so again creating something where teens can go at
4 night because they said that's when really the
5 problems arise. If we had something to do then
6 there wouldn't be as many issues. Eliminate the
7 inequalities in the different school districts,
8 improve law enforcement and community relations and
9 so with that they said it could be really simple,
10 we just want to sit down and have pizza with the
11 police officers and just talk and build a
12 relationship.

13 They talked about supporting youth
14 programs and so under that they said programs that
15 help them to think about how to deal with conflict,
16 programs that helped them work through that and
17 promote positive self image.

18 Promote personal development and
19 responsibilities so that kind of fits into the
20 programs and increasing involvement in politics and
21 policies.

22 So those were the things that they
23 wanted to come out of that.

24 MS. BENNETT: So if you would join me
25 once again for a round of applause for our amazing

1 youth conversation leaders and discussion leaders.
2 They were truly wonderful in running groups for 144
3 young people over a three and a half hour period,
4 three and a half to four hour period so the report
5 that accompanies this is probably 20 plus pages and
6 it has deeper dialogue with all of the information
7 in it if you'd like to read more, specifically what
8 the comments are, they were all demonstrated but
9 these were sort of the high level insights that
10 emerged from that.

11 We are now at a place in our meeting
12 where we invite public commentary. This evening we
13 do have a topic, right, so our focus is on
14 education and child well-being and if your remarks
15 are around education and child well-being we
16 certainly want to hear them. We also know,
17 however, that you may be in this room and have
18 other things that you want to say to the Commission
19 that you think are important that are not
20 necessarily focused on that topic so we're going to
21 take the next 25 minutes or so to open up the
22 conversation so that we can hear from you, I'll be
23 documenting insights over on the board so if you've
24 got comments about education and child well-being
25 or general comments that you'd like to make to the

1 Commission our next period is to do so.

2 I'm going to call Laurna back because
3 we asked you all to sign in if you were interested
4 in speaking and she will invite you to come speak
5 to the Commission using a fish bowl process.

6 MS. GODWIN: Good evening.

7 Good evening everyone. My name is
8 Laurna Godwin and as Rebeccah said I'm going to
9 take you through the public open mic period. We
10 have 25 minutes to do this, we are going to start
11 out with our topic this evening which is education
12 and child well-being so when you came in we asked
13 you if you wanted to speak so to be equitable in
14 who gets to speak I am going to pull names from
15 this fish bowl, you have two minutes, I will time
16 you, when your two minutes is up you're up, you're
17 finished and I will then call several others and
18 for about eight minutes we will do general
19 comments. So first this is the fish bowl for those
20 who wanted to talk about education and well-being.
21 And when you come up please state your name and
22 your title for the Commission.

23 So the first one is Anthony Levine.
24 Is Anthony still here? And after Anthony Deanne
25 Tusant. Is Deanne here? Please raise your hand.

1 MS. KRAMER: Hello, I'm Tina Kramer
2 and since we're talking about education we
3 definitely have to mention disparity as far as the
4 amount of experience that the teachers have as well
5 as their education level. If you go to Brentwood
6 or Clayton in their high school almost 100 percent
7 of their teachers have Masters degrees. When you
8 go to St. Louis City you have almost 30 percent
9 that have Master degrees. Now these are the future
10 leaders of our communities, however, and our, in
11 our areas that are less funded we get the teachers
12 who've only had experience for maybe five years on
13 average and then they're going to the Claytons and
14 the Brentwoods. So is there something that we can
15 do, is there a program that we have that would
16 distribute equally the amount of experience as well
17 as the education level of the teachers that are
18 teaching our high school and middle school
19 students?

20 That's it. Thank you.

21 MS. GODWIN: Our next speaker, and
22 then after that get ready David Jackson. And then
23 Amir Brandy.

24 MS. TUSANT: Good evening. My name
25 is Deanne Tusan and I am a parent as well as a

1 future educator. I attend Harris Stowe State
2 University and I'm an elementary education major
3 and the reason why I chose to do that is because
4 I'm fed up. I started my quest as an advocate for
5 my children and now I'm an advocate for my
6 community and as a future teacher I want to be able
7 to be placed into my community and educate my
8 children but the problem I have is the politics. I
9 want to be able to teach, I don't want to play
10 politics. Children don't understand that, they're
11 at school to learn and I want to be a part of that
12 and I wish that someone would listen and take
13 politics out of the schools and start placing these
14 children first.

15 Thank you.

16 MS. GODWIN: Thank you.

17 David?

18 MR. JACKSON: Good evening. First of
19 all let me clarify, my name is David Jackson, I'm
20 president of the Board of Education for the City of
21 St. Louis. I believe our number is slightly higher
22 than 30 percent of personnel that has MPAs but also
23 we are the highest number of P.h.D.s in any school
24 district in the state.

25 I also would like to thank this

1 Commission and the opportunity because of the last
2 time that I presented was at the first meeting that
3 we, my statements about other organizations
4 throughout this region that have not addressed
5 racism in this region, there seemed to be
6 arguments, those same organizations are now
7 stepping up to the plate and having an impact on
8 having the discussion. Better Together is one of
9 the organizations who have really been vocal on not
10 only racism but disparity in the region.

11 As far as education I would like this
12 Commission to consider, and it would be nice if you
13 could invite some legislators who whatever
14 recommendations you make is going to take the
15 legislature to enact those and to have an impact
16 and it would be nice if we looked at the funding
17 formula for the public schools in the state of
18 Missouri, it's hard. It is under-funded
19 approximately between 6 and 700 million dollars.
20 There is also an issue because a lot of parents,
21 they voted for gambling because they thought the
22 gambling revenue was going to help public education
23 but what happens is the governor takes those
24 revenues from the gaming and he withholds that
25 amount from the public education budget and so

1 rather than the budget increasing it actually
2 maintains at the level it is because the governor
3 utilizes those dollars and he can do that and I
4 think that's one of the things the Commission needs
5 to include in their dialogue, that somehow we need
6 to prevent the governor from messing with our
7 utilizing those gambling revenues.

8 Thank you.

9 MS. GODWIN: Thank you.

10 As Amir comes up after that we have
11 Sharleesa De Witt? Pruitt, I'm sorry. Sharleesa
12 Pruitt. And then Jeff Forest.

13 MR. BRANDY: Good evening. My name
14 is Amir Brandy and I have been made aware that
15 there are business-minded people who have targeted
16 the St. Louis public system for private business
17 and they are, the Hedge program is what they were,
18 what I was told that this was about and what they
19 are doing is they're determining the level of
20 education based on your zip code. They were
21 determining the level of the educators based on
22 your zip code and from that they are determining
23 the course in which you are directed based on your
24 educational experience. This is why we had issues
25 like what we seen in Normandy where people were

1 concerned about the kids from Normandy affecting
2 their test scores. If education is distributed
3 equally across the state I would imagine that they
4 all pulled from the same source and if they don't
5 pull from the same source then we have the
6 responsibility to make sure that these kids are
7 equally educated so that they qualify to go to the
8 Ivy League or whatever college they choose, they
9 are educated enough to be able to score high enough
10 to be eligible to go to these schools and I think
11 that as the Commission moves forward that they
12 check into this and make sure that that is the
13 case.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. GODWIN: Thank you. As Charlene
16 comes up --

17 MS. PRUITT: Sharleesa Pruitt.

18 To piggyback off on what Amir said my
19 concern would then be the dollar amount per child
20 attendance to the school system. How do we govern
21 the equal distribution of the attendance dollars
22 per children? And I say that because when my
23 children, which are now grown, but when they
24 attended Ferguson Florissant which is a shared
25 school district, different governments but shared

1 school districts, the children at that time were
2 \$1,062 per attendance day but when it came to
3 distributing those funds the Florissant side of the
4 school district got the majority of the monies. My
5 children shared books so they never brought
6 homework home, Florissant had two and three
7 computer labs within one elementary school, things
8 of that nature. So how do we govern that
9 attendance fee per kid to be equally distributed
10 throughout the school district?

11 MS. GODWIN: Thank you. Next is Jeff
12 Forest and then after Jeff will be Mona Johnson.

13 MR. FOREST: Good evening Commission,
14 how are you tonight?

15 My name is Jeff Forest I'm the acting
16 dean of business and human development, Florissant
17 Valley Campus, St. Louis. And our college
18 president is also here, Ruby Curry, she is
19 president of the campus and we're here because we
20 believe in the work of the Commission and we
21 believe that it's important to stand with you as an
22 educational institution and to be a partner and to
23 be a source of hope, healing and reconciliation for
24 our community. One of the things we also want to
25 encourage you to think about is St. Louis Community

1 College as you draft plans and procedures and
2 processes in terms of helping our students succeed.
3 We believe in the underdog. We are an all access
4 college, that means if you come in with a GED, if
5 you come in with no ED we welcome you. We teach
6 you and we partner with local high schools such as
7 Hazelwood School District to ensure your success as
8 a student who once attended Wellston in their
9 childhood and a graduate of Normandy, the Vikings,
10 also as a graduate of the University of Missouri
11 St. Louis, this community is in my blood. Not only
12 is Florissant Valley Community College located in
13 the heart of Ferguson, Ferguson is at the heart of
14 what we stand for so we want just to encourage that
15 you as you look at what we should do in the
16 educational area, and if you're looking for a
17 partner to continue to work with you in the success
18 of our students here in this community and
19 throughout the City of St. Louis, St. Louis
20 Community College is here you for.

21 Thank you.

22 MS. GODWIN: Thank you Jeff.

23 As Mona comes up after Mona will be
24 Kevin Potter.

25 MS. JOHNSON: Yes. I am a first

1 graduate of my family of high school, I went on to
2 graduate from SLU then got two Masters degrees,
3 became a teacher, been an educator for 14 years. I
4 stayed in the hood because I'm like I lived here my
5 whole life, why would I leave. That was in 2003.
6 The things that I encountered as an educator, the
7 police not knowing who I am and treating me like
8 they treat, you know, people. I then became an
9 advocate for education, against education
10 corruption and industrial prison complex and when I
11 say industrial prison complex I mean from the
12 police to the courts to the prisons and at one
13 point I was ran out of my house in St. Louis City,
14 you know, the book is coming soon, but I ended up
15 in Canfield Apartments and I was volunteering at
16 the NAACP working on the prison committee and
17 that's when I realized like education is so
18 important, I mean these kids couldn't write and a
19 lot of times the judges try to help them and say
20 file this form because they don't have money for
21 lawyers, the lawyers are railroading, there's just
22 so much involved and you do not know unless you go
23 through it so that's why these kids who are going
24 through it they need to know how to read and write
25 like nobody's business. We don't have time, like

1 the lady said for the politics, we don't have time
2 to wait for people to get schools together that's
3 been failing for 20 or 30 years, these kids need an
4 education right now and right now there's a bill,
5 SB 129 that they tried to pass three years ago,
6 we've been fighting them in court and these kids
7 have an opportunity at Normandy and Riverview to
8 get transferred to schools where they're first of
9 all safe because we all know that you must be safe
10 first. The solution is not to open a new school
11 that have all kids whose parents are poor, that's
12 the problem. I don't care how much money you give
13 a school, if the kids are poor in the school they
14 would be preyed upon, that's a fact.

15 MS. GODWIN: Time.

16 MS. JOHNSON: That's our problem
17 right there. We need education right now. There
18 was one black person on the jury and he fought for
19 literacy and education and integration and that's
20 what we need.

