

**In The Matter Of:**  
*Wilmington Education Improvement Commission*  
*P.S. DuPont Middle School*

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*Public Hearing*  
*November 30, 2015*

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IN THE MATTER OF:

WILMINGTON EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION

REDISTRICTING IN THE CITY OF WILMINGTON  
AND NEW CASTLE COUNTY: A TRANSITION,  
RESOURCE, AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Public Meeting of the Redistricting  
Committee of the Wilmington Education  
Improvement Commission, taken pursuant to  
notice at P.S. duPont Middle School, 701 West  
34th Street, Wilmington, beginning at 6:30 p.m.  
on Monday, November 30, 2015, before Jennifer  
M. Guy, Registered Professional Reporter and  
Notary Public.

BEFORE:

JOE PIKA  
HENRY HARPER



1 MR. HOLODICK: Good evening,  
2 everyone. Welcome to P.S. DuPont Middle School  
3 here in the Brandywine School District. We are  
4 conducting our WEIC town hall meeting. This is  
5 the first I believe of four meetings that are  
6 going to be -- five meetings, pardon me, that  
7 will be held here in the New Castle County  
8 greater Wilmington area. So we are very  
9 pleased that we are opening this feedback  
10 session, if you would, here in Brandywine.

11 We have our entire Board of  
12 Education joining us this evening. I'm just  
13 going to introduce our board quickly. Board  
14 president John Skrobot is with us; vice  
15 president Ralph Ackerman is here; board member  
16 Joe Brumskill; Cheryl Siskin; Michael Falstad;  
17 Karen Gordon; and Kristin Pidgeon. So I thank  
18 our seven board members for being here to be  
19 part of this commission meeting, and also hear  
20 the feedback from our local community.

21 I'm going to turn it over to our  
22 two chairs, Dr. Henry Harper and Dr. Joe Pika.  
23 Thank you.

24 DR. PIKA: Thank you, Mark. I



1 wish I had a great big voice like that. I once  
2 did, but I don't have a great big voice  
3 anymore.

4 We are here this evening to  
5 conduct a public hearing on the draft plan that  
6 has been released. And Henry Harper is here  
7 with me, as is Greg Coverdale, who is a member  
8 of the State Board of Education.

9 For those of you who have not  
10 been to a public hearing before, Henry and I  
11 are the public officers for this event tonight.  
12 And just a few procedural items for the record.  
13 I'll be reading from a script. Later in the  
14 script, I'll open the floor to those who have  
15 signed up to make comments.

16 I declare this public hearing to  
17 be open. My name is Joe Pika, I am the  
18 co-chair of the Redistricting Committee of the  
19 Wilmington Education Improvement Commission. I  
20 have been appointed by the chairman of that  
21 commission to conduct this public hearing.

22 The Wilmington Education  
23 Improvement Commission Interim Redistricting  
24 Report was released on November 17, and we are



1 here tonight to gather public comment. This is  
2 not a question-and-answer session. Let me  
3 repeat that: this is not a question-and-answer  
4 session on that plan.

5 This hearing provides the  
6 Wilmington Education Improvement Commission and  
7 the State Board of Education with an  
8 opportunity to receive public comment on the  
9 commission's interim report that was released  
10 on the 17th of November.

11 We also have other commission  
12 members with us this evening. And rather than  
13 going around and asking everyone to introduce  
14 themselves, let me just introduce Tony Allen,  
15 who is the chairman of the Wilmington Education  
16 Improvement Commission.

17 We also have up here in the front  
18 a court reporter who is present to provide an  
19 accurate record of this hearing. It would be  
20 necessary for each speaker to clearly identify  
21 himself or herself by name and affiliation  
22 before beginning to speak so that the court  
23 reporter will be able to note who you are in  
24 the transcript.



1                   The record of this hearing and  
2 the other three hearings will be provided to  
3 the members of the Wilmington Education  
4 Improvement Commission and the members of the  
5 State Board of Education together with any  
6 written or electronic comments received at this  
7 hearing or outside of this hearing between  
8 November the 17th and January the 14th. This  
9 meeting is also being recorded, and that  
10 recording will also be posted and shared with  
11 the State Board of Education for their review.

