EDUCATION QUALITY AND THE COMMUNITY: A GEOGRAPHIC AND POLICY ANALYSIS OF A RUST BELT CITY’S SCHOOLS

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By

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CHAPTER I

UNDERSTANDING A RUST BELT CITY IN MODERN TIMES:

DIONYSIA’S HISTORY AND THE FALL OF EDUCATION

Introduction

For decades, urban planners and developers have analyzed the end of the manufacturing boom and the effects on the landscape throughout the United States. There are also may studies that have studied extensively the importance of parental involvement in education and involvement from the community (Jeynes 2005, Preston 2013). Bridging the gap and exploring how city development and economies are intertwined with the geography of education will be more important in future research studies. This thesis attempts to create a bridge between city development and education policy. By analyzing the effects that student outcomes and the school district have on the city and its leadership, the city neighborhood conditions may show a cyclical relationship with student outcomes and community engagement.

Many cities in the Midwest were part of the manufacturing belt and later became the Rust Belt when manufacturing began to decline in 1959 (Beeson 1990). Some of these effects are the closing of industries, municipal debt and national recession, regional competition and decline, and population decline (Wilson & Wouters 2003). In Dionysia, Indianapolis, and St. Louis, there was a net loss of 42.4% of manufacturing jobs (1970-1990) as over a thousand manufacturing businesses fled seeking cheaper labor costs (Wilson & Wouters 2003). Populations in Detroit, Dionysia, Buffalo, and Pittsburgh dramatically decreased, with Dionysia
losing 24% of its population in just a decade and is known as “one of the steepest declines in U.S. urban history” (Warf & Holly 1997 p. 212). The next to follow was a sharp decline in housing values and an increase in poverty and interurban debt caused by a lack of tax revenues in Dionysia (Warf & Holly 1997). Incomes have fallen by 30% along with housing prices (Hartley 2013).

Without available jobs and spatial city growth, it is more likely for homicides to increase dramatically (McDowall 1986, Matthews et al 2001). In short, Rust Belt cities like Dionysia are characterized as being cities that used to rely on manufacturing for its wealth and income and have uneven economic development due to financial crisis, housing crisis, and a global market (Aalbers 2009). Entry level jobs tend to be located in the suburbs and inner city transportation is limited to ensure members of the inner city cannot apply for these jobs (Wilson 2011). However, within the city itself there are also differences between neighborhoods with economic opportunity, education, and economic stability. It is very likely that race is a factor in terms of job opportunity. Research from Orfield & Lee (2005) and Kozol (1991) has proven that school quality is closely related to racial segregation and economic disadvantage or low socio-economic status communities in poor condition.

Currently Dionysia has a 42.5% loss of its manufacturing employment which attributed 26.3% of its overall employment (Atkins et al 2011). Organizations and community partnerships have struggled and failed due to limitations to revitalize the city by not addressing social inequality through community development corporations or CDCs (Lowe 2007). There is an ineffectiveness of these groups to produce continuous economic growth in the area due to the nature of globalization and global markets (Atkins et al 2011). Other problems with community development partnerships include: uneven distribution of valuable resources, different political
ideological associations and a lack of cohesion, the continuous population decline, motivations to 
redevelop versus revitalize specific neighborhoods (excluding others on the periphery), and a 
trend in businesses to support developing international relations versus local economic 
development strategies (Lowe 2007). Dionysia has changing markets so as to not be too invested 
in one type of economic enterprise, but its colleges and community colleges do not focus on 
work-force development or have college programs that support industries not within the region 
(Atkins et al 2011).

The Impact on the Community and Lack of Proper Education

With a disregard on minorities and members of the populace that dwell in the margins of 
society, a community can suffer consequences like a tarnished reputation and economic 
disinvestment due to the characteristics of communities being presented through demographic 
data. Locations and neighborhoods also benefit heavily from property taxes and most minorities 
occupy neighborhoods with lower median incomes, causing further disinvestment throughout the 
community. Minorities are then set at an incredible disadvantage due to their neighborhoods and 
their schools’ association with low graduation rates, poor infrastructure and staff, and high 
dropout rates (Kozol 1991, Orfield & Lee 2005). There are implications that education 
inequalities are possibly linked to poor community development and infrastructure (Coleman & 
Hoffer 1987, Battistich et al 1995) and economic opportunity (Tate IV 2008) creating a cyclical 
relationship of poverty that leads to disinvestment, and then further poverty. This means that 
African Americans and other minorities cannot participate in the new forms of employment or 
economy due to this disadvantage. This disadvantage is of course caused by segregation and 
discrimination that African American’s and minorities face on a daily basis with regards to 
housing and the location of their neighborhoods (Orfield & Lee 2005).
The psychological effects tied to economic decline caused by globalization is detrimental to communities in small and large ways. African Americans and minorities that suffer from racism, as both an act and as a characteristic of society, suffer larger amounts of stress which can lead to depression and retaliation or acting out in anger on their children or members of their household (Murry et al 2001, Nyborg & Curry 2003). This means that African Americans and minorities face problems associated with race that has an impact on their individuality and personal lives. This in turn can impact their neighborhoods due to low socio-economic conditions being associated with an increase of violence (McDowall 1986, Matthews et al 2001). These individuals are more likely to suffer traumas in their childhood caused by the effects of racism on their family members and later on themselves.

In the new form of the city economy and US economy, it is more vital to strive for “learning regions,” regions that are built to incorporate “the flow of knowledge and learning” (Cooke 1995, p. 170) through people and infrastructure (Cooke 1995). This is an important step as part of the transformation from a Fordist manufacturing economy to a post-Fordist manufacturing economy (Cooke 1995). However, if minorities are still left uneducated, this will inhibit a source of highly-skilled laborers, causing an increase in unemployment or poverty. This destroys city growth and communities, leaving many unqualified for the type of high-tech jobs available in the private sector at the present day (Tate IV 2008). Also the community will be more likely to improve its stereotypical conditions if these “learning regions” were properly created and supported by the city and individual communities. If students feel connected positively to their school and their community they are less likely to engage in substance abuse, risky behavior, or violence (McNeely et al 2002).
According to David Wilson (2008), the government has long encouraged the formation of the suburb and segregated these suburbs based on class and race. In addition, highway system placement has also been a tactic to further segregate African Americans and other groups from white Americans (Wilson 2008). There has been a known association with redlining districts, racial bias with mortgages, and employment opportunities associated with racial discrimination (Wilson 2011). Even in the present day, many employers will not hire Black men or Black women in a service economy to interact with customers even though formally as a country we are no longer allowed to discriminate based on race (Wilson 2011). Other variables such as school tracking, cuts to public services, and land value drops are seen as not being racially motivated, but impact African Americans and minorities at a greater percentage of negative impact than white Americans (Wilson 2011). For example, during the manufacturing decline in Dionysia, African American neighborhoods and other neighborhoods on the East side of Dionysia experienced a large decrease in land values, with some experiencing a 66% decrease and others at a 71% decrease (Smith 2002).

