

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
and  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

IN THE MATTER OF:            )  
  )  
CHRISTINA SCHOOL DISTRICT)  
and NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS )  
ACT                                    )

Townsend Building  
401 Federal Street  
Cabinet Room, 2nd Floor  
Dover, Delaware 19901

Friday, December 14, 2007  
9:00 a.m.

BEFORE:

RICHARD M. FARMER  
VALERIE A. WOODRUFF  
DENNIS SAVAGE  
TERRY M. WHITTAKER  
BARBARA B. RUTT  
JORGE MELENDEZ

APPEARANCES:

MARY L. COOKE,  
Deputy Attorney General  
Counsel to the State Board of Education

DAVID H. WILLIAMS, ESQ.  
District Council Board Attorney

WILCOX & FETZER  
1330 King Street - Wilmington, DE 19801  
(302) 655-0477  
www.wilfet.com

1       ALSO PRESENT:

2               DR. LILLIAN LOWERY  
3               KELLI RACCA  
4               DAN CRUCE  
5               DON PATTON  
6               WENDY LAPHAM  
7               JAMES DURR  
8               ANN CASE

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14                       MR. FARMER: Good morning, everyone. I  
15 would like to welcome you to our meeting today, a  
16 special meeting of the Board to consider Christina  
17 School District's Neighborhood Schools Plans. I'm  
18 Richard Farmer, Vice President of the Board, and I'll  
19 be chairman of this meeting today.

20                       Mrs. Allen, our Board President, is not  
21 here. Her husband is ill at the University of  
22 Pennsylvania. He's doing fine, but she really needed  
23 to be with him as he's going through some testing  
24 today. So that's why she is not here, but she passes  
on her greetings to Christina. We're very, very happy  
to have Christina here, and all the representatives  
from Christina.

1                   The purpose of this morning's meeting is to  
2 hold an evidentiary hearing on the Neighborhood  
3 Schools Plans resubmitted to the State Board by the  
4 Christina School District as a result of the Court of  
5 Chancery's May 31st, 2001 decision which mandated that  
6 Christina submit an Act-Complaint Neighborhood Schools  
7 Plan to the State Board of Education.

8                   I wanted to point out that we have a court  
9 recorder present today, and so all of our comments  
10 will be recorded and we'll be asking each person to  
11 introduce themselves so that the recorder can get  
12 their names clearly.

13                   I'm going to at this point ask that the  
14 table here introduce themselves.

15                   MS. COOKE: Mary Cooke with the Attorney  
16 General's Office, counsel to the State Board.

17                   MR. MELENDEZ: Jorge Melendez, State Board  
18 of Education.

19                   MS. RUTT: Barbara Rutt, Board Member.

20                   MS. WOODRUFF: Valerie Woodruff, Secretary  
21 of Education.

22                   MR. WHITTAKER: Terry Whittaker, Board  
23 Member.

24                   MR. FARMER: And, Mrs. Lowery, if you would

1       like to introduce those who are going to be presenting  
2       for you today.

3                   DR. LOWERY:  Sitting at the table with me  
4       is Dave Williams, our District Council Board Attorney,  
5       and Kelli Racca is our Director of Facilities.  She is  
6       the nuts and bolts of our Neighborhood Schools Act,  
7       and you will find that as we proceed.

8                   Behind me is Wendy Lapham, our Public  
9       Information Officer; Dan Cruce, Chief of Staff and  
10      Superintendent; Don Patton is presently the principal  
11      at Kirk Middle School, but will be moving to Bayard  
12      Middle School to open that school.  Behind him is the  
13      President of our Board, Mr. James Durr, and I am  
14      Dr. Lillian Lowery.

15                  MR. FARMER:  Thank you.  The purpose of  
16      this hearing is, Christina submitted its first plan to  
17      the State Board in November of 2001.  It was not  
18      approved because it failed, among other things, to  
19      comply with grade configuration requirements of the  
20      Neighborhood Schools Act.

21                  In May 2002, Christina resubmitted a  
22      revised plan and an alternative plan.

23                  In March 2003, the State Board concluded  
24      that neither plan submitted by the District meet the

1 legal requirements of the Neighborhood Schools Act.

2 In May 2007, a group of parents were  
3 successful in obtaining an injunction blocking the  
4 closing of Elbert/Palmer School based on the fact that  
5 Christina did not have an approved Neighborhood  
6 Schools Plan in place. Vice Chancellor Strine ordered  
7 the District to submit a third Neighborhood Schools  
8 Plan, and the District has done so.

9 As before with these proceedings, the  
10 burden of proof is on the District to show that its  
11 plan meets the requirements of the Neighborhood  
12 Schools Act.

13 Mrs. Cooke, if you wish to proceed with the  
14 documents.

15 MS. COOKE: Sure. I have taken the liberty  
16 and gone ahead and premarked the Neighborhood Schools  
17 Plan Submission No. 3 as Exhibit 1 of today's hearing.  
18 The State Board did receive a revised page 16 which I  
19 have marked as Exhibit 1A.

20 I've also taken the liberty to premark the  
21 PowerPoint that's going to be used at this morning's  
22 hearing as Exhibit 2.

23 The State Board has also received some  
24 public comments prior to today's hearing. I'm going

1 to go ahead and mark that as well. First, Exhibit 3  
2 is actually a letter from the Christina School  
3 District. It looks like urging folks to get out and  
4 to vote for the referendum.

5 Exhibit 4 is a letter from the Christina  
6 School District legislators to the editor also  
7 supporting the November 6th referendum.

8 Exhibit 5 is a letter to President Jean  
9 Allen from Jea Street urging the State Board to  
10 approve the Neighborhood Schools Plan; and Exhibit 6  
11 is a November 21st letter from Council Member Hanifa  
12 Shabazz to Mrs. Allen, again requesting approval in  
13 support for Christina Neighborhood Schools Plan.

14 DR. LOWERY: May I ask a question about the  
15 first letter?

16 MS. COOKE: Sure.

17 DR. LOWERY: Was the first letter jointly  
18 written from Christina and Mayor Baker?

19 MS. COOKE: Yes, it was. It was jointly  
20 written by the Christina School District, Mayor Baker,  
21 and the City Council President Theodore Blunt.

22 MR. FARMER: Mrs. Cooke, do you wish to go  
23 ahead and swear in the witnesses?

24 MS. COOKE: I'd ask the court reporter to

1 please do so.

2 Anyone who's going to be speaking, please  
3 be sworn in.

4 DR. LOWERY: What I would like to do when  
5 we get to the question-and-answer period is, there are  
6 people here who have intimately worked through the  
7 process and other details better. So when you ask  
8 questions, I may defer to them. Should they be sworn  
9 in?

10 MS. COOKE: Yes.

11 DR. LOWERY: Okay. Great. So we need to  
12 swear in everyone who's here from the Christina School  
13 District.

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18 KELLI RACCA, LILLIAN LOWERY, DAN CRUCE,

19 DON PATTON, WENDY LAPHAM, JAMES DURR,

20 the witnesses herein, having first been

21 duly sworn on oath, was examined and

22 testified as follows:

23 MR. FARMER: Thank you. Dr. Lowery or

24 Mr. Williams, do you have any questions of how we're

1 proceeding?

2 MR. WILLIAMS: No. The submission is  
3 comprehensive. I'm sure you've had a chance to see  
4 it. And I know that this is an evidentiary hearing,  
5 we're making a record, but the presentation is going  
6 to be somewhat informal in the sense that Dr. Lowery  
7 will be kind of walking through the major points, and  
8 as she just indicated, happy to answer any questions  
9 that are left on the table either during her  
10 presentation or after her presentation.