21 MS. GODWIN: After Kevin we'll take
22 one more on the topic of education and child
23 well-being and that is Tina Kramer.

24 MS. KRAMER: I already spoke.

25 MS. GODWIN: Okay. You all switched

1 over here. Kevin Potter then.

2 MR. POTTER: Good evening Commission.
3 My name is Kevin Potter and I am the president of
4 NewPOT Solutions Charitable Foundation, I'm also a
5 former Missouri Tiger football player and Chicago
6 Bear and I'm also a State Farm agent in St. Charles
7 so I am heavily rooted into Westview and I was
8 excited to pull off my shirt and show that I earned
9 this T-shirt as being a mentor in some of the
10 programs that we support but I earned a lot more
11 respect as a result of supporting Westview, the
12 Westview champions football program and my
13 foundation supports the development of student
14 athletes so our mission is to support development,
15 mentor the personal, the academic and develop the
16 potential of student athletes and we do that
17 extremely well, we've done a great job with
18 Westview, we've got a few other coaches that are
19 here and we're doing so well that the Suburban
20 North Middle School Program has asked me to serve
21 as a commissioner so I'm acting, providing
22 structural development, education issues and we've
23 got a lot of good programs going on but it's kind
24 of like I've adopted a lot of babies now so we got
25 five football teams. Dr. Tobias from Hazelwood

1 that are part of the program then we have U City,
2 Jennings, I think Normandy and Westview and I've
3 also found a sponsor to take care of the helmet
4 issue, the helmet you got a lot of issues,
5 concussion issues and things like that, probably
6 more than half the teams wouldn't be able to play
7 because of compliance issues with concussions so I
8 found out a sponsor to support that.

9 What I want to do is I want to be
10 able to come and present to you on the ideals that
11 we have to support and possibly be of service to
12 the Commission. And I think I've got a few members
13 on that.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. GODWIN: Thank you Kevin.

16 MR. FOX: Thank you. My name is
17 Patrick Fox. This is my second Commission meeting,
18 I was here for the one that dealt with the police
19 and dealing with that issue. That evening we had a
20 lot of vigorous, active, boisterous protesters. I
21 kind of missed that. I don't miss all necessarily
22 the loudness and the confrontation but I miss them
23 not being here. This Commission is a result of
24 those protesters and yes, we fix the police issue
25 and the municipal court issue, we will improve

1 lives but if we get these two issues fixed,
2 education and preserving and developing healthy,
3 intact families these are the game changers that
4 make generations do better and if somehow or
5 another this Commission can energize hundreds of
6 people on the street demanding better schools,
7 better teachers, more funding, making grades not
8 babies, waiting to form your families until when
9 you're ready these are the things that pull people
10 out of poverty, keep people out of the street, get
11 them employed and make a better society. Solve the
12 police problem certainly, solve the municipal court
13 problem but the poor will still be with us if
14 they're not educated and they don't come from
15 healthy families.

16 Thank you.

17 MS. GODWIN: Thank you.

18 Okay. Now we're going to switch to a
19 few general comments before we divide into
20 break-out sessions and move into the gymnasium so
21 all of you get a chance to speak in small groups.
22 Okay?

23 So Clifton Kenny? And then after
24 Clifton get ready Bob Miller. Bob Miller here? If
25 not I'll take the next person.

1 Okay. And then after Bob Alexis
2 Templeton, I saw her, she is one of the people that
3 spoke earlier, I don't know if she's still here.

4 MR. KENNY: Hello. Clifton Kenny,
5 community and student activist.

6 Although we protest for greater
7 transparency in the criminal justice system the
8 issue of fairness in the education system is a
9 number one priority for me. I attended Hazelwood
10 public schools my entire life before attending
11 Lutheran High School North and I know by firsthand
12 experience that our schooling systems over two
13 different worlds in two different environments. At
14 times our schools have allowed me to believe in the
15 education system and at times, the majority of
16 times our schools simulate my alarming distrust
17 with the education system. I strongly believe that
18 our current education system has become a ladder to
19 systematic poverty. I believe schools should
20 emphasize on the individual rather than
21 standardized testing. Innovative education reform
22 is the number one issue I'm out there protesting
23 for and I believe Teach For America is a leading
24 agent in that. Teach For America saved my life.
25 If it weren't for teachers in the program who

1 taught me to believe in myself and seek social
2 justice for my community I wouldn't be where I am
3 today. We don't need anymore clock in clock out
4 teachers, we need more programs like Teach For
5 America and I hope the Missouri legislature gets
6 their act together and passes significant education
7 bills because the youth is ready, the youth is
8 energized and the youth is prepared to go battle
9 anyone who obstructs educational justice. I guess
10 to have equal education I presume means the
11 beginning of prosperity for all and I guess that's
12 why politics rejects it. I challenge our leaders
13 to create policies that end the notion of school to
14 prison pipeline, I challenge them to stop cutting
15 funds for early and secondary childhood education,
16 create policies that build social equity and
17 equality, touch lives, inspire our young, teach our
18 young men and women to be free and make a
19 difference.

20 Clifford Kenny.

21 MS. GODWIN: Bob Miller. Then after
22 Bob Alexis, if Alexis is still here.

23 MR. MILLER: Do you know how much of
24 the lottery goes to the schools out of a dollar?
25 \$.25. So you said it quite right. Where does that

1 other 75 cents per dollar go? I call that
2 S-T-E-E-L -- no, S-T-E-A-L. \$.25 out of a dollar.
3 That leaves some in someone's pocket somewhere,
4 doesn't it? And we heard about Teach For America,
5 I see a member up there. I'd like to follow up and
6 see how many of your six or seven candidates
7 started out the school year at Normandy, I hope all
8 six or seven of them are still there. I hope so,
9 okay? And then I'm for fixing the schools right
10 where they are whether it's Riverview Gardens or
11 Normandy but it's going to take time and it's going
12 to take a lot of time, Dr. Jackson knows that. And
13 state appointed superintendent, not Adams,
14 president of the board, good man and it's going to
15 take time so I'm urging you parents, I'm urging you
16 parents look into transferring these students. If
17 they're going to be there for another two, three,
18 four years get them into a, Riverview Gardens, I
19 guess it's Mehlville, Francis Howell for Normandy,
20 get them transferred because things aren't going to
21 be changed in a year or two years or three years
22 and your student if he's going to be there two,
23 three, four, five more years he's going to probably
24 fall behind four, five or six more years so it's up
25 to you. There's a good website out there called I

1 think it's C-E-A-M, Ceamteam dot org and they'll
2 help you, they'll help you do what has to be done
3 to transfer your child. It's gone through the
4 courts as someone mentioned, it's free
5 transportation, if it's to Francis Howell for
6 Normandy it's free transportation, if it's for
7 Riverview Gardens to Mehlville --

8 MS. GODWIN: Time.

9 MR. MILLER: Thank you.

10 MS. GODWIN: Thank you Bob

11 And our last one for this session is
12 Ruth Baker.

13 MS. BAKER: Good evening. I came up
14 for a general comment but to, since we're talking
15 about education, I didn't know what the topic was
16 but I think for starters we ought to stop
17 miseducating all the children because Christopher
18 Columbus did not discover America, so for starters
19 let's stop miseducating our children in the school
20 system.

21 But I think everybody likes a sale,
22 everybody likes that half-off sale, well I think
23 after the kids get out of school rather than
24 leaving them out to fend for themselves on the
25 street, people steal because they don't have, we're

1 not born to steal, and I don't like the negative
2 image that only black people steal, I don't like
3 that, not all but you know what I mean, 10 out of
4 whatever are all, they're black people that steal
5 and that's what's portrayed in the media. But if
6 we're going to have a sale I say rather than higher
7 another police officer at 50,000, I'm using even
8 numbers, 50,000 a year, rather than sending them to
9 prison at \$50,000 a year why don't we hire at least
10 three people with that \$100,000 and we won't need
11 that police officer or that next jail cell. So I
12 say let's do a half off sale at least and rather
13 than not have the, hire, because that's what the
14 chiefs are talking about, hiring more police
15 officers. If we had more jobs we would not need
16 more police officers so let's have, have a half-off
17 sale and hire three more people instead of a jail
18 cell and another police officer.

19 Thank you.

20 MS. GODWIN: Thank you.

21 That ends our public open mic period
22 for this meeting. Before we continue we're missing
23 three of these keypads. Did anyone not turn their
24 keypad in? If you have not turned in your keypad
25 just leave it up here please. There's nothing else

1 you can do with it. Thank you.

2 Now we're going to break out into our
3 small groups, the topics tonight are education and
4 child well-being. We are going to move into the
5 gymnasium which is diagonally there under those
6 cameras under the Bully Free Zone here at Westview
7 Middle School. There are two education break-out
8 sessions and two child well-being. The two
9 education ones are on the right-hand side when you
10 enter the gymnasium, the child well-being are on
11 the far side. The questions we are asking you both
12 are the same, what are your issues with education,
13 child well-being and what are your suggestions for
14 improvement with education and child well-being.
15 We have 35 minutes in there and then we'll come
16 back here, someone from each group will be asked to
17 report out for two minutes so if you'd like to do
18 that let your facilitator know, come back here and
19 report out and then we'll move to the framing of
20 this whole issue and we'll hear from some key
21 leaders in that area.

22 Okay? So we hope you will stay with
23 us, please move to the gymnasium now as quickly as
24 you can and decide which group you want to
25 participate in. Thank you.

1 (Break-out sessions held)

2 MS. GODWIN: Thank you, I hope all of
3 you found the break-out sessions worthwhile and
4 gave your input and as you know we selected one
5 person from each group to report out and they have
6 two minutes so since I'm up here I'm going to ask
7 for my group to report out first and that is Devon
8 and our group was one of the education break-outs.
9 So Devon. Damion, I'm sorry.

10 DAMION: So I'm going to try to put
11 35 minutes of heavy discussion in 120 seconds.

12 So I guess you can kind of sum up our
13 talk in terms of we have the title that maybe kind
14 of what happens outside the classroom really
15 impacts what happens inside of school and one of
16 the big issues that came up was the need for
17 wraparound services in the schools in terms of, you
18 know, to address the socioeconomic issues, things
19 like Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome and mental
20 health issues. There came the issue of tenure and
21 teacher accountability and that, you know, some of
22 the folks are saying that teachers do have to be
23 held accountable and that we can't put the teacher
24 tenure in front of the need to teach and, you know,
25 advancing the students and that also the other side

1 that teachers need to be able to teach and not just
2 teach to a test or to a certain score so we kind of
3 need to find that balance. Also suspension and
4 discipline came up a lot, that suspension in our
5 discipline system really doesn't work because a lot
6 of times when you suspend students we're giving
7 them just what they want, if they don't like
8 school, school is not what they need anyway and we
9 need to find alternative forms of discipline for
10 our kids. Also, there's not the same level of
11 teaching across the board in all school districts,
12 we said that some of our city schools do not have
13 as much education and they're not teaching in the
14 areas that they were trained to the level they are
15 in some of the suburban school districts, the
16 wealthier school districts.

17 And then we also need to make
18 legislators, policy makers just as accountable as
19 we do the teachers. We also talked about teacher
20 pay, we should make those that make decisions
21 accountable too, maybe come to the schools, sit
22 down, not just for a photo opp but they really need
23 to come and sit down all day and that that's kind
24 of a wraparound issue. Social workers need to be
25 able to focus on one school and not be spread out

1 so thin.