Minorities due to their lack of political clout have a long history of being left “vulnerable to unemployment during business-cycle downturns or periods of economic restructuring” (Sundstrom 1998). Across the country African Americans suffer higher unemployment rates, higher infant mortality rates, and higher poverty rates. These factors may cause disenfranchisement within neighborhoods and communities. In suffering Rust Belt cities where resources are scarce, African Americans and other vulnerable populations can suffer much worse. This type of suffering does not afflict just one individual, but generations and can reflect poorly on the entire community.
School History

The schools in Dionysia have undergone significant cultural and political conflict since the 1960s in which it was a well-known fact that the city was segregated from the east and west side and African American children were extremely disadvantaged. The United Freedom Movement led a civil rights campaign in 1962 fighting against a proposal to build new schools instead of busing Black students to unused classrooms in current schools throughout Dionysia (Miggins 2012). Violence erupted when a minister was accidentally killed (Miggins 2012). Throughout the 1960s there were a series of anti-poverty initiatives being held by the district, and they became heavily reliant on federal money for their programs. However, in 1973 the NAACP filed a complaint against the district referring back to its segregation and in 1978 the Federal government issued an order to desegregate the schools and claimed the board of education was guilty of segregating students (Miggins 2012). After arguments from the board claiming that they did not segregate schools, but rather housing was responsible, the Federal government ended the debate by claiming that the school board was responsible in actions related to busing students and building new schools and that the school district had violated the 14th amendment (Miggins 2012).

White flight from the district was eminent and in making matters worse, the public refused to pass a levy giving money to the school district to be able to afford these changes (Miggins 2012). A 20-million-dollar loan was acquired by the federal government and the school district received a second loan in 1981 with an appointed financial administrator (Miggins 2012). A department of school desegregation relations committee was established to attempt to integrate the schools and an office of school monitoring and community relations was created to reach community members and explain the process of integration to families and report on the
plan’s progress (Miggins 2012). This led to “crosstown busing, massive teacher transfers, a mandatory reading program, and other measures to equalize the schools” (Miggins 2012). However due to the changing educational environment, costs for students had increased throughout the district making the district in the top 10% of the most expensive school districts in Ohio while enrollment continued to drop (Miggins 2012). The district began to spend more money on administration and maintenance than on teaching staff (Miggins 2012). The federal courts continued to send orders to continue to desegregate the schools and teachers and employees had begun to strike while the district continued to spend more money on non-teaching staff and other employees (Miggins 2012). Eventually the school district was facing a 50 million dollars deficient to repair its infrastructure and did not have the money to do so (Miggins 2012).

The district continued to borrow money from the government throughout 1977 to 1983 and voters consistently refused to pass a levy (Miggins 2012). By 1991 the district faced a 30-million-dollar deficit, with the cost of students higher than other districts in the state of Ohio and the district faced severe educational achievement decline amongst its students, many of whom could not even qualify for entry level jobs (Miggins 2012). Throughout the 1990s there was a push for school reform however, the school district had a decrease in tax revenue, its deficit increased from 55 million to 114 million and the district attempted to ask for another loan from the state (Miggins 2012). To add to the current budget challenges, the public still refused to pass a levy in 1994 (Miggins 2012). Finally, in 1996 an operating levy was passed by voters, but in 1997, the Ohio state legislature made mayoral control mandatory until the year 2000 (Miggins 2012). The school district was marked by intense numbers of persons who were considered illiterate and many more students who failed to graduate high school (Miggins 2012). The district was no longer the school district it was back in the 1970s (Miggins 2012). As depicted
above, Dionysia’s schools have long been plagued by an increasing school budget, poor priorities (Miggins 2012), and a public that failed to support its city’s schools and the desegregation legislation of 1978, causing a massive drop in enrollment, leading to more debt and disrepair well into the 1990s and early 2000s.

Understanding for the Future

The geography of education is developed by school district policy, community involvement, school re-building projects, neighborhood segregation, and the effects of business-model school systems on reducing or increasing the achievement gap to name a few elements that will be discussed in this work. This includes understanding and properly labeling the various policies that are created to reduce the achievement gap and help under-privileged populations. Understanding the economic pitfalls of the city itself aids in understanding the challenges that school districts and policy makers face and explains why these policies were created. Between the 1930s and the 1970s cities found less avenues to increase revenue for their schools through taxes and poorer cities are less likely to be able to support their school system financially (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013). By understanding the economic decline of Dionysia, the population decline, housing crisis, and problems associated with Rust Belt cities in addition to understanding the lack of support for the city’s schools and the importance of education as a means of escape for many individuals who are disadvantaged, this history becomes intertwined with the present in both policy decisions and the present day lives of the city’s citizens. By understanding the economic problems of the city itself, one can begin to see the lack of revenue for the city and housing crisis in tandem to the lack of revenue for the schools through property taxes.
Due to the economic decline of the city and the city’s history with its school system, school and city policies about funding for schools, and forging relationships with charter schools have become paramount to city leaders for the survival of the urban education system in Dionysia. However, this desperation to save inner city schools has consequences and mainly, this thesis questions whether or not these policies actually eliminate the uneven spatial structure of educational opportunity or if the problems are further exasperated. This thesis attempts to ask the questions:

1. **What policies are the school district pursuing to improve education quality, equality and access to high performing schools for minorities and the poor, and is the community sharing equal power in engagement or having an open relationship with the district in implementing these policies?** Do these policies seem to be working from the community’s point of view?

2. **Is there a relationship between poor performing schools with high levels of blight and crime?**

3. **Do the poor performing schools that are surrounded by blight and crime have high levels of minority students and are blighted and crime ridden neighborhoods predominately surrounded by African Americans or minority populations within the city?**

These questions help to understand if the school district’s policies are working according to the community or local businesses and partners. This distinction is crucial because when attempting to understand how to reduce the achievement gap it is important to understand that access to a quality education becomes key and what better way to understand access by asking the community. As this chapter demonstrates, the type of city environment and its school policy and history will greatly impact the city’s current policies and decisions made by policy makers and businesses alike. The research questions above relate to school district policies and explore the neighborhood’s condition and its relationship to schools to pinpoint possible environmental and
urban developmental causes to poor performance and if minorities are being disenfranchised in Dionysia as the literature suggests.

This chapter introduced the economic and social conditions that citizens of Dionysia and policy makers are currently facing. In chapter II, a deeper literature analysis explores the various other factors that impact a child’s education as well as how the physical environment of the city plays a role. Chapter III gives a detailed account of interviews, public meetings, and policy document analysis attempting to understand the policies of the school district in Dionysia, if they seem to be working, analyzing if indeed the school policies are including community involvement, and including the community’s perspective as well as school district members and business associates. Chapter IV will discuss the intimate relationship between neighborhoods and their schools in an effort to determine if blight and crime is related to poor performance in schools and if minorities are more likely to belong to poor performing schools due to their likelihood of living in disinvested neighborhoods. Chapter V will conclude and discuss the results of these chapters as well as future studies, impacts, and policy implications that are needed for the immediate future.
CHAPTER II

PREVIOUS STUDIES AND DISCOURSE: THE DYNAMICS OF EDUCATION

Family Background and the Communities with Low SES Populations and Minorities

Access to a decent education has been proven to determine the future well-being and success of every American citizen. Urban studies programs and urban geographers have not sought to study education and its visible effects on the urban community enough and this is in part due to its complexity and the ambiguity of what causes such drastic differences in student outcomes. There are many variables that contribute to this social dilemma that Americans across the country and their children are facing today, which can mean that in most studies, like this one, a researcher may only point out relationships between various factors and will not be able to discover direct causal relationships. In the past, family background was considered a significant variable with regards to education inequality (Coleman 1968, Jencks & Others 1972) and today is still used as one of the most important variables when analyzing education quality (Gutman & McLoyd 2000). In order to first understand the differences in educational outcomes we must acknowledge social differences in families that can cause permanent neurological affects.