12                   We'll proceed in the following  
13 manner: We'll take comments from anyone who  
14 desires to speak. There are sign-up sheets at  
15 the back of the room. We have one that has  
16 been delivered to us from those who signed up  
17 early. If there are others who have come in  
18 later and desire to speak, please sign up on  
19 the sign-up sheets in the back of the room.

20                   Sign-up began at 6:00 p.m., and  
21 we will end that sign-up at 7:30, at which time  
22 we'll collect the remaining sign-up sheets.  
23 I'll allow individuals to speak in the order in  
24 which they signed up, and I'll begin with the



1 first sign-up sheets now. Each individual will  
2 have three minutes to speak. Each group will  
3 be allowed five minutes to speak. And we have  
4 a timekeeper right here who will be happy to  
5 remind you of how that clock is going.

6 Those giving testimony will be  
7 given 30 seconds' warning, and then will be  
8 told to stop after their time is up. For those  
9 who have come this evening with questions, I  
10 really am very sorry, but procedural guidelines  
11 do not allow us to answer questions during the  
12 public hearing.

13 We'll start, then, with the first  
14 person who has asked to give public comment,  
15 Joseph Lazartic. Mr. Lazartic?

16 We'll move on, then. The second  
17 one is J. Noonan.

18 MS. NOONAN: I wasn't planning on  
19 commenting; I thought it was just a sign-in  
20 sheet.

21 DR. PIKA: Third, Ashley  
22 Dalzell-Gray.

23 MS. DALZELL-GRAY: I too, thought  
24 it was a sign-in sheet.



1                   Hi, my name is Ashley  
2 Dalzell-Gray, I'm a parent here at P.S., so I  
3 am in the Brandywine School District.

4                   I guess one of my concerns or  
5 questions about this is as a parent with  
6 children in here, are we, again, I guess as --  
7 again, I'm not sure, and it doesn't make clear  
8 in the plan how the commission is going to  
9 guarantee that the redistricting in and of  
10 itself will be of benefit to the students. I  
11 don't see anything that seems to be  
12 redistricting for the sake of redistricting and  
13 trying to identify the needs of low income  
14 students. But again, as a parent, I'm  
15 concerned that at the end of the day, there's  
16 no real implementation plan in here that  
17 guarantees me as a parent that the changes are  
18 going to be the benefit, and there's some way  
19 to guarantee that the changes are going to be  
20 of benefit to the students in the classroom.  
21 There seems to be a lot of rhetoric, but not  
22 concrete plans, if I'm reading this correctly  
23 of what is really going to be impacting the  
24 students, other than changing them around from



1 one building to another building. And at the  
2 end of the day, how do we make sure that  
3 students get the actual resources that they  
4 need other than just the adults changing the  
5 landscape a little bit, and not really  
6 impacting the classroom.

7                   So that's my public comment. And  
8 again, I would say also for the various board  
9 members that are present, both from the state  
10 and at the district level, again,  
11 decision-makers, are you really making the  
12 right decisions on behalf of all children, or,  
13 again, the perception of helping children, but  
14 again, at the end of the day, how are you as  
15 board members guaranteeing that this is going  
16 to change the lives of all students. Not only  
17 those that are low income, but also for those  
18 students that are in the whole building. We  
19 need to make sure that our students today,  
20 whether they're from income, middle, low, high,  
21 whatever, that they have a culture within their  
22 buildings that brings all of them together to  
23 support each other and to make sure that when  
24 they get into society, that they all have the



1 skills to understand each other's side of the  
2 fence. Does that make sense?

3 So again, as board members, I  
4 really wonder how is this plan going to be  
5 implemented, and how is it any different than  
6 all of the other plans we've been hearing about  
7 through the years. So that's my concern as a  
8 parent with children in the district. Thank  
9 you.

10 DR. PIKA: The next person who  
11 have signed up is Len Church.

12 MR. CHURCH: My name is Len  
13 church, I'm a retired federal employee of  
14 30-plus years, and I've been in the district  
15 for about, we'll say 30-plus. And what I just  
16 would like to propose to not only the panel  
17 here, but also the board, is that this was my  
18 high school, and there are some of my  
19 classmates that are probably here, as well.