2 MS. GODWIN: Thank you so much.

3 And now from Monique's group it is
4 Scott.

5 Actually the podium's here so you can
6 report out to the Commission.

7 SCOTT: Okay. I'm not a big fan of
8 this kind of break-out process, doing this reducts
9 of all these ideas with little quips and proverbs
10 and it's hard to keep in content.

11 The thing I would emphasize first of
12 all there was a lot of common ground about the need
13 for early education and the emphasis on getting
14 kids oriented to learning early on and also a lot
15 of common ground on the disparities in funding
16 regionally and the difficulties we've had
17 politically in holding accountabilities over how
18 monies are spent, who's doing what in the education
19 system. There is also consensus pretty much on the
20 kind of home issues and, of safety and priorities
21 that need to be focused on the schools and where
22 resources are politically, frankly some people were
23 alarmed that all this money was spent on police
24 forces during this crisis and a lot of money
25 diverted from education.

1 Good sense about the need for
2 empowerment of kids in the formative years,
3 character building and diverse activities,
4 difficulty of having so many of these after school
5 activities cut and my pet thing, teach them civics
6 because if they want to speak, they aspire to speak
7 they need to know how to use that. Their
8 attentions also, there's kind of, this is prevalent
9 in the broader debate, we believe there are good
10 things about having choices and how kids, where
11 kids can go to school and what kind of curriculum
12 they can pursue and at the same time a real sense
13 that, of loss when local schools shut down and I'm
14 an advocate myself of that kind of localism, the
15 pride kids have and the identity that people have
16 and connections they have around local schools, I
17 hate to see them shut down and then --

18 MS. GODWIN: Time.

19 SCOTT: You'll give me 15 more
20 seconds.

21 One more thing is another interesting
22 attention is upon the emphasis on the basics of
23 things kids need to know to be better prepared, the
24 three areas, reading, righting, arithmetic to get
25 prepared for later education and also the need for

1 extracurricular options for kids.

2 So that's the best I can do with what
3 I got.

4 MS. GODWIN: Thank you.

5 And now we're going to move to the
6 child well-being groups and Adrian's group Susan to
7 report out.

8 SUSAN: We talked about issues that
9 we thought affected child well-being and then we
10 have suggestions for improvement. We made a
11 laundry list, actually a really long list so if you
12 have a minute maybe take a look back there.

13 A couple of the issues, everyone was
14 universally concerned about the physical safety of
15 children in the neighborhood. We talked at length
16 about that. One thing we also talked about was the
17 limited after-school programs and the limited
18 community programs. Because of the lack of those
19 programs it leads to young people with nothing to
20 do. One of the members of our group repeatedly
21 said, you know, there's just nothing to do and
22 because of that I know young people get into
23 trouble and have other things happen to them.

24 We also talked about the force of
25 home training, often, not just educating or helping

1 children it's helping the whole family so we talked
2 about parental support as well. Some of the
3 suggestions we had we talked about block monitors
4 and just talked about the force of decent street
5 lights in neighborhoods, that they make a
6 difference from a safety perspective. We talked
7 about landlord supervision, many families live in
8 homes where the housing is substandard but they're
9 afraid to complain because they're afraid their
10 rent will be increased if the building has to be
11 repaired or they'll be evicted and that affected
12 child well-being.

13 We talked about programs for conflict
14 resolution training as a way of addressing some of
15 the violence and gang-related activities in
16 schools.

17 We talked about the importance of
18 unity in the neighborhood, a lot of people talked
19 about their experience growing up in prior years
20 where people in the neighborhood watched out for
21 each other so that, you know, obviously has an
22 effect on safety and one final thing is we talked
23 about accountability, it's not enough to just set
24 up youth programs but people have to be willing to
25 come to the programs and to be, to take on the

1 roles that they say they're going to take on.
2 One of the people in our group talked about many
3 times children were signed up for youth programs in
4 the city, they might go for a sporting event and
5 then other people just didn't show up so the
6 program would be cancelled. But we have a long
7 list, so thank you.

8 MS. GODWIN: Thank you Susan.

9 And before I bring up our last person
10 who's going to report out I just want to mention,
11 just a reminder that all of the information that
12 was recorded inside as well as what you hear at the
13 Commission meeting will be on our website at
14 stlpositivechange.org. We have a transcriptionist
15 up here so you can read all of the proceedings that
16 were held in this room where all of us are together
17 verbatim and then we will type up the notes from
18 inside our break-out groups, say in a week or so
19 you'll see that on the website. But all the
20 previous meetings, all that information is on there
21 as well.

22 So with that Haquin Mitchell, there
23 you are. Great.

24 MR. MITCHELL: Good evening everyone.
25 I want to thank you guys first of all for being on

1 the Commission, we know that you guys have a big,
2 enormous job and we support you.

3 Our concerns kind of centered around
4 a couple of things and one of the topics we talked
5 about is the old saying it takes a village to raise
6 a child so one of the things that we talked about
7 mostly was we need more engagement with community,
8 families, parents, schools. Everybody just needs
9 to get more involved in the process of raising a
10 child because no one can do it alone. Nobody has a
11 book, manual on how to raise a child, most of us
12 didn't go to class or anything like that. Funny
13 how we have class for everything else but not the
14 most important thing, which is our children. So we
15 need to have more classes about how to raise
16 children from early in infancy stage.

17 Then we talked about the school to
18 prison pipeline, we have to stop that. We brought
19 up the point of if you put a biscuit in an oven,
20 turn it on 500 degrees and walk away what do you
21 get, it's going to be burnt, so what we're saying
22 is you're sending a child into a public school
23 system or any school system for that matter that's
24 not conducive to that child's learning and growth
25 that child's not going to be successful, there's

1 not going to be any factor in that, but.

2 We talked a lot about placing high
3 expectations on the children so that they can rise
4 up to our expectations instead of lowering
5 themselves to no expectations at all.

6 We talked about children raising
7 themselves and my program is called ACOG where we
8 have children's parents who are in prison, mother
9 or father are incarcerated, the other parent's
10 either involved in drugs or not involved in their
11 lives. We have 12 and 14 year old children
12 practically raising themselves. Grandma and
13 Grandpa doing the best they can but it's kind of
14 overwhelming to them.

15 The youth side we talked about the
16 cliché of -- it escaped my mind but love is the key
17 basically. Love is the key -- I remember now. If
18 a child does not know that you care a child does
19 not care to know what you know, something like
20 that. If a child does not know how much you care
21 about them they don't care to know what you know so
22 basically what we're saying is you have to show the
23 child love, you have to show the child they're
24 important in order to get the child to listen to
25 what you say to encourage them to be better.

1 We talked about more programs. The
2 other group talked about more programs. Of course
3 we cannot get this 35 minute topic into two minutes
4 so we encourage you guys to look more into what we
5 talked about and last but not at least we talked
6 about culture, really teaching children about their
7 culture so they know where they came from and they
8 have a good idea where they come from.

9 Thank you.

10 MS. GODWIN: Thank you.

11 Let's give a round of applause for
12 all of our citizens who reported out.

13 Thank you very much and now I'll
14 return it over to Rich.

15 MR. RICH MCCLURE: Okay. We're going
16 to now move into a part of our program where we do
17 some level setting and where we hear first from two
18 of our commissioners who have particular expertise
19 and career experience in these spaces. The reason
20 we're here tonight and the reason we have these
21 topics on the agenda is you all prioritized them.
22 At our first meeting we asked folks to tell us and
23 of the long list of disparities, the topics we're
24 talking about here tonight which were education and
25 child well-being were ranked at 68 percent at the

1 top of the disparity list and so this involvement,
2 these report outs have been incredibly helpful so
3 what we're going to do here is a little staging
4 management here so we're going to turn our chairs
5 around because Grayling you have some slides?

6 Commissioners go ahead and turn your
7 chairs around so you can see the slides. I'm going
8 to turn the podium around so Grayling can talk to
9 you as well as us and we're going to learn with you
10 so first we're going to hear from Dr.
11 Grayling Tobias, superintendent of the Hazelwood
12 School District, and then secondly we'll hear from
13 Becky James-Hatter, the executive director of Big
14 Brothers Big Sisters so we're happy tonight to
15 announce that Grayling and Becky will serve as
16 co-chairs of the education equality and child
17 well-being working group. We're very pleased that
18 they've agreed to provide leadership in this case
19 and they will be engaging our community and others
20 as we work through the great challenges of these
21 issues. So we're going to hear first from them and
22 then Starsky is going to introduce the second part
23 of our presentations.

24 So Dr. Tobias.

25 DR. TOBIAS: I was going to say that

1 was a quick presentation.

2 Good evening co-chairs, Starsky and
3 Rich, fellow commissioners and community. What I'm
4 going to do is to give you a brief picture of
5 education in our region but before I begin I'd like
6 to thank Maxine Clark from Build-A-Bear, she and
7 her staff compiled a lot of the information from
8 the Department of Elementary and Secondary
9 Education into a one page sheet and we may, with
10 our work group we may use that as a resource so
11 thank you very much Maxine.

12 Take a look at tonight's agenda
13 that's on the screen, we're going to take a look at
14 the state's accreditation levels, we're going to
15 look at how the state classifies accreditation and
16 also look at the St. Louis African American student
17 population by district. Then we're going to look
18 at poverty research.

19 There is an article in the St. Louis
20 Post Dispatch recently about poverty and we're
21 going to take a look at that research, it just came
22 out. We'll also look at regional poverty
23 information by district and then last I'm going to
24 share with you the 2014 Annual Performance Report
25 which is the Department of Elementary and Secondary

1 Education state report card.

2 Now, the Department of Elementary and
3 Secondary Education, the accreditation levels are
4 listed on the screen. If a district earned less
5 than 50 percent of the annual performance points
6 possible then that district is considered
7 unaccredited. A district is considered
8 provisionally accredited if it earned 50 percent or
9 more of the annual performance points possible. A
10 district is accredited if it earned 70 percent or
11 more of the APR points possible and a district is
12 accredited with distinction if it earned 90 percent
13 or more of the APR points possible.

14 So there are a total of 520 school
15 districts in the state of which 507 of those are
16 classified as accredited. 11 school districts are
17 classified as provisionally accredited, there's one
18 unaccredited district and one school district is
19 under state review. You see an asterisk at the
20 bottom right-hand part of the screen which lets you
21 know how many St. Louis other districts are
22 provisionally accredited, unaccredited and under
23 state oversight.

24 On this slide you will see the
25 African American student population percentage in

1 area school districts. I'll give you a moment to
2 view that.

3 In Saturday's Post Dispatch there was
4 an article and the article highlighted a report, I
5 know this may be hard to see but it highlighted a
6 report from the Southern Education Foundation.
7 This new report found that at least 51 percent, the
8 number of children who qualified under the Federal
9 program for a free or reduced price lunch is at the
10 highest in at least 50 years. In other words
11 during the 2013-14 school year more than half of
12 U.S. public school students lived in poverty. And
13 it also gives you the poverty percentages for each
14 state and just for a point of reference Missouri's
15 percentage is 45 percent. May be a little bit
16 difficult to see.

17 This slide gives you a snapshot of
18 the percentage of students who are eligible for a
19 free or reduced price lunch by district in the St.
20 Louis area. I'll give you a moment to take a look
21 at that.