In the neurological process of development there are two types of brain plasticity or the imprint of experience on the development of the brain, creating connections and cognitive function, which are called developmental plasticity and adult plasticity (Nelson III & Sheridan 2011). The developmental plasticity takes place during the time of childhood when the brain is
more likely to be influenced by experience and can create connections within the brain or “circuits” which when once formed are “difficult if not impossible to change” (Nelson III & Sheridan 2011, p.30). Therefore, once certain habits or behaviors are encouraged or established, it is more likely that a child will carry those habits or behaviors with them into adulthood, which can have an effect on their future academic and career goals or their personal life. More importantly certain negative experiences like traumatic stress or repeated stressors can have irreparable consequences on parts of the brain and in particular the amygdala (which controls emotions and recognition) and the hippocampus making it even harder to regulate emotions and prevent future impacts of stress on the brain (Nelson III & Sheridan 2011). Students that are prone to witnessing violence or experiencing traumatic stress in their home or neighborhoods will be impacted and the effects will establish how they perform, how they work, and how they choose to live their lives well into adulthood. Traumatic stress can also lead to a decrease of hippocampal tissue in the brain per volume and an increase in amygdala tissue which can lead to severe depression and anxiety, both considered serious mental illnesses (Nelson III & Sheridan 2011). This is very important when it comes to school attendance and performance. “Childhood mental illness, is associated with decreased school attendance and increased difficulties with attention and concentration, which impair one’s ability to excel academically” (Nelson III & Sheridan 2011, p. 36). This mental illness will be reflective in their work environment, it will affect a person’s ability to perform well at their job, and “is associated with increased days off work, decreased concentration, and increased distress.” (Nelson III & Sheridan 2011, p. 36).

Minorities are more likely to acquire some of these mental illnesses due to traumatic events and stress due their association with poor environments, being part of the low socio-economic status (low-SES) population in cities, and even due to racism. African Americans and
minorities that suffer from racial discrimination suffer from stress caused by racism which can lead to depression and retaliation or acting out in anger (Murry et al 2001, Nyborg & Curry 2003). It can also be said that Black women are more likely to face psychological distress through forms of double exploitation in their living experiences (Moradi & Subich 2003). This means that African American families and minorities are disadvantaged from an early age based on racism and the inequalities that can be found from their social status within normative society. Black women who struggle being their race in society and who are forced to deal with discrimination on a regular basis will undoubtedly affect their children in home. This may mean that African American mothers are more likely to produce “broken” families (as compared to the nation’s normative behavior of a non-broken family) and have little support for a child’s education (Murry et al 2001). There is also evidence that stress may be caused by discrimination which can lead to “family aggression and parent aggravation” which is “associated with less social competence, health-promoting behavior, and self-esteem… and negative academic behavior” (Youngblade et al 2007, p. S50). This can also affect divorced families, married families, as well as single parents.

Marital instability is more damaging to youth in high school facing advanced math coursework, graduation, and maintaining school engagement in the classroom than families with a cohabitating structure than previously believed (Sweeney 2011). Families that are considered low-SES tend to support their child’s education less while parents with high-SES show higher levels of support (Jeynes 2005) and these hindrances may be a factor. Those with a low-SES background are also more likely not to complete or enter college and there is a direct relationship to those who do not complete college to those who have also have not completed high school even if they earned a GED (Bailey & Dynarski 2011). This creates a vicious cycle of
disadvantage for black women, low-SES populations, and other minorities. As a result, wealthy children from white families will have had more experience engaging in conversation with adults before entering school (which aids in their level of learning and communication) and will have completed more than 400 hours more literacy activities before entering school than low income or minority children as (Philips 2011). Parents have one of the greatest impacts on a child’s ability to complete tasks through this type of training of routine socialization through reading. This means that in order to study educational policy we must also recognize that families are “social systems” that play a large role in opinions, culture, habits, and beliefs which means that there are disparities and inequalities within familial groups before a child even begins preschool simply because there can be definite differences in upbringing (Furstenberg 2011).

One must consider that the policies that involve or encourage community development, do not fix the problems that poor families face because these members of the community are more likely not to be able to make the community meetings or receive the same information because they may be busy working (Furstenberg 2011). As Furstenberg (2011) stated, “most parents lack the repertoire of skills that the odds-defying families possess. It is unrealistic to build a policy to reduce educational inequalities by mobilizing parents to adopt and mimic the techniques of the most motivated and capable families” (Furstenberg 2011, p. 476). However, although increasing parental involvement in schools by itself can only produce limited positive results, and it can be said that too many studies focus on policy and not the familial importance within education (Furstenberg 2011), but focusing research on how to develop better policy may be the only means of achieving change quickly, which is what school districts need at the present time. Due to the nature of retrieving the type of data necessary to witness exactly how families may evoke change in a school or a student’s educational outcomes still proves very difficult.
This study attempts to make strides in that direction by reaching community members and listening to families in public meetings. However, this study cannot fully grasp the intimate knowledge towards understanding the impact that families have on children, nor can any policy truly strive to “change” families to encourage better rearing and educational practices for their children. This study attempts to understand the policies that impact these families and their children’s education and in a means to hope to alleviate the problems these parents are facing. Until federal and state law and regional economies shift to address the disadvantages that these populations face, these families are doomed to take part in the vicious cycle that leaves them economically poor and behind their fellow American counterparts. By understanding the policies that shape these communities from the federal level, state and city level, and final school district level can we begin to understand what policies need to be implemented that can truly help these families and their children.

**Inequitable Community Policy**

Children who are born into minority and/or poor families are at an incredible disadvantage within their communities. Policies in housing or child enrollment are in support of segregation and utilized in both neighborhoods and schools. Segregation in neighborhood communities is known to be connected to poor schools and poverty, based on race, class, location, language, and culture (Orfield & Lee 2005). As neighborhoods become more separated due to segregation policies and incentives, schools eventually suffer the same fate with a reduction in racially diverse schools (Orfield & Lee 2005). Neighborhoods, like their schools, are racialized through the process of both individual choice and “residential stratification” (Sampson & Sharkey 2008, p. 25). This stratification is based on cultural and structural factors like income, economic status, and education (Sampson & Sharkey, 2008).
Neighborhood environments may not always be the factor as to why student outcomes are different, but should not be overlooked (Burdick-Will et al, 2011). Variables that can affect the neighborhood and eventually educational outcomes are defined as the environment and proximity to pollution, a lack of close proximity to jobs, violence, the neighborhood resources in the area like (child-care centers, safe parks, grocery stores), the unique culture of minority groups, and the sociological pressure to adhere to one’s cultural beliefs (Harding et al 2011).

There have been studies that prove that children that move to a “different neighborhood can improve their achievement-test scores even if there are no changes in the level of neighborhood racial segregation or in school quality…even children who have already spent many years living in segregated, economically distressed, and dangerous neighborhoods can experience gains in cognitive outcomes from moving” (Burdick-Will et al 2011, p. 272). Even though there are other studies that suggest that parental influence is the major factor in student outcomes and not the school that was chosen or the surrounding community, this is based on a lack of gathering a complete and thorough history of the schools, their surrounding communities and families, a proper way to measure these levels of data, and data reflecting how parents and students shape the in-classroom in-school environment (Altonji & Mansfield 2011, p. 353). Of course, as stated earlier, this is due in part to the difficulty of retrieving this type of data and to perform in-depth and long-term temporal study with this type of information.