20 And what we recognize in this  
21 process -- can we pick this up? Well,  
22 whatever. What we recognize in this process is  
23 something that was eliminated a long time ago  
24 in terms of we had people who were in Excel,



1 and in Excel, one of the things I recognized as  
2 a young African American male was I had someone  
3 to emulate in that process, and I also had  
4 someone who I could mimic. And I say that in  
5 terms of this: Those teachers that will put  
6 forth over to us in Excel and the ones who  
7 achieved the ultimate in Excel were the ones  
8 that went on to do other things. I would just  
9 like to say this, one of them was Velda  
10 Jones-Potter, who actually was a part of this  
11 along with Representative Charles. Those were  
12 people who, as far as I'm concerned, they were  
13 ones who were high achievers like us all along  
14 with Mr. Dave Johnson, he was one of the high  
15 achievers in this process. And I'm just  
16 utilizing those because they may be not even be  
17 here. But the base of this process is that  
18 they were all mimicked by individuals who not  
19 only looked like them but proceeded to teach  
20 them the way they were taught. Now, what I'm  
21 looking at in a broader scale coming up to 2000  
22 and I could go to '78, but I'm going to go to  
23 2014 for dates that passed me. But when the  
24 Warner School was discombobulated, and some of



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1 you board members remember that, you  
2 implemented those kids over to Shortlidge, and  
3 that was K through 12. Well, those kids are  
4 unmanageable, and I'm quite sure that the board  
5 knows of it, I'm quite sure you get a few  
6 complaints about that, and maybe the  
7 commission, maybe you just need to take some  
8 time to go over there and see where the process  
9 may lie. And I realize the social problems and  
10 all these other things.

11 But after 9/11, one of the things  
12 we recognized was the state's demographics  
13 changed, and they changed because Delaware  
14 actually began to import people from out of  
15 state. And I won't name those states because  
16 I'm quite sure if you don't know, you can look  
17 that up on the internet. Once they came down  
18 to take that land, that was an influx in the  
19 state economy, and those individuals who were  
20 there decided that they didn't want to send  
21 their kids to public school. And in that  
22 process, what they decided to do was push not  
23 only the charter school systems, but also the  
24 systems where which individuals would not be



1 able to be educated along with my own. And  
2 when I say my own, individuals that look like  
3 me. Not overlooking anything in that process,  
4 just saying to the fact that these are -- these  
5 are direct facts that can be viewed, and they  
6 also can be substantiated to where which we  
7 also know that in that process, everybody has a  
8 right to choose, but the fact is that is that  
9 in the best interest of our kids?

10 And when I say that, I just say  
11 that, like I said, federal employee, I had four  
12 work campaigns, I survived. I'm back here.  
13 And the only thing I can say is this: Not only  
14 am I disgusted, but I'm appalled at what I see.  
15 Because how am I going to be able to pass on to  
16 the people that I trained to recruit people to  
17 hold on to a system that's broken? And it is  
18 broken. And for some of us who don't want to  
19 realize that, I suggest that you ask yourself a  
20 question: Do you really want ISIS to be at  
21 your back door? And I'll leave it at that.

22 DR. PIKA: Thank you, Mr. Church.

23 The next speaker is Stephen  
24 Washington. Mr. Washington?



1 MR. WASHINGTON: How you doing  
2 this evening? Just one question regarding the  
3 process. How many teachers actually involved  
4 in this process?

5 DR. PIKA: As I said at the  
6 outset, we are not here to be able to answer  
7 questions for you, Mr. Washington. I'm sorry.

8 MR. WASHINGTON: I just ask  
9 because in the process, there has to be  
10 integrity. And if everyone is not included in  
11 the process, there's no integrity of the  
12 process. That's all I have to say.