22 This slide gives you a look at the
23 2014 Annual Performance Report percentages in the
24 St. Louis area. I want to highlight just some of
25 the improvements made by north county school

1 districts and the St. Louis public schools from
2 last year. Ritenour improved by almost nine
3 percent, Jennings improved by almost 13 percent,
4 Pattonville improved by 14 percent, Riverview
5 Gardens improved by almost 17 percent and the St.
6 Louis Public Schools had the largest increase in
7 the area of 18.6 percent.

8 REVEREND BLACKMON: Are those
9 accredited?

10 MR. TOBIAS: Those are the Annual
11 Performance Percentage by district, that is the
12 district report card and 100 is the top.

13 REVEREND BLACKMON: So Normandy
14 improved when it re-opened?

15 MR. TOBIAS: Normandy was one of the
16 few districts that went in the wrong direction.
17 Two years ago they were at 11 percent and now
18 they're at seven percent.

19 REVEREND BLACKMON: Thank you.

20 MR. TOBIAS: So I appreciate fellow
21 commissioners, thank you for allowing me to present
22 a regional picture of education and then afterwards
23 I think all of us who were giving presentations
24 we'll have an opportunity to be available to answer
25 questions that you may have.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. RICH MCCLURE: Thank you
3 Grayling.

4 So Becky you don't have slides so
5 we're just going to flip our chairs around.

6 MS. JAMES-HATTER: Good evening
7 everyone and thank you so much Commissioners, I'm
8 very sorry my back is to you, and more importantly
9 to the community. I'm looking around the room and
10 see so many of you that have been here several
11 times, keep coming back and I just want to tell you
12 how important this is so if I could just ask that
13 you plan to come to the next one and bring a friend
14 along because what we are hearing from all of you
15 is changing all of us so thank you very much.

16 For the sake of understanding, just a
17 couple of definitions. When we talk about child
18 well-being the context in which we're talking that
19 is birth to 25. The second thing I think you, is
20 probably pretty important to know about the
21 terminology is that it certainly intersects in a
22 massive way with education and it's also inclusive
23 of family well-being so tonight Rich Patton is
24 going to be introduced more formally after I speak
25 and he's going to present data on child well-being

1 and begin to talk about the specifics. But I
2 wanted to kind of set the stage tonight and beyond
3 about this conversation and as Rich said I'm the
4 CEO of Big Brothers and Big Sisters, I've been in
5 Big Brothers and Big Sisters in St. Louis for 20
6 years so I have a lot of experience but after I
7 listened to you in the break-out groups I'm pretty
8 sure I don't know any more than the rest of you do.
9 But I do have four thoughts that I hope will guide
10 the commissioners and all of us as we kind of wade
11 into this very deep pool.

12 So my first one is this moment is
13 all, I mean all about young people. The issues of
14 education and child well-being are the very heart
15 of the charge of this Commission. Teens, children,
16 teens and young adults have brought us to this
17 place. Someone said that tonight and it is because
18 of the death of Michael Brown, an 18 year old
19 teenager, and the relentless protesting of our
20 young adults who have us in this room tonight and
21 who are really preparing us for the real change
22 this region needs to undertake.

23 Number two, knowing is not the same
24 as understanding. Tonight we are hearing a lot of
25 information, we're going to get more information,

1 it's going to be relevant, it's going to be
2 qualified, it is going to be all of those things
3 but we have a simple question that we are going to
4 have to answer going forward and that is how well
5 are we taking care of our children. I would ask
6 that when we try to answer that question ask them.
7 They'll tell you if we're doing our jobs, if we're
8 loving them enough, if we're supporting them
9 enough, if we're protecting them enough. If we ask
10 our children how are we the adults taking care of
11 them we will have a very different sense and a very
12 different understanding. We're not going to be
13 surprised by some of the data, I'm sure you're not
14 surprised about some of what you already saw
15 tonight but I caution you not to get comfortable
16 with this information because just because we know
17 this information better again doesn't mean we truly
18 understand it.

19 Number three, what happens in schools
20 and in the classroom is fundamentally critically
21 important but it is not everything. Having access
22 certainly to a great education should be an
23 absolute and it is fundamental to child well-being
24 but there is a long list and you've already started
25 to hear it tonight, a very, very long list of

1 serious issues that too many children are facing.
2 We already have heard about the poverty rate, 51
3 percent for the first time of children going to
4 public schools are living in poverty. The
5 Washington Post has got a fabulous article in it,
6 you must go read it. It was just out. And on top
7 of poverty, which I'm not too sure people
8 understand what that really means, you've got a
9 pile on of other issues that happen in those
10 phases. Mental health, lack of basic needs, not
11 hearing incarceration, family instability and
12 homelessness and that is a very, very short list
13 and when you take that in its entirety our children
14 are living in the most chronic and traumatic
15 stressful environments, expected as they should to
16 excel, expected to be their very best but yet we're
17 not providing the adequate support. That can't be.

18 Now let me, I'm looking out at a
19 really highly engaged, intelligent group, I
20 listened to the groups, everyone in here is working
21 but we've got so much more to do but we also have
22 to reconsider a whole lot of what we're already
23 doing because if it was all right and enough we
24 wouldn't be here today. Child poverty is on the
25 rise, not the decline, and the kinds of stresses we

1 are allowing to happen is truly unacceptable.

2 And the fourth thing I don't want you
3 to forget as we move through this is we, the adults
4 of this community, must put our children first. It
5 is going to take encouragement to stare at this
6 stuff, to be creative. We have to coordinate
7 better, we've got to come up with bigger and better
8 answers to the problems but as one of the groups
9 said as we're being creative as adults do not
10 forget at the end of the day it's about these kids
11 feeling like we love them and care for them. We
12 cannot start this work tomorrow simply thinking
13 that we just need to scale our current ideas with
14 some new resources, that is not going to do the
15 trick and if we fail at loving and caring for our
16 children then I see no sustainable path to ensuring
17 the full potential of our community.

18 I close with a couple of things, a
19 challenge to our Commission, to all of you, that we
20 are going to have to generate ideas that are bigger
21 than our fears and we're going to have to create
22 opportunities and the support systems so that we do
23 not leave those that we have typically left behind
24 and left out to try to figure out for themselves
25 and I want to be absolutely clear on this point,

1 that none of us can be undertaking this as an act
2 of charity, this work has got to be about inclusive
3 prosperity.

4 Thank you.

5 REV. STARSKY WILSON: I want to thank
6 Commissioners Tobias and Commissioner James-Hatter
7 for their leadership in accepting this charge and
8 for the framing that they have given us for going
9 forward and in some ways the charge they have given
10 to us. Where I come from after Commissioner
11 James-Hatter you just pass the hat, open the doors
12 to the church and be done. No.

13 One of the things we also want to do,
14 we've been very intentional in these sessions is to
15 offer an opportunity for us to learn more as we go
16 into these work groups and also to provide a bit of
17 education for the community as a baseline for the
18 work that we're doing going forward so we really
19 are appreciative for those of you who have stayed
20 for this portion, not just to speak but to hear
21 from some of the leaders in the community in some
22 of these respective areas so we want to give thanks
23 as we prepare to hear presentations from three of
24 such leaders, first coming up and, I will just
25 introduce them all for the sake of time, first

1 coming up will be Mr. Rich Patton who has for more
2 than the last 20 years led Vision For Children At
3 Risk, he'll provide some framework for the child
4 well-being landscape in the St. Louis region with
5 data and framing for us, then we'll hear from Tony
6 Neal from Educational Equity Consultants, he will
7 provide a focus on education disparities for our
8 region and information on why educational equity
9 matters and strategies to address them as is in his
10 area of consultancy and then we're quite blessed if
11 you're watching the slide from Dr. Tobias to have
12 Dr. Tiffany Anderson with us as well from the
13 Jennings School District where she serves as
14 superintendent who will provide some framing for us
15 on educational systems reform. You'll note that
16 she was at the top of two of those slides, number
17 one the percentage of African American students in
18 the district and number two, the percent of
19 increase of turnaround in the district under her
20 leadership so we're absolutely honored that she is
21 able to join us tonight so we'll invite them to
22 come and share in that order.

23 Mr. Patton.

24 MR. PATTON: Wish me luck, I've got a
25 clicker, I've got notes and people helping me.

1 I truly appreciate the opportunity to
2 make a presentation to the Commission. I'm a
3 public policy guy, I'm a St. Louis native, there is
4 not a more critical set of issues to the overall
5 well-being of this community and its individual
6 citizens and residents and children than the things
7 that this Commission is struggling with.

8 My goal here is to not get
9 overwrought. The primary public policy issues I've
10 addressed over the last 40 years, I'm sorry to say
11 it's that long, has been governmental structure and
12 municipal service delivery in the St. Louis region,
13 quality education and school desegregation and
14 promoting the well-being of children, and all three
15 of those things are tightly balled up in the issues
16 that this Commission is dealing with. My intent is
17 not too much to present data but to present a
18 picture of what I see is the big piece of the
19 puzzle, and a puzzle it is, what the big elements
20 are, what the big features are on the landscape
21 related to child well-being in the St. Louis
22 region. What are the moving pieces and what are
23 the pieces that should be movable that maybe are
24 not.

25 So I'm going to touch really quickly

1 on five things, one is our goal, what's the North
2 Star of the work we do? Promoting child well-being
3 and we need to understand what that is. What's the
4 current landscape in St. Louis related to the
5 status of kids. What are the risk factors we need
6 to reduce from a strategic standpoint to improve
7 child well-being and what are the protective
8 factors we need to promote and then in this, in
9 many ways might be the most critical but
10 establishing government and community capacity to
11 promote the well-being of our children, youth,
12 families and communities. We know what to do about
13 this across the country and in St. Louis. I think
14 in St. Louis we have a particular challenge with
15 our capacity or willingness to do that.

16 So the Child Well-Being Symposium in
17 which Reverend Wilson had a lead role in leading
18 this foundation. To say a big, fancy symposium at
19 the Federal Reserve Bank and International
20 symposium in November of this year and they
21 developed in conjunction with that the steering
22 committee and definition of child well-being. It's
23 behind me, I'm not going to read it. It is a
24 little abstractive, it's a little academic but it's
25 sure good enough. It suggests that child

1 well-being is achieved when children have attained
2 all relevant and appropriate developmental
3 milestones. Displaying capacities that we know are
4 associated with future success, such as resilience
5 and secure attachment and we're relating to
6 themselves and their peers in the world around them
7 as children.

8 The part of this I like is the part
9 that's in red, again I think almost intuitively we
10 have a sense of what child well-being is but this
11 statement puts it on us and on the community and
12 highlights the obligation of saying that each child
13 has a right to well-being and that it is the
14 responsibility of the child's community to create
15 those circumstances that best allow each child to
16 flourish. This definition recognizes that children
17 in different emotional, cultural and social
18 environments may be constrained in achieving
19 well-being.

20 I am certain from having worked here
21 and across the country we have not recognized that
22 here in St. Louis the way many other communities
23 have and I think that's the task that we're moving
24 toward.