What has been known to affect children’s outcomes is segregation and funding disparities or a lack of equitable resources for all children. Funding disparities continue in the education system as students that belong to predominately white schools receive more funding per child and have better resources (Ladson-Billings 2006, Kozol 1991). Although we cannot prove race is a direct cause, as the number of white students rise in the schools, the funding does as well
(Ladson-Billings 2006). This produces a gap not just in education, but also in wealth which is a function of power, political and social due to the educational outcomes afforded to some students over others (Altonji & Doraszelski 2005). Education privileges for one particular social group creates a disadvantage with other social groups simultaneously (Waters 2012). Other research has noted that the privatization of schools harms minorities even further by increasing the wealth gap (Bartlett et al 2002). Certain traits of culture are thus more valued than others (Waters 2012) and industrial training or low tech training has a history of being enforced into minority education (Ladson-Billings 2006).

Segregation policies in the neighborhoods and nearby schools is also key to the students’ experiences of their school. Integration has been proven to benefit and improve test scores for minority students (Bankston III & Caldas 1996). Integrated schools are correlated with higher achievement scores and better teachers (Orfield & Lee 2005). In the Midwest of the United States, students only have racial contact with one predominant group (Orfield & Lee 2005) despite a history of desegregation being enforced throughout the United States after Brown vs. Board. Latinos and African Americans are usually grouped together in schools and these are schools that tend to be the poorest (Orfield & Lee 2005). This greatly hinders the success of minority groups that choose to go to college and can even influence their choice to continue towards post-secondary school education (Rovai et al 2005).

It can be said that despite policies written to encourage desegregation in schools and cities, schools have never integrated and the policies conducted and enforced by administrators are not integrated (Horsford 2011). According to Horsford (2011) schools may have multiple races, but even within these classrooms and schools, programs are created to further segregate students and resources are still unequal (Horsford 2011). “These challenges remain not by
accident, but because they are embedded in the institutional structures, systems, policies, and practices that govern and perpetuate inequality in our schools and society” (Horsford 2011, p. 46). When segregation occurs, minority dominated schools are associated with higher dropout rates and lower achievement scores. They also usually have unreliable and poor teaching staff (Orfield & Lee 2005), but not always. There are also major differences in school curriculum within these segregated schools. Segregated and minority dominated schools offer very little higher level coursework that focus very little on mathematics courses (Lleras 2008). Whites are very unlikely to attend “multiracial schools” (p. 12) and these communities are often surrounded by poor infrastructure, housing decay, and no jobs (Orfield & Lee 2005). Even low-income whites can be victims of housing discrimination showing that this issue is not purely racial, but also economical, and intensifies racial disparity in the community and in society (Orfield & Lee 2005).

Federal School District Policy and the Difference within States

Current school issues and policies that are prevalent in the school system are policies that reflect teacher accountability, school choice or a business portfolio model of schools, school funding and disparities, student based budgeting, cultural openness and multilingual education, and the rights of states to dictate student education to name a few. Some of these policies have historical precedence within the United States. After the Civil War education in the United States was seen as a social step ladder to increase social mobility and is still viewed in this light to this day (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013). Within the United States there was the need for public education and the debate of private education since before the 20th century with parochial schools and catholic education (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013). Education on a national level has historically been a means of Americanization and created a unified culture, but not on a federal
level, only on the state and local level from the beginning of education policy and reform in this country (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013). Many states have similar policies, but have different officers to initiate those policies, different sized school districts, and elected or non-elected school boards (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013). States have primarily controlled the finances of their schools since 1795 when Connecticut sold some of its lands to fund its schools indefinitely (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013). Urban schools in particular have had to acquire their funds for schools through taxes and levies and were able to do so during the industrial revolution and economic boom since most of the United States wealth was condensed within (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013). However, between 1930 and 1970 funds that were once raised for schools began to decline and dropped from 83 percent to 51 percent (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013).

School funding lawsuits and a litany of underfunded urban school districts now plague the United States. More than 20 states and their funding policies have been declared unconstitutional in local and federal court (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013). Due to more government programs and grants being created and made available for school districts to fund their schools, accountability through mandatory testing and teacher assessments that determine wages or job security have become the norm (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013). In 1957 a report titled A Nation at Risk written by the National Commission on Excellence in Education was one of the first national reports to discuss the then-current failing school system and supported a business model approach although its policy implication was rather vague (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013). However, America’s Competitive Challenge report written in 1983 and the Action for Excellence report created by the Education Commission of the States in 1983 began to further push for private business support and partnership combining state and federal funding policies at the time (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013). The United States has since supported policies in
educational policy with three US presidents over the course of 13 years that began with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which was passed in 2002. The NCLB has come under scrutiny as taking the historical ideal of public education as “free and available to all” and has now since made education a commodified product (Gibson & Ross 2007). Critics note that these reforms promote establishing relationships with educational management organizations that use these relationships for profit (Gibson & Ross, 2007).

In 2010, the NCLB act was challenged regarding funding by the school district and teacher’s union in *Michigan vs. Duncan* with the case going to the Supreme Court, but to no avail (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013). The funding that was being challenged dealt with Title I funding for poor schools as well as teacher training, limits for class sizes, funding for technology, and rights that teachers have in maintaining order within the classroom (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013). The NCLB act still requires testing for assessment and many states have laws that seem to blame teachers for failing students such as California’s Stull Act that weighs teacher competency on student performance (Pulliam & Van Patten 2013). The Stull Act was passed in 1971, but is still relevant to this day as one of the major governing policies for California schools (Hope Street Group 2013, Sandoval 2015). In an effort to measure accountability, other school districts have either limited collective bargaining agreements with teachers or simply have had a committee or the CEO take over the school district itself as is currently being done in Chicago and Youngstown, Ohio and schools that are determined to be poor performing are closed or consolidated into other schools without any opposition allowed from the community (Johnson 2010, Guerrieri 2015).

It can be said by critics that in this way states and city legislation can justify the take-over of schools as a human right and necessity, “blaming schools for increasing economic inequality
and reforming schools in order to appear to be doing something about it” (Hursh 2007, p.18).

“Schools and teachers are provided with the goals they are to achieve but not explicitly directed in how they are to be achieved” (Hursh 2007, p.18), which can create a clash between school districts and their communities because members of the community do not see the broad vision of school boards and their members, nor understand the complexity of how school districts are involved with their local governments when local government takes over school districts. Further, it adds to the complaint by members of the community that think the board sees them as “data” and not as people which will later be discussed in this thesis. Other policies created in an attempt to reduce the achievement gap and increase accountability have been the creation of school of choice initiatives and student based budgeting systems, that again, support business model approaches. School of choice seems to be a response to solving school segregation and desegregation reform complications by directly putting the choice within individuals’ hands instead of finding institutional methods to fix inequities therefore school districts and the community no longer bear responsibility (Scott 2013).

Some have argued that school of choice not only is done to eliminate the affiliation to local schools, but to undermine the community’s ability to partake heavily “in public discourse regarding the nature and purpose of schooling” (Hursh 2007, p. 19). However, as is iterated in chapter III and chapter V, it may also dramatic increase community discourse in response to community school changes, but the discourse will not change these policies for the discourse is kept at a local level, but the policies are being made at the Federal and state level of government. Student based budgeting systems help reform the financial system of schools in an effort to make individual schools accountable and increase equity assuming that schools that have more students need more valuable resources (Curtis et al 2014). This method began in 1997 in Seattle.
and has since been adopted by other cities and urban school districts in Denver, Cincinnati, Boston, and Los Angeles to name a few (Curtis et al 2014). Current research suggests that evidence that student based budgeting increases equity and student outcomes is inconclusive (Curtis et al 2014). In Chapter III it is also discussed what the positives and negatives are to the student based budgeting system in Dionysia more in detail.