13 DR. PIKA: Thank you,  
14 Mr. Washington.

15 Michael Falstab?

16 MR. FALSTAB: I didn't have a  
17 comment.

18 DR. PIKA: Didn't have a comment.  
19 State Representative Potter.

20 REPRESENTATIVE POTTER: Good  
21 evening. How is everyone?

22 I was one of the ones to help put  
23 the legislation together along with Senator  
24 Henry to make this happen along with the



1 moratorium of charter schools. And I just want  
2 it to be in the record that I believe greatly  
3 that we need to improve the education of the  
4 City of Wilmington youth. My legislative  
5 district is located in the First District in  
6 the City of Wilmington. Children have been  
7 disproportionately affected by desegregation,  
8 and I believe that the Education Commission's  
9 plan to reduce the school districts from four  
10 districts to two and examining funding sources  
11 for students with extra needs as part of their  
12 overall effort will strengthen the education of  
13 the City of Wilmington and prove to be very  
14 beneficial to children in the city. I urge the  
15 State Board of Education to accept the  
16 Wilmington Education Improvement Commission  
17 plan in its entirety; no deviations.

18 I want to thank you for your  
19 consideration. I want this to be part of the  
20 record. I'm here wearing two hats. Also I'm  
21 going to give you this letter from the Delaware  
22 Black Caucus, and on behalf of the Delaware  
23 Black Caucus, please accept the statement of  
24 support of redistricting in the City of



1 Wilmington New Castle County transition. It  
2 goes on to say that the caucus extends its  
3 support to the long-term recommendations of  
4 strengthening the revenue base that supports  
5 public education at both the state and local  
6 levels. And you can read the rest as part of  
7 the record.

8                   And I will just say that I know  
9 that Colonial wants to now expand their efforts  
10 into the city, and they only have a small  
11 portion of students in the city. And I say  
12 that, you know, we need to reject that.

13                   This is a great opportunity for  
14 the city and the State of Delaware to help make  
15 education right for the city and for the state.  
16 Because as the city goes, the state goes, and  
17 we need to do the right thing now. We lived  
18 through the desegregation process, and it's  
19 been a failure, so let's get it right this  
20 time.

21                   DR. PIKA: Thank you, State  
22 Representative Potter.

23                   Yes, State Representative.

24                   REPRESENTATIVE POTTER: Also



1 someone who didn't speak up and they want to  
2 speak, they can still speak?

3 DR. PIKA: Yes.

4 REPRESENTATIVE POTTER: So I  
5 encourage those of you who want to speak,  
6 speak; it's for our children's education.

7 DR. PIKA: The next speaker is  
8 Nnamdi, help me with the last name, Chukwuola.

9 MR. CHUKWUOLA: My name is Nnamdi  
10 Chukwuola. This is my district. I welcome you  
11 all, proud grad coming from Brandywine School  
12 District as my high school. And I'm a member  
13 of the WEIC. I am, as State Representative  
14 Potter said, I'm hopeful, encouraged by the,  
15 say, attention being given to the issue of  
16 education within the City of Wilmington. I am  
17 very I would say cautiously optimistic, but I'm  
18 struggling within myself to find true just  
19 belief that, as Ashley mentioned, the  
20 implementation of this great work that's being  
21 put forward is truly going to come. I remember  
22 early in the process, there were mentioning of  
23 the stars aligning, and everything seemed to be  
24 lining up. 5nd unfortunately for me, they



1 aren't anymore. I'm really, again, struggling,  
2 trying to understand how we are believing that  
3 we're moving in the best interest of the  
4 students of Wilmington.

5 And I say where we are again in  
6 Brandywine School District, I know that  
7 Brandywine and Colonial has presented their  
8 resolution from their board. I know  
9 Brandywine, the board has stated that they  
10 don't want to increase the number of children  
11 being served. I don't see how we're moving  
12 toward a two-district model when we don't have  
13 two districts moving forward together.

14 I'm struggling with trying to  
15 understand how, you know, we're putting so much  
16 burden on Red Clay District and how we're  
17 giving Red Clay so much, I guess credit in  
18 essence to say that they're going to do this,  
19 they're going to do that. And with Red Clay  
20 having the opportunity to have been the only  
21 district that is authorizing charters in the  
22 state and we're saying that that gives them the  
23 upper hand. But Red Clay hasn't, as far as the  
24 districts, the schools that they have



1 chartered, they've been very hands off, and  
2 they haven't been the best when it comes to  
3 educating Wilmington students. And I struggle  
4 with that. I struggle with just thinking that  
5 things are going to work themselves out.