25 The current landscape related to

1 child well-being, it's simple and it's dark and it
2 is not pretty. On average children in St. Louis
3 are about average, actually they're a hair above
4 average but we get there in the ugliest possible
5 way. We have a large number of kids who do
6 unusually well, who have an unusually high number
7 of their life needs met and on the other hand we
8 have a very large number of kids who do very
9 poorly, whose life needs are not met and who we do
10 not attend. Those stark disparities in child
11 well-being are often along racial lines and that
12 makes them inequities just not severities. It's
13 number of people cited and as you guys know poverty
14 is a primary factor in undermining the well-being
15 in children and it is worsening, it's not getting
16 better. Many, and Becky went down this list, many
17 children in our community are at risk as poverty,
18 unstable families, with schools and with health
19 care and on and on and on. The disparities in the
20 St. Louis region are longstanding and they are
21 persistent. We did our first report in 1991 and
22 the one thing that has remained true during that
23 period is those disparities have been maintained
24 and they have worsened. Areas where kids are at
25 risk move around, there is some change in the data

1 but those stark disparities have stayed in place.

2 Governmental proliferation and
3 fragmentation make it difficult to address problems
4 related to the well-being of kids.

5 So let me throw up a little data.
6 And it's easy to get lost in the data, if you want
7 to get lost in the data you can go to the Vision
8 For children website at www.visionforchildren.org
9 and click on the kid's data button and there are
10 about 40 indicators there of child well-being at
11 the zip code level for the five core counties of
12 the region so that's I forget, about 152 some odd
13 zip codes that make up the five main counties in
14 the region and there is zip code by zip code data.
15 Zip code data on the number of children living in
16 poverty runs as high as 46.3 percent within the
17 region, that's the 63106 zip code on the north side
18 of the city of St. Louis and there are nine St.
19 Louis area zip codes with child poverty rates above
20 30 percent. More than one in five children in 21
21 area zip codes, and that's 21 again of some 150
22 live in severe risk and there are areas that
23 average up to 23 percent of poverty.

24 According to the U.S. Census there
25 are 150,000 kids in the St. Louis region who face

1 risks of increased violence. This is a discussion
2 we have had for years, for decades I guess with the
3 Regional Chamber Association on Economic
4 Development, how well are we going to do in a
5 region with 150,000 poor kids at the core of our
6 region. And in terms of school achievement which
7 we know is the key to a lot of things including
8 economic opportunity. School achievement results
9 are typically 15 to 20 percent below state and
10 local levels in these challenged districts.
11 Community tendency is to shy away from the data,
12 when you hear bad news, I know in 1997 we used to
13 rank order the zip codes, we don't do that anymore
14 for political reasons but in our 1997 report the
15 63135 zip code re Ferguson moved into the high risk
16 category and that was with the then mayor, nobody
17 remembers his name, multiple times to hear how that
18 wasn't true. Rather than taking that information
19 as predictive and foreshadowing what might come of
20 the tendency was to shy away from that.

21 Maps. I love maps better than data,
22 you get it more quickly. This is a map of the zip
23 codes in the region, the highlighted zip codes are
24 high risk zip codes for children, youth and
25 families so if you want to know where we're not

1 doing right, where we need to concentrate attention
2 which is a composite map, basically an index, that
3 will point you in that general direction. On each
4 of the zip code indicators we have each of the risk
5 indicators, I bought a set of zip code maps for the
6 Commission to highlight on issue risks where those
7 risks are elevated but really it's one map. Once
8 you see the poverty map, once you see where there
9 are large numbers of kids in poverty you can go to
10 low birth rate, you can go to school dropout, you
11 can go to almost any map and you're looking at
12 essentially the same thing.

13 So what to do about it. There are a
14 lot of models in which to address this but a simple
15 one that we pursued and is certainly supported by
16 the research is to reduce the risk factors that
17 harm kids, that make it difficult for them to
18 succeed and promote child protective factors.

19 And this is a rundown on some risk
20 factors and this is a little complicated. There
21 are risk factors in the research at the individual
22 level, at the family level, at the community level
23 but these are things that are generally recognized
24 as key issues. Poverty obviously, single
25 parenthood is a risk factor, four or more children

1 living in the children's household, the lack of
2 high school diploma, the result of lack of quality
3 education and engaging in risky behaviors that
4 include violence, gangs, whatever it is. Community
5 disorganization which we see induced in a lot of
6 conditions in the metropolitan area and then this
7 is an emerging issue, and my background is not in
8 social work, my background is in policy, so.
9 Exposure to trauma and resultant toxic stress. We
10 have so many kids that are so imperiled that have
11 so many risk factors, that have so few supports
12 that they just can not function on a day-to-day
13 basis and muster the skills and the capacities that
14 they need to be successful.

15 Protective factors, I know they're
16 big long lists. Economic opportunity obviously,
17 knowledge of parenting and child development,
18 nurturing and attachment, a lot of people in the
19 session we were in today spoke about that, the fact
20 that kids need to be loved and need to know by who
21 they are loved. Parent resilience. Social and
22 emotional competence. This is not especially with
23 young kids all about academic skills and knowledge,
24 it's about the ability to be socially, emotionally
25 competent and to have executive function and coping

1 skills.

2 Concrete support in times of need,
3 food, housing, transportation, clothing, more about
4 this in a second when we get to the state of
5 Missouri. Social connections and community
6 support, hard to do in the fragmented environment
7 in which we live, and then addressing cultural
8 issues, systems of shared actions, values and
9 beliefs.

10 So what are the strategies that we
11 can do, that we can engage in to address the things
12 that are before the Commission and the community.
13 Focus on reducing racial and socioeconomic
14 disparities. We have to absolutely acknowledge and
15 embrace that. We have not done that as a community
16 for decades, it is a goal in itself. It may be the
17 goal in itself. Strengthening family functioning,
18 addressing poverty and life skills issues, address
19 children's critical early developmental needs,
20 early childhood education. I did something that we
21 have not done in this community in this state,
22 ensuring people educational opportunity, providing
23 economic opportunity, putting vital community
24 supports in place and that relates to the
25 community, capacity, governmental capacity and then

1 establishing the link, I think this is politically
2 important, establishing the link between child
3 well-being and overall community and economic
4 development. A community only will do as well as
5 its children will do. The regional chamber will
6 not be successful or very successful or as
7 successful as we would like it to be in pursuing
8 economic development strategies with 150,000 poor
9 kids at the core of the region who are not
10 educated, they don't have job skills, who are not
11 consumers and can't buy things and that the link of
12 the policy and program agenda for children, youth
13 and families to the broader community and economic
14 development agenda.

15 I'll get all worked up here. So this
16 is, this relates to the capacity of this community
17 to address this range of issues and implement the
18 things that we need to be done. Our civic cultural
19 history goal is segmented and fragmented. We have
20 little sense of a common community good and shared
21 interest and when it comes to kids we tend to see
22 children as my children and your children, not our
23 children. What we do about that with our long
24 history I don't know but we can start by
25 acknowledging at least and starting to address it.

1 The formal local governmental
2 structure is fragmented and directed primarily to
3 promoting local interests. There's an uneven
4 collection of have and have not jurisdictions
5 without the capacity to deliver adequate
6 professional services, services such as police and
7 schools if they're poorly done and may undermine
8 child well-being rather than contribute to it.

9 All of the stuff related to below can
10 go into government capacity as well within the
11 state of Missouri, that's the job of the state.
12 Cities are creatures of the state so the state of
13 Missouri has much leeway in what it can do and
14 specific mechanisms like quasi legislative groups
15 to reorganize government, restructure government
16 but we have to get back to that capacity and that's
17 someplace where the state can provide some
18 leadership. The state of Missouri really exhibits
19 not very much interest in providing these for
20 investing to promote child, youth and family
21 well-being. We have a weak and have for decades a
22 weak social service support system, things like
23 child care subsidy. We happened to come across a
24 report from the Center of Law showed that 44,000
25 child care subsidy slots have been lost in the

1 country. 12,000 of those were lost in the state of
2 Missouri. A quarter of the loss in funds to get
3 kids into quality education were in this state and
4 when we started to look into that I think what we
5 were finding is because the delivery system for
6 social services in the state is broken down.
7 They've closed offices, you call in nobody answers
8 the phone, you cannot get these services. We have
9 an under-funded school foundation formula, so far
10 we have no Medicaid expansion and we simply don't
11 do what many other states do including our
12 surrounding states to promote the well-being of
13 children needs.

14 I'm stopping here. So as I said
15 these events are longstanding and they undergird
16 the problems we were addressing, there's absolutely
17 a sense of tragedy about them but they also provide
18 as an opportunity and a challenge to change the
19 trajectory of this region. I think the work of
20 this Commission, Ready by 21, For the Sake of All,
21 My Brothers Keeper and as of last Friday the
22 Northside Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant all
23 provide mechanisms through which needed change can,
24 and must, be effectuated.

25 We will as Vision For Children At

1 Risk and the 400 child and youth serving agencies
2 with whom we work contribute in any way we can to
3 achieving the critically needed changes by
4 providing research and analysis, building
5 partnerships to implement these strategies and
6 advocating the well-being of St. Louis region and
7 all of its children.

8 Thank you very much.

9 REV. STARKY WILSON: Thank you Rich.

10 We'll let you know that all of these
11 slides will be available on the
12 stlpositivechange.org website so you'll have access
13 to all of the slide presentations.

14 MR. NEAL: Well good evening, good
15 evening Commissioners and thank you for the work
16 that you are doing. Good evening to all of you and
17 thank you for hanging in there. I know I am
18 standing between you and going home so I'll try and
19 be as brief as possible.

20 I am Tony, Neal president of
21 Educational Equity Consultants and I'd like to use
22 two of our partners that are here today Dr. Billy
23 Mayo and Dr. Phil Hunsberger so thank you for
24 joining us this evening.

25 Thank you for the opportunity to

1 speak to you this evening. Educational Equity
2 Consultants specializes in diversity training that
3 identifies and eradicates systems of oppression
4 that damage our workplaces, our communities and our
5 schools. Since 2001 EEC has been the leader in
6 diversity training for schools and companies across
7 the country. Through our trainings and programs we
8 have equiped more than 3,500 educators, business
9 leaders and citizens with the knowledge first to
10 uncover oppression and then combat it by way of
11 effective techniques that promote respect and
12 empowerment among students, school leaders and
13 community members. Oppression in our schools keeps
14 our children out of a promised and necessary
15 education. In addition, oppression in our
16 communities and workplaces poisons morale,
17 dissolves trust and diminishes productivity.
18 Though not always predictable or understood issues
19 with racism, classism and sexism to name a few
20 exist within ourselves and our institutions. As
21 educators and community leaders it is up to us to
22 eliminate the oppressive attitudes, behaviors and
23 policies that sabotage a student's right to
24 learning and a community's ability to understand
25 the concerns of its citizens. The late Dr. Asa

1 Hilliard said it best, we cannot tolerate or
2 support ideology and practices that cripple will
3 our children further, those that hold that our
4 children are the program are those that assume that
5 our teachers and school leaders are not capable of
6 becoming powerful[factors in the lives of
7 students.

8 So what does educational inequity
9 look like? Throughout the region there is a lower
10 percentage of students in, of color in upper level
11 classes, AP classes and honors classes either due
12 to the student's not feeling support, incapable of
13 meeting the challenges or little to no preparation
14 for entry into such classes. In some schools
15 higher level classes are not even an option.

16 In term of core selection students of
17 color are often tracked into classes that hinder
18 them from having the necessary requirements to
19 enter into institutions of higher learning. A
20 major factor in the perpetuation of the inequities
21 that target our students of color is the lack of
22 adequate teacher preparation programs that
23 challenge teachers to divest themselves of biased
24 preconceived notions of children of color. Many
25 schools of education provide little education on

1 classes pertaining to being a culturally proficient
2 incident teacher.