Federal policies that promote the marketization of schools eventually undermine poor or failing schools, by ensuring they have no possibility of improving, through the elimination of the schools or by the movement of budget funds to private entities (Hursh 2007). Failing schools increase public support for privatization (Hursh 2007). This shift of forcing members of the community to think individually instead of as a community with regards to their schools becomes more than a change in policy, but also a change in ideology, allowing public officials, businesses, and governments to legitimize their actions and has been considered by some, “to embark on an ideological crusade” (Hursh 2007, p. 26). The policies of No Child Left Behind directly contribute to inequitable education and access to quality schooling for some students (Lipman 2007). According to some, NCLB increases the achievement gap between white students and minority students, making students numbers in a system that they did not create, increasing dropout rates, and reinforcing social constraints at a time when the intellect of an individual determines their social mobility in the present economy (Lipman 2007).

President Obama has signed a new bill titled Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) on December 10th, 2015 (U.S. Department of Education, n.d). This act enforces the belief in equitable education for those who are disadvantaged by supporting local efforts to decrease the achievement gap (U.S. Department of Education, n.d). The act also requires all students have a high-quality education in high school and preschool based on academic standards (U.S.
Department of Education, n.d). The ESSA seems to still support many of the NCLB policies such as testing as a means of determining learning and progress (see U.S. Department of Education, n.d). This concludes that the NCLB policy has left its mark on education and it may take years for it to be reversed.

**The Blight and School Relationship**

Familial background and outsider influences have a prominent place in school quality and student outcomes. Neighborhood quality can also reveal the income status of the student and the student’s personal challenges, explaining some of his or her school abilities or outcomes. Neighborhood quality can be assumed to have an impact on a school’s ability to appropriate funding, but neighborhood quality most assuredly can have an impact on a student’s emotional and physical safety. Following previous studies that reflect on disorder and crime within neighborhoods, studies have concluded that as disorder increases so does the likelihood of crime or the perception of crime (Wilson & Kelling 1982, Gault & Silver, 2008). This is based on the assumption that neighborhoods practice self-efficacy approaches to monitoring and preventing crime, and once a neighborhood falls into disorder, residents believe the neighborhood to have an increase in crime and withdraw, allowing for crime to actually occur. In 1999, Sampson and Raudenbush argued that the theory was false and there is no direct link between disorder and crime. However, Martha Gault & Eric Silver (2008) argue that the broken windows theory developed in 1982 by James Q. Wilson & George L. Kelling do not imply that disorder is linked to crime, but rather one happens before the other in a series of time and they do not imply that disorder causes crime.

Regardless, “disorder undermines informal social control, which in turn leads to an increase in crime” (Gault & Silver, 2008, p. 243). Disorder, which is typically defined as a
“violation of public ordinances” (Gault & Silver, 2008, p. 241) can have great impacts on inner city youth. There is a strong relationship between neighborhood disorder and stress, which can lead to “psychologic distress, then to drug use and from drug use to sexual risk behaviors” (Latkin et al 2007, p. S238). These conditions are also linked to high unemployment and economic pressures that may be assuaged with urban renewal reforms, improving the relationship between residents and police, and creating economic opportunities for residents (Latkin et al 2007). Other studies have also been able to demonstrate that perceived disorder and actual disorder in the neighborhood both have adverse effects resulting in lower self-esteem, decreased participation in activities in the neighborhood which leads to depression, and mental illness (Haney 2007, Eamon 2002, Aneshensel & Sucoff 1996). Craig K. Ewart and Sonia Suchday (2002) discovered using the City Stress Inventory (CSI) index, people with “scores of both CSI subscales were associated with higher chronic levels of depression and anger, as well as with attitudes of interpersonal distrust (hostility) and low self-esteem that increase vulnerability to stress and related disorders” (p. 260). Residents of these neighborhoods typically who are exposed to violence and disorder were likely to become irritable and anticipated future encounters (Ewart & Suchday 2002).

More importantly, there is evidence to suggest that blighted and vacant housing, a symptom of disorder, has a direct negative consequence on youth and their associations with defining violence in their neighborhoods (Yonas et al 2007). These vacant houses are associated with anger and depression which causes young people “to value themselves and others around them less... ‘causing' young people to engage in high-risk violence-related activities” (Yonas et al 2007, p. 677). However, children can react differently to violence in their communities. Some may respond by staying out of the public view and public places where violence is likely
to occur (Harding et al 2011). Differences in family dynamics in social situations, family resources or family choices can restrict their children’s activities to protect them from exposure to violence (Harding et al 2011). But there are still cases in which children and youth were more likely to engage in criminal activity.

By engaging in criminal activity, these students may be more likely to drop out of high school, as shown in Chicago in a study undertaken by David Kirk and Robert Sampson (2011), that showed 73% of students in Chicago dropped out of high school if they had a criminal record (Kirk & Sampson, 2011). Their study also finds that not every student in these areas has a criminal record, however schools that have a larger number of youths with a criminal record have “poorly functioning learning environments, characterized by fear and a lack of commitment among teachers” and that expulsion tactics “may make things worse” (Kirk & Sampson, 2011, p. 398). Instead of correcting the problem, these students have underlying causes that cause them to have poor performance in their schools and should not be blamed for the environments that have created them. The conditions of a student’s neighborhood and the school’s policy in handling disciplinary action, could in fact make problems worse in schools and in neighborhoods and are more likely to increase crime. The end result is a neighborhood that is decayed with a bleak future for its improvement. As Timothy Haney (2007) had stated in his work:

“individual traits (such as education or race) interact with a neighborhood’s physical conditions and mechanisms of social control to send a clear message to residents regarding their life chances, the level of investment in their neighborhood, as well as their future prospects...environments do matter for psychological outcomes” (p. 991) (emphasis mine).

**Current and Future Impacts on the School Quality and Community**

Education inequalities and community disenfranchisement have a cyclical relationship. A positive community in low-SES communities will have a positive impact on schools and
student achievement (Coleman & Hoffer 1987, Battistich et al 1995). Students have shown that if they are surrounded by negative role models in their home and in their community they are more likely to react negatively towards school (Youngblade et al 2007, p. S50). Community involvement through centers can be helpful towards student achievement, but due to the poverty of poor communities and the lack of those centers, parents must take on extra responsibility which requires self-motivation (Gutman & McLoyd 2000). Physical/social school structures and school curriculum can influence a student’s choice to remain in high school or to drop out (Bridgeland et al 2006) making the importance of investment in decent school buildings and in the built environment all the more important.