6 I think that it deserves a  
7 greater deal of attention paid to the true  
8 limitation, what's going to happen, how are  
9 some of these things going to be put in place,  
10 the role of City of Wilmington. I know it's  
11 been mentioned in the WEIC report about the  
12 office of education and public policy and how  
13 we begin to create a voice in the City of  
14 Wilmington and the education of its children.  
15 I believe it's important.

16 I am, again, in support of the  
17 process, but I just see that there are gaps in  
18 the implementation, and again, I'm just  
19 struggling, trying to find that true support  
20 for it. Thank you.

21 DR. PIKA: Thank you. Darlene  
22 battle?

23 MS. BATTLE: Good evening. My  
24 name is Darlene Battle; I'm representative for



1 the Delaware Alliance for Community  
2 Advancement. And I received this paper just  
3 today, and reviewing it, I do have some  
4 concerns, and I know you guys cannot answer it,  
5 but I'm putting myself in the place as if I was  
6 a parent. My question is where are the  
7 parents? How is the message getting out to  
8 them? Why aren't there more folks here? And I  
9 just felt that you guys did a poor job getting  
10 the information out.

11 Because I'm looking here, one, it  
12 says that you put the -- you said that the  
13 arrangement posed by the Court in 1976, it had  
14 failed the students -- well, it failed our  
15 children, black children. And I look over  
16 here, and it seems that we don't have the  
17 money, and you're going to fail our children  
18 again with all -- this is a proposal, and  
19 you'll fail our children again unless all of  
20 the outlines that is here is saying that  
21 they're going to put the funds up to educate  
22 our children.

23 So I have a lot of questions, and  
24 I know you guys can't answer it. But how was



1 the information distributed up to the parents  
2 in all the schools? I see one mother over here  
3 with her children, and I wonder if she, does  
4 she really understand this? So that's my  
5 comment.

6 DR. PIKA: Thank you, Ms. Battle.  
7 Is there anyone else here in the  
8 audience who would wish to make a comment this  
9 evening? If you would sign up. Latasha  
10 Shackelford.

11 MS. SHACKLEFORD: Hello. My name  
12 is Latasha Shackelford. My concern as a  
13 parent, I just literally today found out the  
14 information. Luckily my cousin told me about  
15 it this morning.

16 It's really concerning and  
17 alarming as a mother, as a parent, to try to  
18 merge three school districts into literally  
19 two. For one, what are we thinking about as  
20 far as the children as far as their resources,  
21 as teachers, as establishing the foundation  
22 first before we sit up there and try to, you  
23 know, dismantle everything.

24 Let's try to build up the schools



1 individually or the district to make sure that  
2 we have stable teachers, teachers that are  
3 going to bring forth, you know, the performance  
4 of excelling these children as far as making  
5 sure that the resources are there for them to  
6 be able to grab on, instead of just, you know,  
7 just throwing everything together. Let's try  
8 to do that first before we try to, you know,  
9 just say, okay, we're going to do this, and see  
10 how it goes.

11 I think before you try to go out  
12 and just on a limb, I think building up,  
13 building a foundation first as far as something  
14 for the children to rely on and depend on is  
15 more important than just saying let's just do  
16 it. I don't know. I mean, it's just  
17 concerning. It's really alarming.

18 And again, like the lady said  
19 before, there should be more people in the  
20 audience as parents, but they probably didn't  
21 know, just like I didn't know. And I think  
22 moving forward, that you guys got to do better  
23 as far as this, so that we have, you know,  
24 there's more input, there's more, you know ,



1 people can really come out and say how they  
2 really truly feel on it and comment on it and  
3 voice it before you make a decision.

4 DR. PIKA: Thank you,  
5 Ms. Shackelford.

6 Is there anyone else here this  
7 evening who would like to make a public  
8 comment? I don't see anybody else signing up.  
9 I don't see anybody running to the back to sign  
10 up on the sign-up sheets.

11 You can also all make private  
12 comments, and that can be done on the Website,  
13 which is solutionsfordelawareschools.com.  
14 www.solutionsfordelawareschools, all one word,  
15 .com.

16 Are we in a Quaker meeting now?

17 Our announced time is to wait  
18 until 7:30 to collect final comments, but for  
19 those of us conducting the hearing, we must  
20 stay until 8:00 p.m. So for those of you who  
21 wonder whether there will be more comments, you  
22 might want to check in on our Website to see if  
23 there were more comments rather than waiting  
24 here in silence as we wait.