3 The testing industry is yet another
4 inequity that we must address. We know that the
5 work and research of one of St. Louis's very own
6 Dr. Robert Williams at Washington University
7 clearly shows that standardized tests and testing
8 that students are subjected to are biased and don't
9 fully measure the true intelligence of students of
10 color. The St. Louis Post Dispatch on August 29th,
11 2014 in the article School Districts Rating Show
12 Wide Divisions Within Missouri Districts, rank, the
13 four surrounding districts, Ferguson Florissant,
14 Jennings, Normandy and Riverview from the St. Louis
15 region with the lowest percentage score on the
16 Missouri Annual Performance Report. Both Jennings
17 and Riverview are often listed on the most improved
18 list showing at least a 10 percentage point gain.

19 I am pretty sure that given an
20 alternative way of measuring of the performance of
21 students in these four districts that we would see
22 students who are brilliant, students who are
23 capable, students who see limitless opportunities
24 and possibilities in which they can aspire to.
25 Educational inequity is ascribing to an old

1 antiquated formula for funding schools, it is a
2 formula that gives advantage to some while
3 disadvantages others. Some may wonder well why
4 does educational equity matter and what is exactly
5 at stake. We know that upward mobility is hinged
6 on education and that there's a strong correlation
7 between a student's feeling empowered and feeling
8 capable and what actually takes place in a
9 classroom. Disenfranchised children are more
10 likely to engage in self-destructive behaviors and
11 to seek a place of belonging in anti-social and
12 destructive environment all which lead to what has
13 become known as the school to prison pipeline.
14 The most recent St. Louis American article Racial
15 Education Gaps Hurt The Economy outlines a very
16 clear picture of the impact that educational equity
17 has on the economy and I quote, black and Hispanic
18 children make up an ever larger share of our
19 population and our work force and of the greatest
20 problems they face is lagging achievement gaps.
21 I'd like to add to that opportunity gaps and income
22 gaps.

23 Ensuring educational equity is not
24 just an investment in students and in schools it is
25 an investment in our economy but more importantly

1 the United States risks wasting its greatest asset,
2 human capital, if it does not act to significantly
3 lift the educational outcomes of all children.

4 Closing the educational achievement gap means more
5 than just increased tax revenue, it also means
6 higher earnings, it means higher materials,
7 standards of living and an enhanced quality of life
8 for these children when they grow to become adults.

9 So what can be done as we consider
10 next steps towards change and advancement. We just
11 create institutions of learning where students are
12 highly engaged, where students see mirrors of who
13 they can become, institutions must be safe, a place
14 where students feel power and empowered, where
15 students feel valued, where their dignity is
16 protected and a place where they know that they are
17 learning. I still recall my freshman year of
18 college and the words of Dr. Benjamin Mays in the
19 option convocation. He said high above your head I
20 hold a crown I challenge you to grow to wear. We
21 just hold that crown above the heads of our
22 students, that crown being high expectations and we
23 must do everything possible to support their growth
24 so that they may one day grow to wear that crown.
25 This is our responsibility.

1 What we are seeing today here in
2 Ferguson and throughout the United States is a
3 result of the top being blown off of the pressure
4 cooker. We are seeing and hearing our students
5 crying out, they are saying see me, recognize my
6 nobility, they are saying my life matters, they are
7 saying what Dr. King so eloquently said many years
8 ago, judge me not by the color of my skin but by
9 the content of my character. We must move from
10 being color blind to becoming color brave. This
11 means that we call out the injustices when we see
12 them, it means that we don't give up or give in or
13 bow down until there's a breakthrough and we get
14 the change that is necessary for kids. It means
15 that we fight to level the playing field and to
16 make sure that our kids and families have equal
17 access to resources, benefits, rewards and most
18 importantly a quality education.

19 What we are experiencing did not
20 develop overnight. It feels as if there is a chock
21 hold on our schools and on these young innocent
22 minds. Our kids are gasping for air as they simply
23 struggle to learn and to breathe.

24 Let's be clear, what is playing out
25 is a long entrenched history of institutionalized

1 racism and oppression and our educational system is
2 in the center. It seems as though the political
3 muscle around education reform has gone soft. We
4 are now in a state of emergency. We must move with
5 a sense of urgency and we need all hands on deck.
6 if You say black lives matter then it is imperative
7 that you no longer put these issues on the back
8 burner, that the issue of education reform must be
9 front and center of any reform movement which seems
10 to make change in the lives of our young people.

11 As I close I leave you with the words
12 of professor and author Julian Wise Class. Any
13 reform effort designed to reduce the achievement
14 gap that does not help whites and people of color
15 heal from the hurts of racism will not likely
16 succeed over time. Although educators can not by
17 themselves solve all the problems caused by racism
18 in society it is possible for us to construct
19 healing communities in which people can learn to
20 listen and give attention while others heal.
21 Through our professional development and community
22 engagement models Educational Equity Consultants
23 creates a safe space for this to happen. We build
24 the capacity of individuals, schools and
25 communities to address racism in the way that

1 enables all people to reclaim their inherent
2 intelligence and nobility.

3 Thank you.

4 REV. STARKY WILSON: I invite Dr.
5 Anderson to come forward at this time.

6 DR. ANDERSON: Thank you, and for
7 those who know me know that I can't stay still so
8 staying behind a podium probably won't work so
9 I'll come around here.

10 I just love Tony, everything he said
11 was so great. Can you let me know when it's five,
12 six minutes? I'm going to go fairly fast because I
13 know you all have had a long evening and what I
14 have to say I put together a brief slide show and
15 let me share that when I was asked to come back,
16 not too long ago, I at first said no and my father
17 said a pastor asked you, whatever it is you must go
18 so there's more.

19 REV. STARKY WILSON: Thanks dad.

20 DR. ANDERSON: And then someone
21 e-mailed and said you have slides so before I left
22 the office I put together just a couple of slides
23 and I'm going to be fairly quick.

24 You saw some information on Jennings
25 if you are not familiar with Jennings and I have

1 not had the pleasure of meeting you you saw that
2 Jennings had the highest poverty, highest minority
3 population so we have about 98 percent African
4 American students of the whole district who look
5 beautiful as they walk in every day, just about the
6 whole district, and if you don't look like me but
7 to see a district that's about four square miles
8 about 90 percent free or reduced lunch in 2012 we
9 were at 57 points and you need 70 to be accredited,
10 we were at 57 points, we were almost unaccredited,
11 below 50 is unaccredited if you remember Dr.
12 Tobias's presentation. With that in mind as we
13 kind of go fast forward it is now 2015 so as of
14 2014 we need 70 points to be accredited, we are at
15 78. We have exceeded the accreditation benchmark.
16 So we are excited when the state changes the
17 designation, because they wait for three years of
18 consecutive practice so we went from 57 to a little
19 bit over 60 and now 78. I'm here to tell you it
20 can be done, it's been done across the nation.
21 This is my third district, I've been a
22 superintendent, this is my 12th year as
23 superintendent. Prior to this I was in Kansas
24 City, the district that I left is still accredited
25 with distinction, has almost 100 percent African

1 American students. That was a black district right
2 in Missouri and that's in Kansas City. Those
3 improvements came. Prior to that I was in
4 Virginia, it's not predominantly African American
5 but there's a large poverty population, 23 schools
6 when I went there, seven were accredited, when I
7 left all 23. It is not me but it is collective
8 energy. We just passed Martin Luther King's
9 birthday so I live one of his quotes where he
10 quotes John Dunn and it's a poem, it's from The
11 Bell Tolls. I cannot do well unless you do well,
12 okay, and so literally you cannot do well unless I
13 do well and vice-versa so really quickly when I
14 finish this up that you can always e-mail me, if
15 you call me or come by our staff is very lean, it's
16 myself and one assistant superintendent, that's it,
17 okay, so I wear the tennis shoes but with that in
18 mind but the only way I can pay for what we need to
19 have because I don't believe there's any obstacle
20 that you can't overcome so I'm going to have the
21 things I need to make sure that I'm not
22 overburdened and having the staff so I'm going to
23 show you how to do this, everything you heard
24 tonight is going to fit into one of these three
25 things. This my 18th year in education, 12th years

1 as a superintendent and so I've moved back to St.
2 Louis, well haven't fully moved back but I'm back
3 in St. Louis because my parents live here, that's
4 what drew me back. I picked Jennings in part
5 because Jennings is four square miles, it is almost
6 unaccredited, it is the highest poverty, high
7 minority so when they recruited me to come to
8 Jennings I came here partially because of that so
9 when students say why are you here, you're the lady
10 that said this, that, why are you here? Because
11 you deserve me, you deserve the best and we have to
12 make sure that our high poverty districts have the
13 best. That our teacher population and our
14 buildings and all those pieces, so with that in
15 mind.

16 I don't like technology, I think I'm
17 supposed to use a clicker here. Okay. First of
18 all I want you to know when I get through with this
19 in about four or five minutes, when I get through
20 this if there are other questions e-mail me,
21 chances are I will e-mail you back pretty quick.
22 With that in mind I've written two books and the
23 back of the books it talks about school across the
24 nation that are performing at a high level. If I
25 asked you for 10 schools across the nation that are

1 performing at high levels, it's like it's hidden
2 from you, it's not at your face, if I ask you right
3 now tell me 10 or 20 schools that are failing you
4 would be able to do that. If I asked you for 10 or
5 20 schools that were succeeding you couldn't do it
6 because it is not in your face. So let's put it in
7 your face, let's see the models of success.
8 People don't know what success looks like therefore
9 they cannot replicate it. In Jennings you know
10 what our staff development is? Our staff
11 development is visiting schools across the nation.
12 So this year we went to the Harlem Children's Home,
13 our teachers, our principal, that's what we spent
14 our money on. All the consultants and all that
15 coming in I don't need that, PE department, that's
16 me, the curriculum department that's me, and the
17 teachers. So we give each other talks about
18 professional development those are the teachers
19 that get professional development and teach the
20 teachers. I don't need all the consultants, I love
21 consultant person who put all this together but I'm
22 telling you if you do not have the money you can
23 not use money and resources as an excuse or you
24 will never achieve the highest level so I just want
25 to share that with you so I'm just going to break

1 this down. I only have like three slides.
2 Then there was another slide really quickly that
3 was on that thumb drive so I don't know if you cued
4 that up, it's not as important as these three
5 things. Everything you hear from today on if you
6 are a student in education, you're a researcher,
7 whoever you are, it falls in three categories, who
8 knew. So when I taught the three categories, I
9 used the three categories, the achievement gap
10 began to close after my first year as a
11 superintendent. Who knew working as a
12 superintendent and teacher, who, knew what working
13 as a teacher and as a superintendent, it's so
14 awesome to know that so I'm going to make it easy
15 for you.