11 MR. FARMER: We appreciate that.

12 Dr. Lowery, do you have any opening  
13 comments or would you like to just get right into it?

14 DR. LOWERY: Just a thank you on behalf of  
15 the Christina Board of Education and our community,  
16 the Christina community. Vice President Farmer, and  
17 Board Members, Secretary Woodruff, we sincerely  
18 appreciate the opportunity to come here and present to  
19 you a plan that is not the Christina School District's  
20 plan, but it's the Christina School District's  
21 community plan. We are pleased to support our  
22 District in moving forward. We are interested in  
23 making sure that we get this right so we can then  
24 start focusing on the core mission, teaching and

1 learning and student achievement.

2           Seventy-eight percent of the 100 percent of  
3 the people who voted during our November 6th  
4 referendum voted for the preferred plan, and to us  
5 that sent a message that the engagement in which we  
6 involved them throughout the process gave them  
7 complete ownership of this plan. We were very  
8 pleased. Of course, we're always concerned with those  
9 who do not have children in schools. And when we  
10 interviewed people, and when the media interviewed  
11 people who were senior citizens who didn't have  
12 children in the school, they too supported this plan  
13 as much as those who have kids in schools every day.  
14 So we come to you as a voice, as a messenger to give  
15 the message from the Christina community at large, and  
16 we appreciate the opportunity.

17           MR. FARMER: It's our pleasure to have you  
18 here today. I'd be remiss if we didn't -- I  
19 personally but I'm probably speaking on behalf of the  
20 Board to congratulate the District for passing the  
21 referendum. Having been through a couple of those  
22 nasty things myself back in the day, it's not easy,  
23 and it was really, truly just uplifting to see the  
24 amount of support you've gathered in just a short time

1       you've been here, although I'm sure you feel like  
2       you've been here for decades at this point.

3                        If the Board has no questions for  
4       Dr. Lowery or her team at this time, Dr. Lowery, let's  
5       proceed.

6                        DR. LOWERY:   Would you mind if I sit at the  
7       podium?

8                        MR. FARMER:   Whatever makes you  
9       comfortable.

10                      DR. LOWERY:   Thank you.   The Board has this  
11       PowerPoint.

12                      We want to get to three points this morning  
13       if we do nothing else.   We want to first -- and I was  
14       glad to hear Vice President Farmer give kind of a  
15       chronological history of our previous applications  
16       because what we're going to update you with today are  
17       data points that completely illustrate that the  
18       Christina School District that came to you in 2001 and  
19       2002 to present the Neighborhood Schools Act is not  
20       the Christina School District that we are today in  
21       2007.   In that vein, we will share with you the data  
22       points, and we will share with you the background, and  
23       the premise on which the community came to this  
24       Community Consensus Plan that we will present to you

1       today as well. And then as our attorney said, we will  
2       answer any questions as thoroughly as we possible can  
3       with everyone involved because I always appreciate  
4       when people talk about the good things that have  
5       happened in the short time that I've been here, but I  
6       must also point out, they could not have happened  
7       without the people who are sitting in this room with  
8       me because they're the ones out in the field doing a  
9       lot of the nuts and bolts.

10                       That plan that was submitted to you in  
11       2001, 2002 had variables for concern that are no  
12       longer the case. We have completely different sets.  
13       For example, in 1978 when the court and the  
14       legislation mandated that we desegregate schools in  
15       New Castle County -- you can see the map here. All  
16       the districts in New Castle County are contiguous  
17       except Christina School District. There are 15 miles  
18       between 80 percent of our District and another 20  
19       percent of our District, that is the City of  
20       Wilmington. So some of the remedies that other New  
21       Castle County districts could come to very quickly are  
22       difficult for us because we have to overcome those 15  
23       miles, those 660 square miles.

24                       Also, in 1996 when unitary status was

1 declared, two other things happened in the State of  
2 Delaware: One was that Delaware became a State of  
3 choice, and it became a State of charter. With the  
4 advent of choice and charter, a new reality became the  
5 Christina School District.

6 In 2001 to 2002, there were about 20,000  
7 students in our School District. If you look at our  
8 School District today, we're about 2,000 students  
9 less. There are only about 17,000 students, 17,200.  
10 More telling is that there are about 29,000 students,  
11 K through 12 who live in the Christina School District  
12 and only 17,200 of them attend our public schools, our  
13 traditional public schools.

14 One thing that is completely different that  
15 was not also present when we came to you before is  
16 that 48 percent of our District qualifies for free and  
17 reduced lunch. That was not Christina in 2001, 2002.  
18 We believe there are two variables that precipitate  
19 that. One is that as students make a choice for  
20 charter or private, those tend to be our students from  
21 our most affluent families, our middle and upper  
22 middle class, and I don't want to generalize because  
23 you will see as we go on that that's not always the  
24 case. So we're taking away some of our most affluent

1 students, but we also have a person who is now in  
2 charge of Child Nutritional Services who has made it a  
3 mission to go out and identify families who need to  
4 access free and reduced lunch so that our students can  
5 get universal breakfast and maintain healthy living  
6 throughout the school day.

7 In the last bullet, you can see the data,  
8 2,129 students within Christina attended charter  
9 schools. That's just the charter school attendance.  
10 That doesn't count the private school attendance. And  
11 nearly 500 of those students live in Wilmington. So  
12 as we go through, I want you to take with you the data  
13 point that we have about 1500 K through 8th grade  
14 students who live in the City of Wilmington. About  
15 500 of them chose charters because they were closer to  
16 home; high poverty, racially identifiable charter  
17 schools within the city because they wanted to be  
18 closer to home.

19 This is the piece when we talk about sound  
20 educational practices and how we develop conducive  
21 teaching and learning environments that we must  
22 overcome, and the State was very insightful when it  
23 crafted the Neighborhood Schools Act Plan to address  
24 this immediately.

1           The transitions that these students go  
2 through before they get to high school tends to engage  
3 them in a very choppy learning experience.

4           For example, our suburban students make at  
5 least three transitions before they get to high  
6 school: K through 4, and then 5 through 6, and then  
7 back out for 7 through 8 before they get to high  
8 school. They are bused two years to go from the  
9 suburbs into the city. More telling is that our  
10 students who live in the City of Wilmington make at  
11 least four transitions before they get to high school,  
12 and they are bused for eight years. For eight years  
13 they are bused. And the reason that seven of those  
14 years must be that way is that there are no secondary  
15 schools in the City of Wilmington. So the only middle  
16 school or high school that we currently have in  
17 Christina School District rests in our suburban areas.

18           So what brings us here today? Vice  
19 President Farmer probably articulated that as well as  
20 I could in his opening statement. I won't be  
21 redundant. We know about the earlier applications.  
22 But in 2004, Christina started to try to get closer to  
23 the mandated Neighborhood Schools Act Plan and they  
24 formed a transformation plan, and with the

1 transformation plan what they actually did was to  
2 set-aside seats at some of our suburban elementary  
3 schools, all except four to be exact, so that students  
4 could have at least 60 seats in their neighborhoods.  
5 But those who could not get through the lottery choice  
6 still had to travel into the city. There also was  
7 limited 6th grade. The configuration of 6th through  
8 8th put at Shue-Medill about 240 seats. So that had  
9 to be a lottery as well.

10           And then as that was happening, we just  
11 quietly started putting the city kids where we had  
12 room now because we were moving some of those seats  
13 out and we had capacity as the 4th and 5th graders  
14 left to allow the City of Wilmington students to start  
15 staying in their neighborhood schools as well. So we  
16 started adding some limited 2nd and 3rd grades at  
17 three of our city schools: Bancroft, Palmer, and  
18 Bayard, with Palmer getting K through 1. So some of  
19 our schools have, through consensus with our community  
20 even before this, started trying to move closer to the  
21 neighborhood schools configuration.