1 Yes, sir?

2 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Rather than sit  
3 here in silence, could we have a pause and if  
4 somebody comes, then we could go back into  
5 session, so we could talk amongst each other?

6 DR. PIKA: Why don't we adjourn  
7 right now. This is our advice from counsel; we  
8 only have three lawyers here to give us  
9 counsel. So we can adjourn for now, and then  
10 recommence in the event that there are more, if  
11 the flood, I'm sorry, when the flood comes.  
12 Thank you.

13 (A brief recess was taken.)

14 DR. PIKA: We'd like to call this  
15 public hearing back into order, please. We'd  
16 like to call the public hearing back into  
17 session, please. We have four speakers who  
18 would like to make comments here for the public  
19 session.

20 For those who arrived late, just  
21 to remind them that the comments are limited to  
22 three minutes for an individual; five minutes  
23 for an organization that might be represented.

24 The first speaker is Rysheema



1 Dixon. Come forward to the microphone. Thank  
2 you.

3 MS. DIXON: Hi. Rysheema Dixon.  
4 I work in probably an arena of different  
5 things. But primarily been working in  
6 Southbridge and East Side, so I've been more  
7 within the Christina School District, and  
8 seeing the effects of what the school district  
9 have had on our kids, especially in  
10 Southbridge, since a lot of high school kids go  
11 to Newark High School. And a lot of them being  
12 suspended or having to repeat the grades  
13 because they've missed 50 days of school  
14 because they couldn't get to Newark High  
15 School. So I know the trial and errors and  
16 them feeling they have to give up because they  
17 can't get to the school.

18 So I do appreciate the fact that  
19 we are trying to get them to come more into the  
20 schools that are here. The one part I think I  
21 struggle with, too, is realizing that there's  
22 no public high school in the City of  
23 Wilmington, which was kind of really  
24 interesting to me of how the city is kind of



1 set up without one. And it kind of makes it  
2 seem like when we start having so many charter  
3 schools that are popping up, but also having  
4 some of the same challenges with our kids as  
5 Red Clay, Christina, and Brandywine and even  
6 Colonial we're having with our children, try to  
7 figure out, is this really working, and is it  
8 working altogether?

9                   And being able to try to see, and  
10 hearing that it was actually one school  
11 district in the city originally as compared to  
12 you said before they had it into four, I think  
13 it seems like that's where the main issues  
14 started. And to be able to get to now where  
15 it's now back to two seems like it will be a  
16 hard time trying to figure out how our kids  
17 really will be able to transition within that.

18                   And I've been hearing even from  
19 some of the high school students already the  
20 effect of it, saying why should we even try if  
21 they're already going to cut down what  
22 Christina School District is doing. So it  
23 already inhibits what our kids feel like their  
24 ability is and what they can look forward to,



1 especially with the referendum passed this  
2 year.

3 And seeing the elementary school  
4 that's in Southbridge struggle, losing their  
5 vice principal, who was really one of the only  
6 males in the school, lose their time, has a  
7 huge effect of how young black men especially,  
8 how they only see their fathers in jumpsuits at  
9 lunchtime.

10 So I'm hoping as we try to figure  
11 out how this all is going to work, that we  
12 think about all those social ills that go  
13 around everything that's happening to our kids  
14 as we try to figure out from four to two.

15 DR. PIKA: Thank you, Ms. Dixon.

16 The next speaker is Wayna Dobson.  
17 And if you would say your name and introduce  
18 yourself.

19 MS. DOBSON: Good evening. My  
20 name is Wayna Dobson, and I am here as a  
21 concerned citizen.

22 First I want to thank State  
23 Representative Charles Potter, because if it  
24 was not for him, I would not even know that



1 this forum was taking place on this evening.

2           Second thing is that I live on  
3 the east side of Wilmington. And every day, I  
4 see my neighbors' children getting up early in  
5 the morning. Their homes are not the best of  
6 homes, the majority of them are probably living  
7 underneath of poverty. And I believe -- I was  
8 raised in private schools. And my grandfather  
9 used to always talk about the public school  
10 system when he was growing up, and everyone --  
11 a lot of people here in Wilmington went to  
12 Howard High School, and they came out being  
13 wonderful men and women. There was doctors and  
14 lawyers and judges and all, an array of  
15 different people.