School connectedness through manageable class sizes, disciplinary policies, and class participation have the ability to create positive connectivity with schools and students (McNeely et al 2002). If students feel connected positively to their school and their community they are less likely to engage in substance abuse, risky behavior, or violence (McNeely et al 2002). This ensures that schools and the outcomes of students graduating or dropping out, is directly tied to the community. However, if minorities are still left under-educated, this will inhibit a possible source of highly-skilled laborers. This destroys growth and communities, leaving many unqualified for the type of high-tech jobs available in the private sector at the present day (Tate IV 2008). This may also cause an increase in unemployment or poverty, which will then lead to further violence and can increase the number of homicides (McDowall 1986, Matthews et al 2001). Not unlikely, with the increase of violence we may find signs of Decay and Disorder, which can be perceived or real, but can further disadvantage a neighborhood (Franzini et al 2008).
An increase in violence and a lack of valuable options for business development will stop businesses from investing in these communities. Furthermore, this hinders most African Americans in these neighborhoods from achieving a higher socio-economic status, which further impedes them and their children in a brighter and healthier future. There is evidence that social mobility in our society has not changed since 1930 and the increase of social mobility as seen from 1930-1975 was really the result of the expansion of the educational system through institutional development which ended at the end of 1975 (Hout & Janus 2011). It can be said that “young people in the 2000s are just about as likely to graduate from college as the young people of the 1970s were” (Hout & Janus 2011, p. 183). This means that social mobility has actually declined even though more students enter college due to higher levels of high school dropout rates and a decrease in college students graduating (Hout & Janus 2011). The youth in our society are already lacking in opportunity to rise in social stature and minorities are likely to suffer from this lack of opportunity even more.

Concluding Remarks

Public education is no longer a free social ladder that can be climbed. Studies do suggest that familial background is far more important than policy with regards to increasing social mobility within the United States (Furstenberg 2011). However, policy and institutional reform still can have positive impacts on increases in social mobility which history can show (Hout & Janus 2011). Policy is also one of the main tools that can be influenced, changed, or altered to aid in increasing graduation rates and student performance in the current political environment of education assessment and accountability. Familial background can control an individual’s outcomes through the neurological development of young brains and in reaction to stress induced by racism (Youngblade et al 2007, Nelson III & Sheridan 2011), however, school districts may
not be able to control individual families, but can control access to quality education through school reforms. Federal and state policies ultimately control the outcomes of every single citizen in this country and how well that citizen can climb up the social ladder. The lack of investment within cities leads to disinvestment in schools and hinders urban children from escaping poverty. With underfunded urban schools as more people leave Dionysia and poor urban school districts across the country, school districts have very little choice in choosing allies in business partners and CDCs which will discussed in further detail in Chapter III. By making school policy follow business approaches students may be faced with an educational deficit (Ladson-Billings 2006) leaving an increase in the population of students who are already disadvantaged continuing to be disadvantaged due to their lack of community support and state and federal support (this will be discussed further in Chapter III).
CHAPTER III
ADDRESSING SCHOOL POLICY AND THE COMMUNITY

Introduction

As stated earlier in the second chapter, access to a decent education has been proven to determine the future well-being and success of every American citizen. Ultimately this study seeks to understand the relationship between community engagement, school district policy, neighborhood disorder and decay, and how these elements can create good or poor performing school districts (please see the Figure 1: Conceptual Diagram below).

Figure 1. Conceptual Diagram
Data

Collecting the research data involved interviewing various staff from the school district and members of the community with the sole promise of absolute discretion. Interviewees were given a number or false name to protect their identity. Even the district name will not be published and is hidden to protect the school district and all parties involved. Interviews were taken from district members and staff and business foundations or partners. Public meetings were attended to reach other members of the community and to receive their input. No student or parent was interviewed and all research concerning the students, parents, and community members was retrieved by attending public school board meetings and recording their comments. Some members of a community organization volunteered to be interviewed and along with an independent community advocate. All participants who were interviewed signed the consent form and there were no risks involved.

In total there were 13 interviews and public meetings. There were three school board meetings that were also attended, but were eliminated due to their lack of public participation and input sessions from the members of the community. Of the 13 interviews, there were nine personal interviews (three people were interviewed as a group), and four public school board meetings that allowed for public input were attended. Public meetings were recorded. I will refer to the information provided by these interviewees interchangeable through the chapter.

Below is a list of the interviewees and their prospective positions:

1. Nancy*: School District Affiliate, once was a teacher and student from the school district and a member of the teacher’s union. She now works for the district as a community liaison on the city’s alliance team.

2. Tina*: An employee for the City* Partnership and Chamber of Commerce (actual name of the foundation is hidden) and is Vice president of the research department. She
consecutively works with schools in school re-build projects and has had a history being a representative for businesses on individual school re-builds.

3. Diana*: An employee of the school district at the time of the interview who works in the Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) office, in charge with training teachers on engaging the families and communities and providing information and services to families about their child’s education.

4. Vern*: An employee of the Neighborhood Progress Foundation that is an economic integration manager. He works with the school district on special projects and initiatives such as aiding in helping more preschoolers get a good pre-school education and access to their schools.

5. Kevin*: An independent community consultant for interest groups with a history of collaborating or conflicting with the school district’s policies.

6. Beatrice*: A foundation member and is known as the education program officer who has also been a representative on committees associated with school re-build projects and the master facilities plan.

7. Staff at a local elementary school titled 1, 2, and 3. This staff worked at a local elementary school that is part of the school district’s strategy to save failing schools known as Investment schools. This was a joint interview and the staff included one site coordinator who is affiliated with an outside development corporation, one principal, and a teacher/staff member.

8. Local community members were also recorded at the public school board meetings.

Full and blinded transcriptions can be found in Appendix B. Policy documents were available online at the time of study, but are subject to change as years’ progress. Please request a copy if link found in the references section expires. Policy documents that were analyzed were taken from the school district website and include, the City Plan or --------Plan for Transforming Schools reinventing public education in our city and serving as a model of innovation for the state of Ohio (2012), the Recommended Scenarios for District School Facilities (2014), and Transformation Alliance Report (June 20 2015). Using grounded theory approaches, these
policy documents were chosen due to prevalence and importance to what was discussed as the key progressive initiatives to the City Plan. The *Recommended Scenarios for District School Facilities* (2014) and Transformation Alliance Report (June 20 2015) are elements from the City Plan and are only analyzed in conjunction to the City Plan, but the main piece of city’s policy is the City Plan or -------*Plan for Transforming Schools reinventing public education in our city and serving as a model of innovation for the state of Ohio* (2012). ii

**Methods**

This chapter asks the question:

R1: What policies is the school district pursuing to improve education quality, equality and access to high performing schools for minorities and the poor, and is the community sharing equal power in engagement or having an open relationship with the district in implementing these policies? Do these policies seem to be working from the community’s point of view?

Hypothesis then includes:

H1: Policies of the school district follow a business-model approach and provide improvement to education outcomes for students who already have access and also the community does not have equal sharing power in decision making with the school district or an open relationship in implementing school policy.

*Analysis:* The frequency of topics discussed at meetings and during interviews will be noted along with a list of District Policies that were discovered during the time of the research study. Those district policies will be discussed in detail along with the community’s reflection about those policies. An analysis of community opinions and
those interviewed will be used to evaluate the plan and its success. The frequency of the *Community Inclusion and Engagement* code within policy documents and the qualitative analysis of community feedback will be compared to policies that are being implemented in the plan. Use of the Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient will challenge or confirm some of these findings with codes and analyze the wording in the documents to find if what words were used for different codes were similar to each other using word similarity analysis. Furthermore, a qualitative analysis of what was discussed during interviews and meetings will be compared to the policy documents such as the City Plan for transforming schools (----Metropolitan School District 2012).