22           The strategic plan, of course, proposes  
23 that we go with putting more 5th grade seats in the  
24 city, in the suburbs, at all schools. We wanted to

1 get to exactly where we were going with this community  
2 plan. K through 5, elementary; 6 through 8; 9 through  
3 12. Two transitions. You go to kindergarten through  
4 6th grade; you stay there for those six years; you  
5 make your transition to middle school, 6 through 8.  
6 You stay there for three years, and then you go to  
7 high school. And research shows that the 6 through 8  
8 configuration is far more academically advantageous  
9 for students. Because when 7th and 8th configuration  
10 exist, by the time you get to 7th grade to settle down  
11 and kind of moving in the right direction, it's 8th  
12 grade, and they are gone. So the 6 through 8 really  
13 gives teachers more time for further articulation and  
14 time to hone those relationships with the families and  
15 the students that need to be honed.

16 We propose putting all the 5th graders in  
17 their neighborhood schools, and we were going to look  
18 at AstroPower as a middle school. As many of you  
19 probably already know, there was a referendum passed  
20 in 2002 that provided for an elementary school and a  
21 middle school in the suburban area. The Route 40 area  
22 in our District is the area that's proliferating like  
23 you wouldn't believe. It's just growing. It's almost  
24 as if someone is pouring fertilizer out there, and

1       they are coming with kids and like that. So what we  
2       were going to do when we proposed that plan is get  
3       some capacity in these districts so that we could ease  
4       up and let that happen. We proposed closing  
5       Elbert/Palmer because in most cases in urban centers  
6       all over this country, as the housing and the  
7       revitalization of our urban centers increase, the  
8       housing for low economically status families become a  
9       little more difficult. And we have far more capacity  
10      in the city than we have students with far less  
11      capacity than we need in the suburbs. So we were  
12      going to close the school. Elbert/Palmer still to  
13      this day, even though we were enjoying to keep it  
14      open, does not even earn its principal. What we had  
15      to actually do was combine through Delaware Code  
16      Elbert/Palmer with another elementary school so that  
17      it would qualify an assistant principal. So  
18      technically what we have running Elbert/Palmer today  
19      is an assistant principal that is tied to Bayard  
20      Elementary School. So she is a school leader.

21                   When that happened, the city and some of  
22      the parents of the Palmer community, as you all know,  
23      went to court to ask for an injunction. The  
24      injunction was granted on May 31st. That's when we

1 received a decision, 2007, and we were compelled to go  
2 and comply with the Neighborhood Schools Act law.

3           The key challenges and hardships for  
4 Christina are those that you know. As I pointed out  
5 at the very beginning, that 15 miles constrains us  
6 like it constrains no other New Castle County District  
7 as far as trying to keep our schools diverse in ways  
8 that will not be possible without busing. And I talk  
9 about the more seats in Wilmington than we have  
10 students. And all of our secondary schools are in the  
11 suburbs, limited choice, and that's not pleasant at  
12 the end of the year when we're trying to open schools  
13 and someone's kid didn't get choice. That's a hard  
14 pill to swallow for a parent. And then the eight  
15 years of busing for our City of Wilmington kids. In  
16 fact, the State did make a good point. It does put an  
17 undue burden on those students who live in the City of  
18 Wilmington to be bused for eight years when our  
19 suburban students are only bussed for two. And the  
20 long bus ride -- I love to tell the story because it  
21 really hits home that this is across the District.  
22 This isn't one part of our District over another.

23           When I first got here one summer, a mother  
24 came in from the City of Wilmington and she sat in my

1 office and cried because her child was getting ready  
2 to go to 2nd grade, and he was being assigned to West  
3 Park Place Elementary School, and she wanted to go to  
4 Bayard. Bayard was closed because it was filled to  
5 capacity. So she didn't get a choice seat at Bayard.  
6 We did end up putting her in Bancroft, but she said, I  
7 don't have a car. I know nothing about that area. If  
8 my child got sick, I wouldn't even know how to get to  
9 West Park. I don't even know where that is. So this  
10 is a parent who was concerned about how she would get  
11 to her child in case of an emergency, is she going to  
12 go to a PTA meeting? Is she going to go over when she  
13 has sometime off to read to her child? It's not going  
14 to be possible. She doesn't have the means to do  
15 that. So the long bus ride is an obstacle not only  
16 for students, but for parents who want to be involved  
17 with their student's (sic) teaching and learning.

18 So CSD, when we had that injunction stayed  
19 by the court, and we were compelled to write our  
20 Neighborhood Schools Act Plan, we went into a corner  
21 and decided, what do we do now? And we decided, okay,  
22 we gave it our best shot as a staff, so now what we've  
23 got to do is go to the community and say to them,  
24 we've made informed decisions; we gave it our best

1 shot in the best interest of students because when we  
2 were going to recreate those schools in the city, K  
3 through 5, we had found a way to diminish class sizes  
4 K through 3 in all of our city schools to a 1 to 15  
5 ratio. We were going to use some of our ref money,  
6 that's referendum money for kindergartners. We were  
7 going to use some of our Title funds to ensure that  
8 when we did that, those students would have smaller  
9 class sizes in full-day K. So we've done the best  
10 that we can given the resources that we have. What do  
11 you want us to do? And that's exactly how I started  
12 that meeting.

13 I was not at the first meeting, and parents  
14 had an opportunity to talk with staff about what their  
15 differences were, and when I got to the second  
16 meeting -- I was actually at UVA with the Secretary of  
17 State Teams during the first meeting. When I walked  
18 in, here is the superintendent, Well, what are you  
19 going to do? I said, We've done what we could do  
20 based on the data. You tell us now what you want us  
21 to do. And that started the community engagement  
22 process. We set parameters for the discussion. And  
23 the first part, we went in, we had our parameters, and  
24 we were going to run it just these ways. This is how

1       it's going to happen, and the community said, No,  
2       you're not. We don't want to break off into  
3       subgroups. We don't want to go to other rooms and  
4       talk and bring it back. We want everybody to stay in  
5       the room right now so we can all hear each other's  
6       thoughts, city and suburbs. And that staff isn't  
7       coming back telling us what they think they heard  
8       someone say; we can hear what each other is saying  
9       ourselves. So those were the parameters. There were  
10      none. This was going to be an open discussion.

11                 We identified potential hardships and  
12      challenges, and I think as you see, as we go through,  
13      you will understand better the Community Consensus  
14      Plan because the city parents could hear what the  
15      suburban parents were talking about; the suburban  
16      parents could hear what the city parents were talking  
17      about. And guess what? They were saying the same  
18      things. A parent is a parent, and that parent wants  
19      what's best for his or her child. It doesn't matter  
20      where they live. And so we reviewed and discussed the  
21      options that were put before us and generated a plan  
22      to bring back to our Board.

23                 Now, usually what happens in a case like  
24      this is, we go out into the community and people

1 present their plans to us, and then we go as a staff  
2 and we craft the plan and we come back and say, Well,  
3 what do you think about this? That's not what we did.  
4 We did not have one meeting out of the public. We had  
5 the University of Delaware, the Art Program there.  
6 Kelli Racca has an excellent relationship with them.  
7 She used to work there. And so they came in as a  
8 consultant, and we had a live geographical information  
9 system right there in public. And each dot  
10 represented a kid, and we could take kids and move  
11 them right there. All that was done in public.

12 Wendy and Dan captured the notes as they  
13 were making suggestions, and we would go back and  
14 modify it if they had asked us to modify it, and we  
15 would come right back to them. Never did staff have a  
16 meeting outside of the public except to integrate what  
17 people had asked us to integrate. And what was lovely  
18 about this is -- and you'll see the data in a few  
19 slides -- all of the suburban parents who were engaged  
20 came to the city meetings, and all of the city parents  
21 that were engaged came to the city (sic) meetings. So  
22 we ended up having a core group of about 40 to 50  
23 people who were there from day one, and traveled both  
24 ways because they wanted to make sure that nothing was

1 changed that they didn't agree to.