16           And I believe that the same  
17 passion and value that was back then when my  
18 grandparents were in school is the same passion  
19 that we all need to have now. Like, who is  
20 going to speak up for the children who don't  
21 have a voice to speak up? They don't even know  
22 what to speak up for.

23           So I'm here on their behalf, and  
24 my desire is that you all do what's best, not



1 for you all, but for our youth. Thank you so  
2 very much.

3 DR. PIKA: Thank you, Ms. Dobson.  
4 Our next speaker is Billy Allen.

5 MR. ALLEN: Good evening. I'm  
6 Billy Allen.

7 DR. ALLEN: And I'm Dr. Allen.

8 MR. ALLEN: We came up as a  
9 couple because we firmly believe that the  
10 family and the parents are the part of this  
11 formula that is the key. Along with that, in  
12 reviewing the documentation and the executive  
13 summary, I felt the need to discuss it in  
14 reverse order.

15 Our goal is to echo what was  
16 stated. We are here to speak on behalf of our  
17 children, specifically our underserved  
18 children, which specifically you identify as  
19 children at risk. Our belief is that there is  
20 no child at risk. We believe that with the  
21 proper programs in place, but more important,  
22 the proper funding. So let's stop right there.  
23 When I look at the funding requirements of this  
24 plan to institute, I believe that we're



1 underfunded. I believe that we get the proper  
2 funding from the state, I would think that  
3 several other districts along with the  
4 districts that are stated that they would  
5 participate, i.e., Red Clay, along with  
6 Colonial will agree not to as well as  
7 Brandywine, as well as Christina agreed to.

8 I believe these districts,  
9 specifically the districts that have served in  
10 the city, if you look at the record of the  
11 district like the Brandywine School District,  
12 obviously they have the formula. But I will  
13 tell you that there has to be an investment  
14 made in that. And I'm not sure that the state  
15 in my opinion at this point is properly  
16 prepared to make the proper investment to save  
17 our children. What do you mean by that? I  
18 simply mean that whatever requirements of the  
19 program that we discuss that we need, so often  
20 I think we allocate funds based on  
21 possibilities of whatever the numbers are. My  
22 recommendation is you increase it by a minimum,  
23 I'm going to use a number of 20 percent, to  
24 over-budget for the program because of the



1 things that happen in our district. If you'd  
2 look at the history that we have along with the  
3 accountability efforts, I think we have room to  
4 improve. But there's a cost of accountability  
5 to put those criterias in place.

6 So my suggestion is twofold. One  
7 is to make sure that our accountability methods  
8 and our criteria that is clearly allocated to  
9 funds that you can properly measure and  
10 allocate it. I note in here you say you do  
11 annual reviews. I think that's great. I would  
12 suggest at the beginning of the program, we may  
13 want to do biannual. A lot of things can  
14 happen over a year, and I don't want to take  
15 the risk off of our children sacrificing a  
16 four-year education based on a recommendation  
17 that can change immediately.

18 With that said, flexibility that  
19 I think our district and our state must have is  
20 that on the fly, if we can identify an issue, a  
21 problem that we all can agree, then let's make  
22 that change. Now, that's easier said than  
23 done, I understand that. But I think for the  
24 first two, three, five years out in this



1 program, that we address that at the beginning  
2 of the recommendation and improvement from the  
3 state. Therefore, when there's opportunity for  
4 us to go back to the state for recommendation,  
5 we will have it in writing that we both  
6 mutually agree that we will make these efforts  
7 on both sides.

8 I'm not looking to change the  
9 recommendation in the law. I understand that  
10 can clearly fund, and our recommendation out  
11 front that I think it will be easier for us to  
12 describe it as we go on.

13 DR. ALLEN: What Bill has said, I  
14 think it's important if we're going to  
15 transition and really mean it, that we do put  
16 the dollars behind it. I know that was one of  
17 the recommendations. I responded to the  
18 initial documentation that came out in the  
19 report, and my feeling was we've gone through  
20 this many times to redistrict, to reorganize.  
21 And I do commend the committee for all the time  
22 and work they've put into it, that we put the  
23 funding behind it. Because again, thoughts and  
24 ideas without funding, you know, go nowhere.