16 First of all we already know what we
17 need to do to improve schools, we already know it,
18 everything you need here, so we know it. It's a
19 matter of how angry are you and how important is it
20 to you to change things to make it happen. Period.
21 Okay? Keeping that in mind so old school is
22 defective school correlates, I don't know it you
23 younger people know that either but here's a list,
24 25 years ago this list was out. Here's what we
25 said how schools achieve. So that's the list. I'm

1 going to break this down into three areas.
2 Content, curriculum and relationships. I'm going
3 to give you examples of these but again, I'm not
4 trying to sell my books but if you don't want to
5 buy the book go to my web page and just click on my
6 bio you'll see some articles that I've written,
7 it's free, print it off but it pretty much has a
8 lot of these ideas. So when you say what does that
9 look like you leave here knowing what that looks
10 like so everything, content, relationships and
11 pedagogy. Content is a curriculum, a mind-based
12 curriculum, no one believes it at all. I don't
13 care who you are but learning standards makes
14 curriculum. And so that means the standards you're
15 going to put in front of them, I may not use any
16 books, I may use a computer and outside and all of
17 that and which means I'm head of the district and I
18 can make it happen because I'm teaching on the
19 standard not testing to the book. Curriculum. So
20 everything that you read is going to fall into one
21 of these, relationship, building Trust. Kids won't
22 work hard for you if they don't trust you. Guess
23 what? Adults won't either. Who knew that? So
24 they will learn up to an extent but they will not
25 work hard for you if they do not trust you or they

1 will work up to a certain extent and so, and then
2 the last one is pedagogy. Having a high qualified
3 staff with effective instructional techniques who
4 understand, basically culturally competent staff.

5 I love Tony and Billy, you know
6 what's it been, 12 years Billy, I flew here to
7 Virginia, every district that I have been in social
8 justice is one of the first trainings that we do,
9 social justice, I have to know you, trust you,
10 respect you, understand you in order to work with
11 you and I don't even necessarily have to fully like
12 you, but, in fact when I was in Virginia one area
13 of Virginia is called the Hollers and if you're
14 from Virginia one side of it is high poverty, go
15 there, first African, first female superintendent,
16 that's when I learned know where you're going
17 before you take a job and so I got there and no
18 idea I was going to be the first black or the first
19 woman, didn't I know? I just knew Virginia was
20 pretty, I knew when I visited, I loved the people,
21 I love the community and I told my husband this is
22 it so when I got there there was one section in
23 Montgomery County is where Virginia Tech shootings,
24 everybody can equate to that, Virginia Tech
25 shootings, that's where Montgomery County is, lost

1 about 20 people, friends, family, friends in that
2 one shooting.

3 With that in mind Virginia on one
4 side of it is the Hollers so I would drive there,
5 when I got ready to leave everybody on the side of
6 the car, I took off next day go back down then I
7 put my hand out they would jump, I say I'm going to
8 hug you so you better shake my hand. So it's that
9 piece of saying one way or the next we were going
10 to have to build a relationship of trust. Okay?
11 And so that's a huge piece. So let me stop for
12 just a quick second and I know we were down to
13 probably out last three minutes so let me stop for
14 a quick second. Content, relationships, pedagogy.
15 Think about the district you live in or the
16 district that you know of that may be a high
17 powered district, which one of the three of those
18 things are broken? If I can I'm going to ask you
19 for about 10 seconds to talk to one of the people
20 next to you and ask what of the three are broken
21 and when you realize this is the system that fixes
22 it then when you go into a system as a principal,
23 as a teacher, you're going to say which one of the
24 three of these things are broken so let me give you
25 30 seconds to have that conversation real quick.

1 In the interest of your time 30
2 seconds is up, I know that went fast, that was
3 about five seconds. I want to pull you back
4 together really quick. When I first walked in
5 don't you love, you can tell a lot about a place
6 with how you're greeted, I truly believe that,
7 that's why we put so much into our teacher
8 interlocution. I came in and these two wonderful
9 gentlemen who were tutoring or something, they
10 stopped me right when I came through the door,
11 shook my hand, I thought they were students in
12 general. I think they're both in here.

13 which one of the three was broken?
14 Pick any district. You don't have to even name the
15 district? Or all three? All three. Okay. Which
16 one of the three is broken, anybody else let's pick
17 a high performing district, I guarantee you if
18 they're not where they want to be it's one of those
19 three things. You can pick a classroom, teacher is
20 mean, great curriculum, she can teach but she's
21 mean and hateful that the kids don't trust her so
22 they won't learn from her. This works no matter
23 where you are, who knew. So now that we know that
24 that works no matter where we are take it, then I'm
25 going to talk about some specific examples if

1 that's okay.

2 So here's some examples, I'm going to
3 talk about content, I'm just going to hit on some
4 things that we've done in Jennings that we did in
5 Kansas City, that we did in Rockwood as assistant
6 superintendent. Under content and prior to this I
7 was a city principal at Clark Academy, same things
8 work. So if we talk about content or curriculum,
9 those are things, first of all the aligned
10 standards based curriculum means again you have to
11 know the standards and you have to make sure you're
12 not teaching to a test, you're not teaching to all
13 that all year long, you have to make sure you are
14 actually teaching to a standard and that is so hard
15 which means I love data, I don't like tests, I love
16 data, I want my children to be able to take all
17 kinds of test because they're going to have to take
18 ACT and all kinds of things when they get out of
19 college to go to graduate schools they're going to
20 have to take tests so I'm not afraid of data, what
21 I'm afraid is when you misuse data to judge people
22 and situations, okay, it's how you use your data
23 that's important. So if you walk into Jennings and
24 you tour Jennings around April we do an educator's
25 institute, people come in from all over the

1 nations, come and visit the district. Okay. So.
2 If you come in Jennings you're going to see a data
3 team in every of school, if you come into my office
4 you're going to see little brown people, 3,000 of
5 them, you're going to see one long board and I
6 track every single student to try to determine
7 who's going to do the home visits, where I'm going
8 to assign the money at. So that's show a standards
9 based curriculum is used.

10 Now when I came in the curriculum
11 department was retiring and they were fantastic
12 people, they were retiring, I was starting, the
13 district operated out of a deficit so I didn't have
14 a curriculum. First of all I talked to myself and
15 said hire me and I said we need a curriculum, we
16 need alliance based standard based curriculum so we
17 just, literally I went to the teachers and the
18 coaches and said here take the chart, the standards
19 and we're going to hatch a plan. Here's what you
20 have to learn about here and here it's only seven
21 and what that's not on any test. You got two weeks
22 to write it. Now I'm not here to say your teachers
23 need to start with line standard base curriculum.
24 Relationships and building trust on the curriculum
25 piece is a huge item in itself. Building Trust is

1 huge. With the Ferguson unrest what you saw
2 Jennings doing which we approached it very
3 different than a lot of places and so, you know,
4 not speaking against other places but the first day
5 when the teachers came back and they came back to
6 the classrooms I said okay if you want to make a
7 difference in the community the students aren't
8 here today meet me at Target which is where the
9 command post was, I handed out trash bags they said
10 what kind of staff development is this. I said all
11 400 people showed up, we to clean up, we got to
12 start our day cleaning up streets you all so we
13 went around cleaning up the streets. Talk about
14 the mess, by the time we got done students were
15 joining us so that's how we started off the August
16 period and we went on and built trust. Every
17 principal in our district practices it, the
18 teachers do to. So when I hire teachers they say I
19 don't want to go to someone's home I say you're not
20 someone who would work well in Jennings. Building
21 trust means literally you know before coming here I
22 was at the Teen Academy, we had about 20 students
23 who are now at the Teen Academy so doing things in
24 a different kind of way.

25 We have a pantry, a food pantry, we

1 give out 8,000 pounds of food, we are the only food
2 pantry in St. Louis I believe since another one and
3 in a quasi way, smaller kind of pantry but 400
4 people a month, 200 people every two weeks so
5 because of high poverty doesn't mean we can't do
6 anything about it. My goodness. You know we talk
7 to students about building Trust, we want a pantry,
8 we partnered with the food bank, we opened up the
9 school pantry in one building just dedicated to
10 food. Guess who runs the pantry? The alternative
11 students. Alternative school for the last three
12 years have never had one fight or one argument,
13 isn't that amazing? We don't believe in putting
14 kids out of school, I just don't believe in it. I
15 think the come back works, where they going to go
16 when you put them out? When our students misbehave
17 if you have one fight, so we do say you got to go
18 somewhere now but you're not going to be in this
19 school or this classroom but we are going to give
20 you a program. Like a program within a high school
21 therefore we can say here's where you're going to
22 be so for that piece of building relationships
23 while they're there when kids get out of jail we
24 don't just send them to school, even those folks go
25 to a halfway house or something before they go back

1 to the community. We have to send out kids to a
2 school and they go there for a year, we have mental
3 health counseling at every school in our district.
4 Why is it that we can do this eyeglass screening
5 and ear screening but we don't do mental health
6 counseling, you know what people will tell you
7 because they can't afford it. Shame, shame on
8 them. I know we get less money than every other
9 district around here but somehow we are able to
10 afford it and as of this year we have a 27 percent
11 fund reserve and we've had a surplus every year
12 since 2013. If we can do it everybody can do it.
13 Now it's not to say we don't need more resources
14 because we do but what I'm saying is that can not
15 be an excuse for not serving young people so we
16 have to be creative students how we do it. So
17 relationships are huge. We have a rule in Jennings
18 and we learned this from our own children actually
19 two days absent without parental contact, home
20 visit. Why do people wait five and 10 days, what
21 happened to the child in five or 10 days so again
22 just relationships. We have a parent academy, a
23 baby college, we have all those things. You come
24 to our school your going to see the teacher's name,
25 Mrs. Jones, and below there, or it could be a

1 custodian James, Mr. Jones and it's going to say
2 what college they went to so a lot of these things
3 just common sense, let's make it a little more
4 things just to build relationships. I love my
5 district, I love my students, many of you, some of
6 you know, I actually live in Kansas, I drive four
7 hours to work because I love my students and I
8 don't mind telling people that. They say you crazy
9 lady. What I tell them is no, I love you, I'm
10 committed to you, I'm so committed to you I will
11 drive 10 hours to see you every day and when they
12 leave for Saturday, because we are in school on
13 Saturdays, that's another piece, we have an eight
14 enough hour day, we give dinner to every student,
15 breakfast, lunch, we give breakfast and lunch on
16 Saturdays. I really go you don't have to leave, oh
17 my goodness, I wish you were still here.

18 Relationships, they have to know you
19 love them and you might be the only one letting
20 them know that.

21 Last thing, pedagogy. Every year I
22 tell my husband I'm going back to the classroom, he
23 say you said that last year, go back to the
24 classroom. My classroom right now have little bit
25 -- who is in front of your children and what are

1 they teaching them. That's a huge piece. I have
2 visited schools across the nation where you have
3 great curriculums and relationship, just happy
4 buildings but the whole building subs or
5 unqualified people or untrained people or
6 vice-versa, unless you have all three in order and
7 in order very well it will not work so really
8 quickly pedagogy he that's a huge piece, when I
9 started everybody get an assessment, a test, a math
10 test, that's students four grade levels above what
11 they were going to teach so if you can teach
12 kindergarten the test is probably 5th grade or 6th
13 grade so that math test, tell you what, 75 percent
14 of the people failed it, you know why, because when
15 you leave as an elementary teacher nobody teach you
16 algebra, you got a content math class so when you
17 start writing out your strategies the way we were
18 preparing teachers in terms of content knowledge is
19 huge so a lot of times that poor performance is
20 because of content knowledge, okay, so we give them
21 an assessment, when you started the structural
22 culture that were already there we matched them
23 with something that they could do well,
24 kindergarten, 1st grade, whatever, a lot of people
25 think I fire a lot of people, I didn't fire

1 anybody. They leave on their own because they have
2 culture variance. They can say it wasn't a match
3 or whatever.