2 We've received an excellent response.

3 These are the people: Elected officials. Mayor  
4 Baker's in-house attorney and his external attorneys  
5 were at every single meeting. Board members,  
6 community leaders, City of Wilmington representatives,  
7 people who have been community activists in Wilmington  
8 for years, and people who were in the old Newark  
9 District were right there with us every step of the  
10 way. Our union groups were there, and the CSD staff.  
11 We had open dialogues and sometimes it was challenging  
12 dialogues, and they asked tough questions, and we had  
13 to give answers that were realistic, and sometimes  
14 that wasn't easy, but I think at the end, they got to  
15 the point, they understood that, we, CSD District  
16 staff will not make to you a promise that we cannot  
17 keep. So let's talk in realities, and I think we  
18 understood the realities as we crafted this plan.

19 This is what they wanted to do: First and  
20 foremost, keep all the schools open in Christina  
21 School District. We say Wilmington city schools, but  
22 they wanted all the schools to stay open in the  
23 District.

24 Access to quality education. Closest to

1 home, closest to home, closest to home. As I said  
2 earlier, one of the key points made by the City of  
3 Wilmington parents is, Why are our kids being bused  
4 for eight years? That's not fair.

5 We talked a little about a middle school.  
6 We had not put in our March 13th plan a middle school  
7 because during the transformation plan, the previous  
8 administration did, and it was received poorly. I  
9 mean, they wrote letters to the editor, We don't want  
10 a middle school in the city. We need to do something  
11 else. We don't want our kids K through 8 locked in.  
12 But now that our numbers have decreased and we look at  
13 our data, our standardized testing data, and our  
14 attendance data, and our dropout data, what they're  
15 saying is, You know what? Why would you build two new  
16 schools in the suburbs and still keep our kids busing?  
17 Give us a middle school in the city. Okay. We didn't  
18 think you wanted that. If that's what you want, then  
19 we'll go back to the plan where we're going to make  
20 Bancroft a middle school. We don't want Bancroft to  
21 be a middle school. We want Bayard to be a middle  
22 school. Bancroft is right in the heart of the city.  
23 These kids can walk out there and get themselves in  
24 trouble. It's okay for the little ones. We're just

1 not comfortable with our middle school kids being that  
2 accessible to the city. Put them in Bayard. It's a  
3 little more secluded; it's at the edge; it's a better  
4 environment. Okay. Then we'll go with Bayard. Both  
5 of the schools were old junior high schools. So both  
6 of them have the structure. It wasn't a big deal.  
7 That helped us because the reason we were closing the  
8 elementary school in the city was, we didn't have  
9 enough students to fill the buildings. Once they  
10 decided that they wanted Bayard to become a middle  
11 school, we had to put those students who were now at  
12 Bayard, about 800, 900 of them, someplace else. So as  
13 we dispersed the city students throughout the city, it  
14 gave us enough students to earn what we needed, and  
15 the Delaware Financial Management System to keep them  
16 open.

17 So the other four schools: Bancroft,  
18 Palmer, Pulaski, and Stubbs will become elementary  
19 schools.

20 And go ahead and complete Porter Road.  
21 That was almost nonnegotiable because if you go down  
22 Route 40 schools, they're in closets. There's no  
23 place else to put them. I walked through a school the  
24 other night at a PTA meeting. We were walking in the

1 hallway. I said, Is this a classroom? Because they  
2 had a desk in the hall, and they had mobiles on the  
3 wall, and there was a mentoring corner like a little  
4 reading corner for pullouts. So we need capacity in  
5 the suburbs in a huge way.

6 The biggest thing is that there be fewer  
7 moves and stability and credibility. And then we can  
8 push back a little more on the community and say,  
9 There are no excuses. Let's take away as many excuses  
10 as we can. Now that your child is in your  
11 neighborhood, how can we partner with you so that we  
12 can all help our children be successful?

13 We work with Wilmington and State  
14 committees looking to create a high school in the  
15 city. Senator Margaret Rose Henry is heading up a  
16 Wilmington Education Task Force, and I don't want to  
17 get into that because I'm just a member. That's not  
18 Christina. But what I did say to them when they  
19 started pushing, Now that we're going to do Bayard, we  
20 want a high school in the city. I told them that is  
21 not a Christina concern, that is a New Castle County  
22 concern. That's bigger than we are. So that's headed  
23 up by Senator Margaret Rose Henry, and I guess the  
24 results of that will come through General Assembly to

1       you if the recommendations are taken for it.

2                       Implement 5th grade in all elementary  
3       schools, and review retaining Astro for future growth.  
4       We still have the Astro building, and, of course, any  
5       building that we own is 60 percent owned by the State,  
6       so that would be a collaborative conversation we have  
7       to have with the State about what we do with Astro.  
8       And we can finally get middle schools to be really  
9       middle schools, 6th through 8th grades.

10                      Now, the community engagement -- and I told  
11       Mrs. Case this morning, we're glad that we got to this  
12       point with the committee, but what was more profound  
13       for the District, given the year and a half that we've  
14       just lived through, is the engagement of the  
15       community. What we did was above and beyond Delaware  
16       Code because, as you know, the Neighborhood Schools  
17       Act legislation says, once we've crafted a plan that's  
18       been approved by the Board, we have to have five  
19       community hearings, public hearings so that the public  
20       can give us feedback on what they think. Because we  
21       had done so well, we thought, in getting together a  
22       huge steering committee -- because we had  
23       representation from every community on that March 13th  
24       strategic plan. They were there at the table, but

1       apparently it wasn't getting as filtered as we thought  
2       throughout the community. We were never going to put  
3       the Board in a position of voting for a plan that the  
4       community did not embrace. So what we did above and  
5       beyond the Neighborhood Schools Act legislation was  
6       hold those design workshops that I talked to you about  
7       earlier. We held eight of them. Before we even took  
8       anything to our Board, we held eight of them and  
9       crafted that plan in public, and pretty much got the  
10      community's blessings before we even took it to the  
11      Board to vote on. And then we have the five mandated  
12      meetings, and we've been meeting with everybody.  
13      We've been engaging everybody. We've been trying to  
14      be as transparent as we can.

15                 Our legislators, as you will note from the  
16      letters that they wrote on our behalf, have been with  
17      us from day one. We keep them apprised as much as we  
18      possibly can, and we're glad to tell you that at every  
19      meeting: The eight design workshop meetings, the  
20      public hearings, and the legislative hearings, our  
21      Board members have been in partnership with us there.  
22      They've been there with them.

23                 So what is the plan? To reconfigure the  
24      District K-5, 6-8, 9-12; minimize transitions; provide

1 quality education for all students. It is a community  
2 plan. It is not our plan; it is a community plan.

3 When you read Councilman Street's letter,  
4 you will see he put in bold, it is a consensus plan.  
5 It is the consensus of the community. We're excited  
6 because it creates full-day kindergarten for our  
7 students. We want to make sure, as you saw early on,  
8 48 percent of our District qualifies for free and  
9 reduced lunch. So Wilmington does not have a monopoly  
10 on poverty. Poverty is throughout our district. And  
11 we worry about our students coming ready to learn.  
12 And as soon as we can get them, we want to get them  
13 there. And so what the legislative mandate allowed  
14 was for everybody to have kindergarten, but one has to  
15 have capacity. And we now because of declining  
16 enrollment and because of the passed referendum, we'll  
17 have capacity. By 2009 we intend to have full-day K  
18 in all of our schools.

19 The assignments are as follows: Everybody  
20 has a K through 8 neighborhood school experience,  
21 everyone: Our Wilmington students, and our suburban  
22 students. And because all of our high schools still  
23 sit in the suburban areas, then our students would  
24 have to go to the three high schools in the suburbs.

1                   What we've done though in the same vein of  
2 neighborhood schools is, those configurations for our  
3 Wilmington students, and our suburban students at the  
4 elementary level will be the same cohorts that go to  
5 the high school. So our Wilmington students will go  
6 to the neighborhood school K through 5, and so will  
7 our suburban students. Six through 8, our Wilmington  
8 students will go to Bayard, still in their  
9 neighborhood, and our suburban students to their  
10 assigned feeder patterns.