Interviews with the school district officials and members of community foundations and organizations were included. Interviews were transcribed using ‘denaturalized transcription’ techniques (Buchholtz 1999). All interviews were explored in depth and pieces were divided into themes so as to fully explain the policies the school district is pursuing to improve education quality, equality and access to high performing schools for minorities and the poor and how these policies are improving economic outcomes and academic outcomes of students. Also an in-depth case by case approach will shed light on the community’s feelings and insight as well as teachers, the city’s teacher union, business foundations, and reactions and feelings from school district employees. In addition to an in depth look at each interview, this research utilizes qualitative research methods from Glenn A. Bowen (2005) who cites grounded theory approaches from Barney G Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Juliet Corbin (1990) in creating a code book to help take into account the frequency count of some of the themes. Jennifer Fereday and Eimear Muir-Cochrane’s methods (2006) were also used as a means of structuring the analysis and coding the interviews in NVivo. The code book created
using grounded theory techniques can be found in Appendix A. With regards to the codebook, most codes were created and defined based on the interviews and from community meetings. In terms of defining community engagement in relation to the school district and the community, community of practice approaches (Smith 2003, Barton & Trusting 2005) were used to define the type of community engagement this research attempts to discover. However, for the sake of objective fairness to the research, whenever community engagement of any kind was mentioned, even if it was just disseminating information to the public or if it related to voting practices with regards to the city levy, it was coded as community inclusion and engagement even if the act did not match the standard techniques and methods in community of practice theories.

Key policy documents that were brought up during meetings and interviews were also coded and analyzed and compared to interviews. Interviews and key policy documents were coded separately and the frequency of codes were used to compare if what was found during the interview process that was deemed the most important aspects, elements, and education initiatives matched the policies as documented through key documentation created by the school district in an effort to answer the research question. Analysis of these documents using the Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient through the NVivo program was utilized to ascertain the similarity and dissimilarity of codes to create a further demonstration about the relationships between the important elements found in the codebook (in Appendix A) and how those elements related to each other. The Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient was set to discover word similarity within the key policy documents and to compare the results of this match to the qualitative content of what interviewees had said and what the public input had stated at meetings. Once the documents were coded, the Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient compared the words used for one code with all the others and did this for each consecutive code looking for word usage and
patterns within the documents and clustered codes together if they had many words in common. NVivo then calculates a similarity index from -1 to 1 with 1 being the most similar (please see How Cluster Analysis Diagrams Are Generated n.d.). This is in tandem to other research that has utilized this approach (Arslan & Babadoğan 2005). Table 1 showing the results of this analysis can be found on page 69.

Please note that some elements were double-coded if it matched more than one code in the codebook, with a few exceptions. Examples of this are, but are not limited to: If a person was both a teacher and a union representative, but spoke at a meeting for the union and did not include any personal experience about being a teacher in their input, their section was marked as union representation or Business and Foundation Inclusion and Engagement. If personal stories or input was added and a person also spoke on behalf of the union, they were double coded as Teacher and Principal experience and struggles and Business and Foundation Inclusion and Engagement. Retired teachers that used their teaching experience to comment on district policies, but were only members of the community were double coded as Teacher and Principal experience and struggles and Community inclusion/engagement if they addressed being a teacher and spoke on the teachers’ behalf in some way. Whereas only one community member who also was a retired teacher, did not seem to speak for teachers per say, but qualitatively seemed to suggest she was speaking as a member who used to be part of a school design team which made her just a community member.

With regards to these circumstances there may be some overlap with frequencies of these codes. The policy documents and their node summary report is available upon request due to the necessity to protect the school district’s identity since within the documents the city name is revealed. Other frequency overlap of codes was intentional and dealt with what individuals were
discussing (i.e. *High Stakes Test, Minority education, School Climate* etc.). This intentional overlap was applied when deemed appropriate and was analyzed for similarity using Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient utilizing exploratory techniques that could find patterns in the data. More importantly, Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient was used to confirm observations when collectively analyzing the interviews. Both the frequency of who was speaking and who or what they represented was deemed just as important as what they said in private interviews or in public meetings. This is important in establishing whether or not the school district includes the actual community or just businesses when improving or creating school initiatives.

**Analyses**

1. **District Policies**

   *The History.* It is inherent that the district policies were designed to improve the lives of urban youth and to improve the district as a whole. Based on my interviews and the historical evidence discussed in chapter I, the district had undergone desegregation reform that dictated change should come immediately, which caused out-flight of students from the school district and has led to the bitter state of affairs of both an underfunded school district and a feud between teachers and the school district that has been relatively consistent save for a few instances. Recently the teacher’s union has threatened to strike, which makes relations between the school district and the union even worse (Nancy, personal communication, October 21, 2015 and February 26, 2016). During desegregation, many people chose not to follow the mandate and took their children out of public schools and placed them in local catholic schools. As Nancy put it:

   …when you look at the big timeline of [Dionysia’s] school history you have [Dionysias’s] schools 1979 desegregation boom and I was a student there and as a student I was [taken] out of [Dionysia’s] schools and sent to Catholic school even though I wasn’t catholic as were many many many other families. Anyone that could move out of [Dionysia] did
anyone that couldn’t move out of [Dionysia] put their kids in a catholic schools and those who couldn’t do either, bused their children across town. And there were I am sure some of those families that were I love this idea, but there weren’t that many (Nancy, personal communication, February 26, 2016).

She further explains:

So when you look at the desegregation they were from people that I’ve heard from along the way that you know it basically said in a 3-month period you took a snow globe of the [Dionysia] metropolitan school district and the flakes were the teachers and the students and you shook it all up and then put it down and whoever landed where landed there. And when you think of educational policy and the impact the mobility rate has on children today imagine that being all condensed into a 3 month period even though the intentions were to provide a better or adequate education for families and children of all parts of town the implementation of the policy was done in a way that left a vacuum of leadership and a compliance driven school board and compliance driven work rules that were done at the federal level not at the tweaking in the way it works so it wasn’t able to be rolled out well. So you had protests you had families that were just not going to go along with this federal mandate. So from the 80s into the early 90s you had just a real a fleeing from the school system a churning of educational leaders that could not go against the mandates but could also not go around them either in a way that says that part of their main goal was focusing on that mandate and the rest was teaching and learning (Nancy, personal communication, February 26, 2016).

Desegregation led to mayoral control that was initially enforced or “piloted” in the 1990s and after two years was then voted on and supported by the people as well as the teacher’s union (Nancy, personal communication, October 21, 2015 and February 26, 2016). At the time the school board was comprised of an elected school board, but this was later amended (Nancy, personal communication, February 26, 2016). In 2006, foundation leaders became more heavily involved in education and began to donate money to build new schools within the city. The amount of money from two foundations that served to combine their efforts, was over 10 million dollars for 5 years with 20 million dollars in commitments (Beatrice, personal communication, November 4th, 2015). In 2008-2009 when the district was so low on funds, had a serious loss of enrollment, had 14 new schools, and yet had to lay off nearly 90% of their staff two years consecutively, foundations hired outside consultants to explore which schools to close (Beatrice,
personal communication, November 4\textsuperscript{th}, 2015). According to Beatrice this ultimately led to a need for a new plan with the systematic changes within the school district due high performing schools being closed due to a lack of enrollment and staff (Beatrice, personal communication, November 4\textsuperscript{th}, 2015). She states, “because of state law and the reinforcement of the collective bargaining agreement…that really led to a staff transition to the request of or into the movement of the [Dionysia’s] plan” (Beatrice, personal communication, November 4\textsuperscript{th}, 2015). Meanwhile you had businesses who are also members of foundations that had been investing in the city’s schools for years and were major investors keeping the education system afloat. Beatrice states:

Beginning in 2011 we saw the changes in the district began to focus on how to take what we were calling this portfolio of excellent new school starting strategy which was this new school start up and extra placements for failing schools and really bringing it front and center to the district’s prioritization. In the fall of 2011 or rather winter of 2011-2012, we were part of a team that worked the [Dionysia] Plan (Beatrice, personal communication, November 4\textsuperscript{th}, 2015).