4 So pedagogy, who's in front of the
5 kids and what are they teaching them. That is a
6 huge piece.

7 I tried to touch on a variety of
8 things in January we were so excited, we opened up
9 a clinic, the spot clinic that's over on Grand, it
10 opens up, Wash U's funding it, it's in Jennings, it
11 actually will serve the entire community, such an
12 awesome thing so I am here to give you hope to say
13 this can happen, it can happen in every district.
14 The things that you all said are issues, we know
15 them, we already know them, we can start talking it
16 and start saying let's look at models of success
17 and what works and then let's put those pieces in
18 place.

19 I am well passed -- 8:45. Tony, what
20 happened to the finger up?

21 I thank you all for staying extra
22 late this evening.

23 REV. STARKY WILSON: Thank you Dr.
24 Anderson for giving us hope, we thank Mr. Neal, for
25 sharing with us, giving us this kind of

1 information, again a lot of information and data
2 and it will all be on our web assignment. We'll
3 forgo our question and answer period with thanks to
4 our leaders here but this is the deal. When you do
5 that well the other thing that we didn't line up
6 earlier is we have set up this education and equity
7 and child well-being work group and so we know
8 based on what we have heard from these speakers
9 that they will not be far from it so we thank them
10 for sharing with us tonight.

11 We do have a bit of business on work
12 group charges that we want to get into so if we
13 could just set up that slide presentation the
14 commissioners have seen this already, we want to
15 give you a little bit of a framework for how we're
16 doing this work going forward you you might be able
17 to access them and you know how they are moving.

18 So the first as we get into this I'll
19 just jump straight in. You'll see that we had with
20 the guidance of the community on December 1st we
21 had the opportunity to, on December 1st when the
22 community gathered for our very first Commission
23 meeting they told us central issues and there was
24 in our executive order 151.415 that created the
25 Commission we have several priorities that we were

1 explicitly called to look at, citizen/law
2 enforcement relations, municipal governance and
3 municipal courts. You see on this slide on the
4 left-hand side the percentages on how the community
5 ranked them so as we went forward we began to set
6 up and do our work based upon the community
7 priorities so on the work side you see that we
8 first set up a work group for citizen/law
9 enforcement relations which is led by Commissioner
10 Isom and then we set up out municipal courts and
11 governance which is co-led by Commissioner Carr and
12 Commissioner Blackmon so you see that those central
13 issues we have the work groups established there.
14 And then we had a list of students, nine different
15 categories of social and economic conditions and
16 disparities, we asked the community to rank those
17 for us and 63 percent said education, 58 percent
18 economic opportunity and 53 percent racial and
19 ethnic relations were things that we needed to look
20 at so what we are setting up tonight is the
21 educational inequity and child well-being work
22 group and you see that we'll also set up economic
23 inequity and opportunity work groups and one racial
24 and ethnic relations. So we are in development of
25 those to further be confirmed. But we wanted to

1 give you a path on how the work is going forward
2 and be able to show you some of that so you'll see
3 that we'll stand up work in all of these different
4 areas based upon these high community priorities.

5 As we talk about the standards you
6 see kind of where we're moving on the standards for
7 the work groups -- Rich you want to do this one?

8 COMMISSIONER RICH MCCLURE: Go ahead.

9 COMMISSIONER STARSKY WILSON: As we
10 talk studies for all the work groups they have kind
11 of a similar focus but they all have standardized
12 outputs. They're going to explore as this is
13 listening directly from the executive order,
14 explore the underlying social and economics issues
15 in the St. Louis metropolitan area using a common
16 set of principles including honoring the community
17 expertise and youth perspective. So first and
18 foremost the things that have come out of these
19 meetings and things that have been said and shared
20 in break-out groups will set the table for the work
21 groups as they go forward.

22 Looking beyond what is to create a
23 model for what can be. The community asked us when
24 they helped us to set expectations for us they said
25 they wanted bold transformational relations, not

1 just to look at what is but to look at what can be,
2 not just to critique the issues but rather to cast
3 our vision forward. So all the work groups will be
4 doing that.

5 Third, leveraging new and existing
6 data to generate evidence based recommendations,
7 again making sure that we take in the data and
8 expertise in the community but often we're pleased
9 that the respective higher education institutions
10 in the area have begin to map their assets to
11 inform the work of our groups so we'll be able to
12 glean that as well and centering on principles of
13 equity and justice that goes without saying, you
14 hear that throughout as we go to these inequities
15 and then finally prioritize action with a sense of
16 urgency and here is where I'll turn to my co-chair
17 Rich McClure to kind of dig into that to learn
18 little bit more.

19 MR. RICH MCCLURE: Thank you Starsky,
20 we want to just briefly highlight these to the
21 folks remaining and to the commissioners because
22 the working groups are now heavy into the heart of
23 their work for the early ones and others that were
24 standing up so we wanted to give you all a road map
25 and be able to say these are the things we need to

1 focus on. The challenge is on the sense of urgency
2 is to have the appropriate pace because some policy
3 recommendations are necessarily going to take time,
4 long term review of the data and some
5 thoughtfulness between now and the time we file our
6 report in September and we realize that assembling
7 the data and having the experts come in takes time,
8 our working group chairs and co-chairs have told us
9 that and we wanted to give them some space, our
10 next meeting is probably going to be February 23rd,
11 probably focused around economic opportunity but
12 that gives the working groups time to do some work
13 between now and then and then to continue their
14 space. The tension here that we're feeling and
15 some of the co-chairs are feeling it and we're
16 working through it is the policy process is under
17 way, it's under way in Jefferson City on several
18 issues, it's under way perhaps in the county
19 counsel, in school districts so we need to be
20 responsive to that policy calendar where we can and
21 so working groups will look to where possible
22 prioritize their recommendations that are in those
23 cases and if they could move those up to the top
24 then we'll be able to inform the policy process for
25 legislatures and others who are asking for

1 reactions and thoughts by our groups so that's what
2 we mean by the sense of urgency and trying to do
3 this pacing.

4 Bethany, our managing director who
5 many of you are here for the first time so we
6 introduced Bethany at our last meeting, Bethany
7 Johnson-Javois. She has been working more than
8 full time even though technically she's really only
9 been on board since the 15th so Bethany please take
10 us through the remaining slides.

11 MS. JOHNSON-JAVOIS: So this is the
12 suggested timing to set the pace for work group
13 priorities. One of our principles that you see
14 later in the next slide is about accountability so
15 we wanted to be very clear and transparent about
16 how we're mapped. November through February are
17 the immediate next steps, within that bucket the
18 first steps towards addressing breaches and
19 building trust. It's been communicated in these
20 committee meetings that we need to make sure that
21 we are looking at actions that begin to speak to
22 community needs urgently. In addition to that
23 prioritizing legislative action for policy reform.

24 For the March through May time frame
25 for that is our intermediate next step is the

1 continuation what happened in the first bucket,
2 making sure that we continue to prioritize our
3 work, that is coming out of the work groups and
4 then may through September 15th, remember that the
5 15th is our deadline, if not before is to think
6 about those bold transformational recommendations
7 and implementation and translation so the question
8 becomes how does this work live beyond the
9 Commission and how is it set up to be able to
10 partner with other organizations, institutions or
11 dream a bit about what the future can be, that work
12 begins now so in some ways we look to be informed
13 by the community.

14 Again re reiterate the guiding
15 principles from the very first meeting to let you
16 know our commitment back to you, transparency, we
17 heard it again tonight, equity and fairness coupled
18 together, that civic engagement is extremely vital
19 and important and welcomed and supported. That
20 with accountability and urgency, the other
21 principle, diversity and inclusion is very
22 important and of course integrity or the word
23 character that I love to use.

24 So the final products for all working
25 groups in some way, shape or form you will see

1 generated from this work. Recommendations and
2 models that account for how broad, how deep, how
3 interconnected and how disbursed these issues are
4 because again everybody say root causes. Not
5 symptoms. So in order to make sure that we do that
6 well from root causes we need to understand how all
7 these things are braided together. I am a social
8 worker so this is how we think, okay? So number
9 one in terms of priorities we're going to address
10 where possible policy based recommendations,
11 systems level, practice based, perhaps things that
12 we can just do because we have the will and we have
13 the expertise and now we have the urgency and of
14 course on the individual level. Other
15 considerations for our work groups not just to
16 recommend pie in the sky but is it feasible and if
17 plan A isn't going to work what does Plan B look
18 like that perhaps we can rationalize to make sure
19 that this is work that lives beyond recommendations
20 and words on paper.

21 Second think about implementation and
22 translation beyond September 15th. One of our
23 first meetings said this is decades of work and so
24 we're thinking about legacy and we're thinking
25 about how this translates beyond us and finally

1 community input sessions and activities to gather
2 input is the key construct for our working groups
3 in final product.

4 At this time we would like to open
5 this discussion up to commissioners, for the
6 community, we are requesting approval of this
7 framework of operating principles and final product
8 guidance.

9 MR. RICH MCCLURE: So we're obviously
10 over time but I do want to be sensitive to
11 questions that commissioners may have in this
12 forum, they're certainly appropriate now so let me
13 open the floor and see if any commissioners
14 participating in work groups or about to
15 participate have any questions or comments that
16 they would like to make.

17 We will certainly be having
18 individual discussions --

19 FROM THE FLOOR: I'm really
20 interested in at what point you come to resolution
21 around specific legislative measures.

22 MR. RICH MCCLURE: Specific input
23 around legislative measures.

24 FROM THE FLOOR: Well ultimately
25 you're going to be graduating from iterating

1 principles to iterating steps some of which may
2 include specific legislative measures or policy
3 measures which have to be rendered in removal forum
4 so where do you get to that level of legislation?

5 MR. RICH MCCLURE: Right. So the
6 working groups are the forum where we move to
7 legislative recommendations and I'll invite any
8 commissioner to jump right in coming up to the full
9 Commission where appropriate and where helpful and
10 this is a stakeholder effort, this is never
11 involving community engagement. Groups who have
12 been involved in these issues are about to be
13 involved and in fact involving some legislative
14 sponsor suggestion as well as they shape things in
15 Jefferson City and some of the pacing on that
16 process. Some bills take multiple years to move
17 through the process, some are moving now and so
18 we'll engage with those as appropriate so the
19 working groups is the short answer to your
20 question.

21 Thank you.

22 Well we will have individual
23 discussions and the ability to think through this
24 carefully but as the working groups now begin to
25 accelerate their efforts we wanted to put8 these

1 points up on the screen.

2 So we're going to wind up now, we
3 appreciate your patience, thank you all for staying
4 and being a part of these discussions.

5 We have had a habit of all standing
6 and taking just a moment to be quiet and center
7 ourselves and to just in your own way perhaps
8 through your own faith just to take a moment of
9 silence and to think about, to pray for our
10 community, to pray for the purposes and work that
11 we have here and then well be dismissed. So let's
12 just take a moment please, bow your heads and
13 center yourself. Thank you.

14 Amen and thank you for being here.

15

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17 (Whereupon, the hearing concluded at 9:03 p.m.)

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REPORTER CERTIFICATE

I, SUZANNE BENOIST, Certified Shorthand Reporter, do hereby certify that there came before me at Westview Middle School, 1950 Nemnich Road, St. Louis, MO 63136, the above-referenced parties, that the proceeding was translated and proofread using computer-aided transcription, and the above transcript of proceedings is a true and accurate transcript of my notes as taken at the time of said event.

I further certify that I am neither attorney nor counsel for nor related nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this examination is taken; further, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto or financially interested in this action.

Dated this 21st day of January, 2015.

SUZANNE BENOIST, RPR, CCR, CSR-IL

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