11                   When they get to the three high schools in  
12 the suburbs, those students who went to elementary  
13 school together will stay together. That's not the  
14 case now. Not only are they making all these  
15 transitions before they get to high school, then when  
16 they get to high school, they may not even be in  
17 school with the same students that they've gone up  
18 through the ranks with. That's no way to build  
19 relationships.

20                   So this next year August of 2008, the city  
21 will be whole because if we can make sure that we get  
22 what we get done, and we will, we will assign K  
23 through 5 at the four schools as I articulated before.  
24 The city next year will implement full-day

1 kindergarten at every school. And Bayard will open as  
2 a middle school.

3 Don Patton, as I said -- Mr. Patton who's  
4 here with us will be the principal. Not only is  
5 Mr. Patton the principal of Kirk, and who has received  
6 recognition from the Lieutenant Governor for the  
7 excellence that he's done in the school with an avid  
8 program to push education, he's also been recognized  
9 by the Chamber of Commerce for the work he's done at  
10 Kirk. But most importantly, and I think what touches  
11 the city in a very profound way is, he grew up in the  
12 city. He went through city schools. They know him.  
13 He's one of their own, and he's very tough. He's very  
14 tough. So those kids are going to get in there and  
15 they are going to learn no nonsense with Mr. Patton.  
16 As a matter of fact, I was talking to one of the City  
17 Councilmen and they were concerned about the high  
18 poverty schools and what was going to happen with  
19 those kids in the Bayard community. They were  
20 wondering who's going to really be there to make this  
21 work. And I said, Well, you know, Don Patton is going  
22 to go in and be the principal of the school. He said,  
23 Okay. Even I don't mess with Patton. So we'll be  
24 okay. So thank you, Mr. Patton, for signing on to

1 give back to your community. And then we'll assign  
2 students 9 to 12 in the proposed feeder patterns.  
3 That's next year.

4 In the suburban area, students will  
5 remain -- the K through 5 students in their K through  
6 4 because we already have K through 4 for our  
7 students. So they will stay in those same feeder  
8 patterns until Porter Road is constructed the  
9 following year. Because, as I said, we are so over  
10 capacity out there, we will have to put portable  
11 classrooms at Leasure and Marshall, and keep the ones  
12 at Wilson and Keene just to bridge over until Porter  
13 Road opens.

14 We will review a schedule for full-day  
15 kindergarten implementation, and assign students 6  
16 through 8. So now all four middle schools will have a  
17 6 through 8 configuration. K through 5, 6 through 8.  
18 And then the 9th grade the same.

19 The following year when we hope to complete  
20 the plan and comport with the referendum, the city is  
21 already done because they're going to be done when we  
22 open next year. Then the suburban area, we will open  
23 Porter Road Elementary. We will reassign the students  
24 according to feeder patterns, and implement full-day

1 kindergarten in all of our suburban schools.

2 When people talk about poverty, we're  
3 creating high poverty schools in the city. When we  
4 have neighborhood schools, the people who attend the  
5 schools are the people who live in the neighborhood.  
6 So we just want to give you a summary of what that  
7 really means.

8 Last year we had no schools -- that 75  
9 percent mark where one uses Title funds and one goes  
10 in with full school Title, that 75 percent free and  
11 reduced ratio did not exist last year. Just to give  
12 you an idea, some of our kids would go to charter, and  
13 then those who elect to choose to go to other  
14 districts because of this crazy configuration -- and I  
15 must add too that we who are even able to keep our  
16 kids K through 4, where we saw the biggest number of  
17 students leaving was after 4th grade because they did  
18 not want to start the transporting and so they would  
19 leave. And then it caught on, if I really want to get  
20 into a charter school or a private school, I probably  
21 need to get in early so I'm going to kindergarten, if  
22 I can, or as soon as I can get in so that I'm not  
23 traveling.

24 In 2007, we have two schools that reached

1       that threshold of 75 percent, and they are in the city  
2       and they are Bancroft and Bayard. Next year there  
3       will be five, and they will be the five city schools.  
4       And I'm going to point something out on the next  
5       slide. It's the middle school and four elementary  
6       schools. Those schools that are over 40 percent -- we  
7       had 12 last year; we have 18 this year because the  
8       numbers increased, but when we disperse the students  
9       in the neighborhood schools, it goes back down to 12  
10      unless something else happens with the economy, and we  
11      all know that families have challenges as we go  
12      through this current economy. So we've been asked  
13      over and over again, What resources do you have? And  
14      as I said early on, I can only talk about the  
15      resources that we have, that we hold in hand. And as  
16      we build trust among our constituents, the business  
17      community, and write grants with the University of  
18      Delaware, and do some creative things, we wanted to  
19      bring to you what we could actually control. And what  
20      we control are the resources that we get, federal or  
21      state outside over and above the Delaware Financial  
22      Management System. And there they are: Reading  
23      First. All of our city schools have Reading First,  
24      and they're doing great things with our kids.

1                   Full-day kindergarten for at-risk students.  
2           That's the Ref Program. That was a referendum that  
3           was voted in the District before I got here. So that  
4           even though the State offered half-day K, the local  
5           community decided that some of our at-risk students  
6           needed a full day of school, so they gave us  
7           referendum money to do that.

8                   Our English Language Learners Title money.  
9           Extra time/after-school money. The secretary and her  
10          staff worked with schools so that we can be creative  
11          with how we use that. And we just have to write a  
12          proposal, and we have some flexibility in that.

13                   Additional professional development money  
14          comes to us, and school climate and discipline money.

15                   Because some of our schools already are  
16          under improvement because of no child left behind,  
17          there's also school improvement money that we have.

18                   This is the point that I wanted to make to  
19          you about going from the 12 to 18 to the 12. When we  
20          reconfigured the schools, 2007-2008, here are the  
21          numbers. You can see it for yourself with Bancroft  
22          and Bayard reaching that 75 percent threshold.

23                   2009-2010 when we're completed with this,  
24          the numbers will go up, the percentages of free and

1 reduced lunch. But look at the number of kids. In  
2 Bancroft you're going from 703 students to 367. So  
3 even though the percentage goes up, now you have a  
4 smaller school environment.

5 I met with Nancy Brickhouse, who's Director  
6 of Education at the University of Delaware, and the  
7 fabulous staff she has assembled. These are people  
8 who are doing research in urban who are already doing  
9 some things in our school. Because Bancroft will  
10 have so much capacity -- Secretary Woodruff and  
11 Provost Rich really were instrumental in getting me at  
12 the table with them -- they want to do a professional  
13 development school, and they want to do it at  
14 Bancroft. So in addition to a lower number, 367, we  
15 will have the University of Delaware sitting in that  
16 school all the time with their students, and it will  
17 do a couple of things for us: Number one, it will  
18 give us more hands on deck. It will make sure that  
19 everything we're doing are current best practices,  
20 research based best practices, and it will bring  
21 students in who will start early on in their  
22 educational training to work with urban students and  
23 families, and we hope it will help us to attract,  
24 select, and retain people who really understand the

1 community and who really believe in our kids and  
2 believe that our kids can learn. So when we look at  
3 percentages, I want you to put percentages in some  
4 kind of a realistic term.

5 Now, probably the biggest jump is going to  
6 be at Pulaski. We go from 272 students, 57 percent,  
7 58 percent to 374, about 102 students, to 74 percent,  
8 and that's okay. And the reason that's okay is  
9 because we will do creative things with our ELL money  
10 because what has happened to our poor ELL students --  
11 poor meaning we've not done a good job, not poor  
12 economically or anything about them. We move them  
13 wherever we have capacity. So although they live in  
14 that Pulaski area, we could count over the last six or  
15 seven years, they've probably been moved to four  
16 different schools because, Oops, the population grew  
17 at Bancroft, so now let's move the program to Pulaski.  
18 Oops, Pulaski got so big, so let's move the program to  
19 Stubbs. They got moved around because it was a  
20 program. Now we ensure their community, just like we  
21 ensure every other community; your kids get to stay in  
22 their community too because they were even talking  
23 about -- the Latino community -- starting a charter  
24 school because they were sick of it. So they were

1       there. In all of our community forums, they had  
2       representatives there, and they are pleased with that  
3       plan.