1 So I think it's a great idea, but I would like  
2 to make sure that we put the provisions in  
3 place. Thank you.

4 MR. ALLEN: In closing, I must  
5 commend the committee, because it was the first  
6 one that I've seen that actually clearly  
7 defined measurements and accountability.  
8 Obviously the numbers, and I'm looking at the  
9 numbers, the number of people that now are  
10 accountable as a total number, reduce that  
11 number as a goal is clearly defined. I think  
12 the efforts that are done, but the key element  
13 of this whole effort is department funding.  
14 Thank you.

15 DR. PIKA: Dr. Allen, your full  
16 name so we have it for the record?

17 DR. ALLEN: Dr. Kim Allen,  
18 A-L-L-E-N.

19 DR. PIKA: Thank you very much.

20 MR. ALLEN: Thank you.

21 DR. PIKA: And we have one final  
22 speaker tonight, Romona Fullman.

23 MS. FULLMAN: Good evening. My  
24 name is Ramona Fullman. I am here as a



1 resident of the Brandywine School District,  
2 though I have done advocacy work in various  
3 capacities in state government agencies.

4           So my comments are brief, and I  
5 just want to frame them in the context of a  
6 quote by an environmentalist by the name of  
7 Terry Tempest Williams; some of you may be  
8 familiar with her. She says that the eyes of  
9 the future are looking back at us and praying  
10 that we see beyond our times. So the work that  
11 you have before you is about now, but it's also  
12 about the future.

13           What I know is that parents send  
14 their children, they walk, they drive, they  
15 catch the bus, to school and present them to  
16 educators and school districts and school  
17 boards and ask that they teach them all that  
18 they need to know to have upward mobility to  
19 grow as individuals and as citizens and as  
20 contributors to our economy. That is your  
21 responsibility. Any children and every child  
22 deserves that. Every child that walks through  
23 the doors are your children. If they fail, you  
24 fail, the future fails.



1                   And it's just really important to  
2 me that we take this responsibility. There's a  
3 lot of politics in this, but in the long run,  
4 whatever happens during your tenure, all of you  
5 who in your various capacities, what happens or  
6 fails to happen, you have to live with. And so  
7 I think that we collectively can do much  
8 better.

9                   There are people that are not  
10 here that should be here. Believe that  
11 parents -- you know, I do advocacy work for  
12 women, and there are lots of women who are very  
13 committed to a better life for their children.  
14 And so part of what they do, whether it's two  
15 jobs that they work or putting part-time jobs  
16 together, they hope that what they're doing and  
17 then by sending their children to school, that  
18 their life will be better. And I'm hoping that  
19 you deliver on that.

20                   So I stand before you in the 30  
21 seconds -- I have vowed not to see that sign.  
22 But I just that you be deliberate, that you do  
23 for the children of the district what you would  
24 want for your own child, each of you, each



1 child. There are lots of disparities and  
2 discriminatory things that happen. Those are  
3 the realities. But you have the capability and  
4 the responsibility to do something about it,  
5 and I hope that you'll accept that. Thank you.

6 DR. PIKA: Thank you very much.

7 Are there any other interested  
8 parties who would like to speak?

9 Hearing none, then, I would  
10 declare this hearing as closed. I want to  
11 thank you all for coming this evening. All  
12 comments made tonight or submitted between  
13 November the 17th and December the 15th will be  
14 considered as part of the final report  
15 submitted by WEIC to the State Board of  
16 Education on December the 15th. All comments  
17 made today or submitted between November the  
18 17th and January the 14th will be available to  
19 the State Board of Education to consider.  
20 Thank you again very much; good evening.

21 (Hearing adjourned at 8:08 p.m.)  
22  
23  
24



1 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER  
2

3 I, Jennifer M. Guy, RPR, do hereby certify  
4 that the foregoing record, pages 1 to 36  
5 inclusive, is a true and accurate transcript of  
6 my stenographic notes taken on November 30,  
7 2015, in the above-captioned matter.

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10 Jennifer M. Guy, RPR  
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