4                   The rate of poverty versus travel. In  
5       2001-2002, one of the arguments that we made is that  
6       we wanted to make sure that we maintained a good  
7       balance over the travel. So let's keep busing because  
8       the balance was more important. The demographics have  
9       changed. Forty-eight percent of our District is free  
10      and reduced lunch. Look at by school. Look at by  
11      school, the free and reduced ratios. I mean, it is  
12      distributed across the District, and when we go into  
13      2009-2010 enrollment for our elementary schools, we  
14      diminish that. We've spread it out a little more, and  
15      we're not just spreading it out because we're  
16      spreading because it's the right thing to do, we're  
17      putting students in their neighborhood schools, and  
18      that's most important. And we will give the resources  
19      that we do have where we need to give the resources.

20                   At the secondary level, the numbers are  
21      there. Bayard will be 77, 78 percent for free and  
22      reduced lunch. So look at Bayard. It will have that  
23      large percentage, but look at the number of students  
24      from the other schools. It will be our smallest

1 middle school. It will have Mr. Patton there doing  
2 what he does, and we are already -- Mr. Patton  
3 e-mailed me this morning about going to visit a school  
4 in Boston that's kind of a Boston charter school.  
5 We're looking at all kinds of opportunities to work  
6 with our union. We don't want to charter our schools.  
7 We like our schools the way they are, but work with  
8 our union representatives to see how we can have some  
9 flexibility and do things outside of the Collective  
10 Bargaining Agreement to get our kids on board. We met  
11 with all of them yesterday. They want us to be  
12 successful because they know our success as a District  
13 is their success as an organization.

14 In the high school we will have then in  
15 2009-2010, nothing over 40 percent because that's how  
16 well distributed they will be. Are there any  
17 questions?

18 MR. FARMER: I'll ask questions about  
19 Bancroft. Looking at your projections for capacity,  
20 and it says approximately if everything falls through,  
21 it should be about 36 percent. What kind of plans do  
22 you have for the use of the rest of that building, or  
23 how is that going to be addressed? Because I know you  
24 guys worked real hard and came up with a plan to close

1 the school obviously.

2 DR. LOWERY: With Bancroft, that's where  
3 we're going to be in partnership with the University  
4 of Delaware. Nancy Brickhouse and her staff -- I met  
5 with eight people, including Nancy -- I forget what  
6 day it was. Wednesday, I think -- at the University  
7 of Delaware and they are already brainstorming some  
8 ideas. That was the partnership that Secretary  
9 Woodruff and Provost Rich helped me to kind of garner  
10 with them. So they will move in. They will move into  
11 Bancroft; they will have offices there; and they will  
12 have classrooms for their students. There's a program  
13 like that in Milford I visited with Nancy where they  
14 have in-house classes and professional development,  
15 and so their students will report there and take their  
16 classes there, but they will be working with students  
17 and teachers along the way. It will be a  
18 developmental research based creative environment. So  
19 they will move in there.

20 MR. FARMER: As I look at it, having some  
21 excess capacity in a building is a good thing because  
22 you can move kids around; sometimes you can break into  
23 smaller group instructions and do some things that you  
24 can't do when the school is at capacity which had

1 always seemed to be where I was stuck being.

2 My concern always is -- and Mr. Street  
3 addresses it -- you're going to have high poverty  
4 schools, very racially identifiable. I was talking  
5 with Mr. Patton before we started today. I'm a true  
6 believer in the neighborhood schools because one  
7 school where I was a principal, I had a section of  
8 kids that had to travel about 15, 18 miles, and I  
9 never got that community to embrace that middle  
10 school. When I could count on parents' support in  
11 attendance, and help, and all the things you do in  
12 middle school, it was only those parents that lived  
13 close by. And it wasn't because they didn't care. No  
14 matter what we tried, we could not get them to buy in.  
15 And I really believe that a neighborhood school can do  
16 that despite high poverty and despite racially  
17 identifiable. And I like the fact that -- I've known  
18 Mr. Patton for -- we go back about 40 years, I think.

19 MR. PATTON: I'm not as old as you.

20 MR. FARMER: He's got a big job ahead, but  
21 he has big shoulders that can carry that, and I didn't  
22 realize until we talked to him and you spoke about his  
23 connection to the community, I didn't realize -- I  
24 knew he had gone to Wilmington High School, but, you

1 know, that's significant. I would like to hope that  
2 having been a community person from William Penn High  
3 School that that made a difference at William Penn  
4 High School, which I think it did. So I think that's  
5 extremely important for your school.

6 Now, let me present this to you. Your kids  
7 are going to be closer to home in the city. For eight  
8 years now they're going to attend their neighborhood  
9 schools. You've got 500 kids elsewhere, charter. You  
10 talked about some of the reasons why they left. Kids  
11 left to go to charter schools or other schools. I  
12 mean, obviously when it came to 5th grade, they were  
13 booking out because they didn't want to ride that bus  
14 that long, and I can't blame them. And obviously they  
15 started choosing earlier to go elsewhere.

16 Are you planning for some impact because I  
17 can envision with the success of your plan, you know,  
18 if we approve it next month, that you're going to have  
19 some kids coming back. And with the success that I  
20 believe you're going to have in your schools with your  
21 leadership and with those around you, you know, do you  
22 have a plan?

23 DR. LOWERY: We leave no stone unturned.  
24 This woman -- I don't know if she sleeps, she has Plan

1       Z. You know that saying, your Plan A is only as good  
2       as your Plan B, I think she's all the way down to Z.  
3       So may I defer to Kelli? And we do look forward -- as  
4       a matter of fact, Mr. Patton says he's going to fill  
5       Bayard up. He's talking about taking students from  
6       other districts. We do have a plan.

7                   Kelli, would you speak to that?

8                   MS. RACCA: Sure. Kelli Racca from  
9       Christina.

10                   When we did the layout for the city and for  
11       the suburbs, because that can happen in both  
12       directions, we tried to never place our feeder  
13       patterns over about 85 percent. So as we reconfigured  
14       our entire District, all of Christina -- keeping in  
15       mind just hoping that that would be where we would  
16       be -- where we would be able to attract back many of  
17       the students that we've lost over the last few years,  
18       in our city schools we have built-in capacity. We  
19       still are only at 60, 65 percent, 70 percent at any  
20       given school.

21                   Mr. Patton, you'll probably be out in front  
22       in terms of filling Bayard first. As we went through  
23       this entire process, that was always in the back of  
24       our minds that we want to make sure we build in

1 capacity for the next four to five years with that as  
2 an option.

3 DR. LOWERY: And we did use DelDOT data.  
4 We've worked with the Department of Ed. Secretary  
5 Woodruff's staff have been great giving us everything:  
6 Projections ten years out, where building is coming  
7 with our realtors. We've done comprehensive studies  
8 of projections. Because what we didn't want to do was  
9 to get to the point where three years from now we're  
10 having to change feeder patterns because that can be  
11 as challenging as a referendum when you start moving  
12 people's kids around from school to school.

13 MR. FARMER: How many kids do you expect to  
14 still have choice from the city to the suburban  
15 elementary schools? Do you have an idea at all?

16 DR. LOWERY: That's going to be a concern  
17 that we do have. Because choice transportation as the  
18 law reads now is that you get to the closest school.  
19 Well, if the closest school is 15 miles away, we don't  
20 know. So without transportation, that number is  
21 probably going to be a lot smaller than it would if we  
22 could look at something like that. The Board has  
23 challenged us to come up with a plan, and Kelli is  
24 working with Bob Laws, our supervisor of

1 transportation, to see what would it cost to maybe run  
2 one bus through the city and one through the suburbs  
3 if people wanted to go back and forth. But given the  
4 current way that transportation is funded, we don't  
5 think that -- you know, Jean White is one of our  
6 longtime Newark residents and speaks at almost every  
7 Board meeting. We don't think that people would want  
8 to leave their neighborhood schools, but we do want to  
9 be mindful that there may be some for whatever reason  
10 want to. So I can't give you a definitive number. We  
11 hope that we'll be doing such a great job servicing  
12 students and their families where they are that they  
13 will be comfortable in their neighborhoods.

14 MR. FARMER: I just would like you to  
15 reiterate the hardships. You've mentioned your  
16 capacity, your school capacity issues in developing  
17 this plan and why this plan is coming forward.  
18 Certainly travel. Anything else that I'm forgetting?

19 DR. LOWERY: The transitions; those choppy  
20 experiences, especially in our students' most  
21 formative years. We know the K through 5. We want to  
22 make sure -- our goal is that every child reads at  
23 least at 5th grade level. It is too easy to go this  
24 way when a kid has been in three or four different

1 schools. This way, I'm pointing in all different  
2 directions. When people are at three or four  
3 different schools. Because who really takes ownership  
4 of the child and the child's academic history and  
5 record? So that is key. I have to tell you because  
6 our core mission is teaching and learning, our key  
7 purpose in this is getting these children stabilized  
8 in a conducive teaching and learning environment. So  
9 the travel isn't everything. We know that people are  
10 choosing to leave our District because they don't want  
11 to travel. With or without our action on this,  
12 they're making choices that stipulate that, and it  
13 gives us the best use of our resources. Because  
14 instead of spreading the resources all over the place  
15 trying to follow the kid year after year, we know  
16 where our children are now, and we can concentrate  
17 what resources we have where they are, and then we can  
18 plan in a more meaningful way because we know the  
19 population -- we know the population is going to be  
20 there. They're not going to be in and out, so we can  
21 kind of project how we use our funds in a most  
22 beneficial way.

23 MR. FARMER: I like what you said to us,  
24 your plan, that if kids attend Stubbs, then they go to

1 Bayard, then they're going to go to whichever high  
2 school they're going to go to. I think that's very  
3 significant that there's some identification there  
4 that those kids will go to school together for eight  
5 years. They have their friends for eight years, and  
6 then they move into a high school and, yes, there's  
7 going to be all kinds of other diverse communities  
8 there, but at least they go in together knowing a  
9 segment of the population of the school. It's very  
10 difficult to do transitions.

11 Don, you're going to have it the hardest  
12 because you're going to be transitioning 5th graders  
13 and 6th graders into Bayard in another year, and then  
14 you're going to be helping your 8th graders transition  
15 into high school, the three different high schools,  
16 but that's a lot easier than, Well, 2nd graders, now  
17 you're going here for third grade. Fourth graders,  
18 now you're going here for 5th grade. I think that's a  
19 very, very good thing with your plan.

20 Members of the Board, do you have  
21 questions?

22 DR. WHITTAKER: Dr. Lowery, you mentioned  
23 about the Astro facility being for future growth.  
24 What do you perceive will happen with that building?

1 DR. LOWERY: The way that we are looking at  
2 our 2nd, 3rd grade cohorts in the suburbs, that we may  
3 need more middle school capacity. We have to work in  
4 collaboration with the State on that, but we do have  
5 little bubbles where we may need some more capacity at  
6 the middle school. We are in the process of that.

7 The State is renovating the Sterck School,  
8 and we will have some vacancies. I mean, we have some  
9 possibilities. So I don't want to just leave the  
10 impression that it is only for future growth. It may  
11 be used for something else. That's something that we  
12 have to work out. In other words, I'm not going to  
13 say it's just going to sit there and wait for a school  
14 to be finished and opened. It very well may be  
15 something that we sell or something like that.

16 DR. WHITTAKER: I'm somewhat concerned  
17 about the Wilmington configuration getting back to the  
18 poverty and the racial composition, demographics. And  
19 as you know, there's a perception, I guess, in the  
20 community, especially Wilmington, resegregating as far  
21 as the demographics itself.

22 The concern I also have is the teaching  
23 staff that will be assigned to the Wilmington in the  
24 sense of the composition and the ethnicity of the

1 teachers. The reason I bring this up is, as you know,  
2 I work at the university. It's a multicultural  
3 university, things of that nature, and interaction  
4 with diverse groups is part of education as well. And  
5 looking at the students' interaction, especially in  
6 the middle schools in Wilmington, my concern again  
7 is -- I know this wasn't predicated on race because we  
8 can't do it, but it was predicated on transition,  
9 making the transition smoother. So what I'm asking  
10 is, knowing that race is a component of education -- I  
11 mean, we are a diverse society; we have to learn to  
12 relate with each other, and some of that is learned at  
13 the earlier stages, especially in the elementary  
14 schools -- when you mentioned that they were buying in  
15 from the community, especially what I call the  
16 disenfranchised, the people of high poverty levels and  
17 ethnicity, were a lot of those individuals at the  
18 table discussing some of this at the meetings? Did  
19 they have a voice in some of --

20 DR. LOWERY: Absolutely. Absolutely.  
21 It's kind of like Mr. Street said in his letter, in a  
22 perfect world, it would not be the choice that they  
23 have, but in this reality who we are right now, it is  
24 the choice they make.

1                   What we're going to have to do we think  
2                   creatively to build up trust in our community so we  
3                   can get alternative kinds of funding sources is look  
4                   at other kinds of ways to get to the socialization  
5                   part of it. For example, JPMorgan Chase wanted to  
6                   come in last summer -- they probably will this  
7                   summer -- with the Delaware Symphony and with the  
8                   Delaware Theater Company and run an enrichment program  
9                   in the summer with our city students having first  
10                  preference, but also opening  
11                  it up District-wide. So children can interact that  
12                  way.

13                  We started something last year, for  
14                  example, in middle school in particular. We kind of  
15                  revitalized our intramural program in a more  
16                  competitive way so that the schools within the  
17                  District are competing against each other. We're  
18                  trying to look at opportunities where even if they're  
19                  not sitting in the classroom beside them, some of the  
20                  enrichment activities and some of the extracurricular  
21                  activities, we will purposefully try to determine ways  
22                  that we can get our District-wide to integrate because  
23                  when they get to high school, they will be playing  
24                  sports together; they will be in band together; they

1 will be doing those kinds of things together. Those  
2 are the kinds of opportunities we're going to try to  
3 look at K through 8: District-wide band programs,  
4 things like that where kids will -- especially once  
5 they get to high school -- immediately form groups  
6 among themselves.

7 MR. FARMER: It's a real challenge, I  
8 think, Mr. Patton, with your kids -- and we're talking  
9 down the road obviously three, four years. The  
10 challenge is going to be, you're going to have a group  
11 of kids from the city who have interacted only with  
12 those kids for essentially eight years. They're going  
13 to be moving to Christiana, Newark, or Glasgow, and  
14 those schools already have -- they're very racially  
15 mixed already. But the challenge is going to be, the  
16 kids coming from Bayard are going to have the least  
17 amount of exposure to other ethnicities. That's going  
18 to be the challenge, Dr. Lowery, for that transition.  
19 That's going to be a big transition. Your District is  
20 going to have to work on something to help that out.

21 DR. WHITTAKER: Getting back to Wilmington  
22 schools as far as the funding. You mentioned that.  
23 I know there are Title 1 funds. My concern is the  
24 stability of the funding. I know Title 1 is

1 contingent on administration, and just trying to  
2 ensure that the students have the resources that are  
3 equitable and comparable to some of the suburban  
4 resources.

5 DR. LOWERY: What we hope to do as we go  
6 forward, what we first need to do in our community is  
7 what we said we're going to do. I mean, the first  
8 couple of meetings was the community kind of letting  
9 us know in clear terms, you promised us this five  
10 years ago. Ten years ago someone promised us this.  
11 We don't know if we believe you or not. What we've  
12 got to do, if we can enact what they just voted on in  
13 the referendum, the middle school and the elementary  
14 school. Finally, they did something they said they  
15 were going to do. They're in their neighborhood  
16 schools, and they're feeling comfortable about that.

17 We've got to go out for operating, but it  
18 has to be a targeted operating. It has to be, Okay,  
19 here we are. Here are these schools. What are you  
20 going to do about it? What are the challenges? And  
21 how are you going to meet those challenges? And the  
22 same process we use for this referendum will be the  
23 exact same process we use for the operating. Because  
24 we have to articulate to them what our challenges are,

1 and then once it becomes referendum, those monies will  
2 come in every year. But beyond that, we have to work  
3 with funding sources, foundations, cowrite grants with  
4 the University of Delaware. The most stable funding  
5 is the Delaware Financial Management System. That's  
6 the funding system. So beyond that, it's going to be  
7 a matter of -- and that's why we're so glad about the  
8 process we just went through. It's building the  
9 community's trust so that people will invest in  
10 Christina.

11 MR. FARMER: Any other questions from the  
12 Board?

13 Mrs. Cooke.

14 MS. COOKE: Thank you. I just have a  
15 couple of questions to clarify a couple of things in  
16 my mind here. It's my understanding that from K to 8,  
17 the students in the District will be attending the  
18 elementary schools, and the middle schools closest to  
19 their residence.

20 DR. LOWERY: Yes.

21 MS. COOKE: Now, when it comes to high  
22 school, 9 through 12, is it correct that the students  
23 may or may not be attending the high school that's  
24 closest to their residence?

1 DR. LOWERY: Our suburban students will  
2 because that's where the high schools are. Our  
3 Wilmington students don't have a high school in their  
4 neighborhood, so they have to go out to the suburbs.

5 MS. COOKE: Okay. And when they go out to  
6 the suburbs, are they going to be assigned to the high  
7 school in the suburbs that's closest to their  
8 residence?

9 DR. LOWERY: If we assign the students of  
10 Wilmington closest to their residence, they would all  
11 be at Christiana High School. And there's only a two,  
12 three mile difference for the transport when we  
13 disperse them among the three schools.

14 MR. FARMER: In other words, if they all  
15 attended the closest school which would be Christiana,  
16 that would overpopulate that school. I remember  
17 seeing that in your submission, like 130 percent or  
18 something like that to capacity.

19 MS. COOKE: And that's the substantial  
20 hardship that the District is claiming to support  
21 dispersing the kids.

22 DR. LOWERY: Yes.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: The extra few miles to  
24 Newark or Glasgow is de minimis compared to

1 transporting all the way back and forth to and from  
2 the city.

3 DR. WHITTAKER: With that said also, if the  
4 Wilmington High School comes into fruition, how would  
5 that impact the transition?

6 DR. LOWERY: Well, what we would do again  
7 is put the kids closest -- we would assign them to  
8 feeder patterns closest to their school. But it's a  
9 State of choice, so they could still choose to go to  
10 another high school.

11 If a Wilmington High School comes into  
12 fruition, we're not just talking about Christina  
13 because Christina alone cannot support a high school.  
14 So that's what Senator Margaret Rose Henry's committee  
15 is doing, looking at all the districts that serve the  
16 City of Wilmington. But the premise would be the same  
17 neighborhood school with choice.

18 MS. COOKE: I have one last question just  
19 to get this clear on the record. Does Christina plan  
20 to assign students on the basis of race or racial  
21 composition of the schools?

22 DR. LOWERY: No.

23 MS. COOKE: Thank you.

24 DR. WHITTAKER: You mentioned also the cap

1 on choice for students is 60?

2 DR. LOWERY: Because 5th grade really  
3 doesn't exist technically in our current feeder plan,  
4 all 5th and 6th grade students are supposed to attend  
5 schools in the City of Wilmington. Through the last  
6 administration, 60 5th grade seats were placed at  
7 suburban schools. So every elementary school in the  
8 suburbs has 60 seats available for choice. And the  
9 reason we did that was, because the schools are so  
10 populated, there's no more room for more than 60  
11 seats.

12 DR. WHITTAKER: Okay.

13 MR. FARMER: Any other questions?

14 Mrs. Cooke, do you have any other  
15 questions?

16 MS. COOKE: No, I do not.

17 MR. FARMER: Do we have any public comment,  
18 Mrs. Case?

19 MS. CASE: No.

20 MR. FARMER: Mr. Williams, Dr. Lowery, do  
21 you have any closing statement you would like to make?

22 DR. LOWERY: I would just say that over the  
23 last year and a half, we have wonderful faculty and  
24 staff who have stayed focused on our children, and so

1 good things are happening in our schools, but we have  
2 spent an inordinate amount of time and energy working  
3 through where they are going to sit in the  
4 Neighborhood Schools Plan. We would love to get this  
5 resolved in a way that is amenable for all. And  
6 because it is a Community Consensus Plan, and it was a  
7 plan that was crafted by our community District-wide,  
8 we appreciate the opportunity for you to hear us, and  
9 we certainly respectfully ask that you give strong  
10 consideration to the plan so that we can, as much as  
11 possible, make parents happy about their schools, put  
12 kids in the most conducive learning environment, and  
13 really start focusing on what's happening inside the  
14 classrooms, and address our student achievement.

15 MR. FARMER: Thank you very much.

16 DR. LOWERY: Thank you for this  
17 opportunity.

18 MR. FARMER: The reason we're all here is  
19 for kids, but you all have had some other overwhelming  
20 problems that you've had to address in addition to  
21 taking care of kids, and I really admire the work you  
22 all have done.

23 I want to let everyone know that there will  
24 be two public hearings on this plan. There will be

1 one in the city, and the Board Members, if you will  
2 mark your calendar, it is January 7th at seven p.m.  
3 and that's going to be at the Bayard School. And I  
4 believe, Mrs. Case, you've provided some maps for  
5 everyone.

6 MS. CASE: January 7th is at Keene.

7 MR. FARMER: Oh, I'm sorry.

8 MS. CASE: January 10th is at Bayard.

9 MR. FARMER: January 7th will be at Keene  
10 Elementary; January 10th will be in the city at the  
11 Bayard Elementary School.

12 I would like to inform everyone that we  
13 will be deliberating your plan on January 17th.  
14 That's our regular Board meeting day in January from  
15 nine to ten a.m.

16 There's a change in our time for the Board  
17 meeting that day. We will start our regular Board  
18 meeting at ten o'clock because it coincides with the  
19 Governor's State of the State Message that afternoon.

20 So we will deliberate at nine o'clock on  
21 Thursday, January 17th to make the decision about this  
22 plan at that time. Certainly you or a representative  
23 are welcome to attend. And if there's no other  
24 further business, I'll take a motion to adjourn.

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MS. RUTT: So move.

DR. WHITTAKER: Second.

MR. FARMER: All in favor?

THE BOARD: Aye.

MR. FARMER: This hearing is concluded.

Thank you very much, everyone.

(Hearing adjourned at 10:15 a.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Vera T. Sitze, a Notary Public and Registered Professional Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing is an accurate and complete transcription of the proceeding held at the time and place stated herein, and that the said proceeding was recorded by me and then reduced to typewriting under my direction, and constitutes a true record of the testimony given by said witnesses.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee, or attorney of any of the parties or a relative or employee of either counsel, and that I am in no way interested directly or indirectly in this action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal of office on this 12th day of September 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_

VERA T. SITZE, R.P.R.

Reporter Certificate #257-RPR, Exp. 01-31-08