The State of Ohio at the time was also working on passing Senate Bill 5 which would have ended all collective bargaining agreements throughout all of the state of Ohio (Nancy, personal communication, October 21, 2015, February 26, 2016). Senate Bill 5 was shut down and soon after the first draft of the City Plan was created (Nancy, personal communication, February 26, 2016). The first draft had undergone significant changes and was later collectively bargained with the support of the teacher’s union\textsuperscript{iii} (Nancy, personal communication, February 26, 2016) and signed into law on February 2, 2012 with House Bill 525 (------Metropolitan School District 2012).

\textit{The City Plan.} The City Plan is the centralized plan for the city created by businesses, members of foundations, and was collectively bargained with teachers and the school district (Nancy, personal communication, February 26, 2016). Key initiatives to this plan involve combining charter schools and districts together in a joint enterprise in sharing levy dollars and
resources, enforcing a “portfolio model” in which all parents can choose what school their child attends (an open enrollment district), and enforcing four key approaches or cornerstones of the plan: growth in high performing charter schools and district schools, replace and close schools that are failing, transfer authority and resources to schools instead of the central office, create the City’s Transformation Alliance (a liaison group that works to keep schools accountable and shares information to parents and the community about their schools), and reforms investment from pre-k up through college or career industries (-----Metropolitan School District 2012). As one might imagine these policies are open to interpretation, but some of the goals clearly describe how they will be met. Some of the ways that this plan ensures that these four goals will be met is through student based budgeting, combining charter schools with district schools in support and resources, building new schools that will be disbursed across neighborhoods to ensure no population is not being served, re-purpose or close failing schools, attempt to save schools that are above failing through investment strategies, give more autonomy to schools to make decisions (autonomy however is based on the school’s performance record and not every school is given fair autonomy), a possible year round calendar for students, more curriculum focused on improving pre-school education, enforcing college and career readiness, opting to re-design the talent office seeking to improve teacher recruitment, and to acquire new technology for the district (-----Metropolitan School District 2012). The immediate effects of this plan on teachers and staff include: teachers and principal unions or groups must create an evaluation system that is performance based that will determine a teacher’s salary, the school buildings have full authority to hire new staff, teachers may be fired if they rate poorly after two consecutive years, the district now has significant autonomy over teacher and principal working contracts,
and the plan eliminates seniority with regards to laying off employees or choosing to bring employees back (-----Metropolitan School District 2012).

This plan also creates the transformation alliance that monitors every school’s progress in the district which can provide input on what charter schools may open in the city and monitors which schools are doing well or provides further input on the building of new schools. This plan also shares levy dollars with charter schools which also means including charter school report card grades on the district’s overall performance grade, and giving the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the district the option to close schools or “go beyond existing collective bargaining agreements” (-----Metropolitan School District 2012, p.13) in order make corrective actions. Unions do have some input or and can negotiate with the CEO’s plans and the CEO can determine the academic calendar of the entire district. Lastly, the plan gives certain exemplary claim status under the “innovative education pilot program” (-----Metropolitan School District 2012, p.13) and any old school or property owned by the district that is sold may be added into the district’s fund or budget provided some criteria is met (-----Metropolitan School District 2012). The City Plan allowed for the CEO to create an investment school strategy and the school district is still enforced to uphold a student parent organization as part of the ORC code. These policies will now be discussed in detail and are in conjunction with the City Plan.

Investment Schools. One of the policies associated with the City Plan has been to attempt to save schools that are above failing through investment strategies. During the data collection a school that was part of the investment plan and some of their staff was interviewed to explore what are the benefits, if any, of this plan. The investment plan has a tiered process and the three tiers are Ready to Teach, Ready to Learn, and Ready to Act (Staff at elementary school, personal communication, March 16, 2016). Schools are placed in one of those categories and must sign a
letter of commitment to the plan that lasts three years (Staff at elementary school, personal communication, March 16, 2016). Each school that was deemed ready for investment had been struggling with attendance and had known instances of behavioral issues and students struggling to pass their courses (Staff at elementary school, personal communication, March 16, 2016). Many students due to outside influences throughout the district are challenged to get to school. As one staff member stated:

I think the things that are keeping them from school runs the gambit. It’s family violence, it’s the drugs, it’s hunger, it’s clothing, we do have a clothing program here. There’s so many things… You know some of our parents have 2 jobs, 3 jobs, sometimes the kids are on their own, but the biggest goal is to have the kids, we want the teacher to focus on teaching and we want them to come here with less baggage as possible so my goal (as the family site coordinator) is to help them or offer to help them with resources so they can focus on learning (Staff at elementary school, personal communication, March 16, 2016).

The lack of students getting to school can bring school report card grades down and influence the way the school is rated (Staff at elementary school, personal communication, March 16, 2016). The school does have strategies that put students in leadership roles and have data notebooks used to self-monitor their attendance and progress, keeping them encouraged to be in school and take note daily on their work and efforts (Staff at elementary school, personal communication, March 16, 2016).

Another major influence in how the school performs is the school’s ability to function well with a staff that has a common agenda. Due to the investment initiative, staff are to attempt to create “a culture that is self-sustaining” and that includes reassessing how they manage their meetings for example, having them weekly instead of monthly, and following a “Data Wise Protocol” (Staff at elementary school, personal communication, March 16, 2016). As one staff member stated:
The Data Wise Protocol that’s a huge thing and like [#1] said that’s going to be here long after we go but they’re so used to it like [#1] was saying they’re not happy at the beginning but it’s very lined out and it makes the meeting purposeful and focused instead of just griping about a kid—*you know what this kid did?* You know that kind of thing, it keeps everybody very much on track it’s timed and I truly believe long after we’re all gone they’re going to keep doing it (Staff at elementary school, personal communication, March 16, 2016).

Other benefits of the investment plan include flooding the investment school with more money to be able to train staff, hire more staff which allows for smaller classroom sizes, and being able to buy more resources for students (Staff at elementary school, personal communication, March 16, 2016). One of the major benefits of the program is being able to afford more staff. One of the staff members who is a site coordinator has the sole purpose of rallying community support for the school and help students and parents receive valuable resources to help their children and even their lives in the process. She states:

> I get involved if it has to do with resources and for not just the child but the family and kids that don’t go to our school if they are in the family, the community. So one of my biggest objectives is to get the community involved to literally wrap themselves around our school with resources whether its supplies, financial support, people support with volunteerism, yeah just so they know we’re here and what our program is and to see how they can work with us to literally as a village raise the child (Staff at elementary school, personal communication, March 16, 2016).

This staff member was able to create an after school program that is fully funded using volunteer staff and now is self-sustaining (Staff at elementary school, personal communication, March 16, 2016). The school was able to support this staff member through the investment initiatives of the school district.

*Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE).* As stated earlier the Student Parent Organization is a response to a mandatory requirement to have a student parent organization for every school. The district is able to run this mandate through the Office of Family and Community Engagement or FACE. The FACE office is how the district is able to
disseminate information to parents and students that include exploring college options, how and when to enroll in the city’s schools, and even to ask parents what would be the best time to have student teacher conferences or if parents would like to go to an all year around school calendar (Diana, personal communication, October 19, 2015). FACE officers ensure that the district keeps up with its mandatory inclusion of parents and files the paperwork to ensure they receive federal funding for parental involvement (Diana, personal communication, October 19, 2015). FACE officers also ensure that parents are included in the academic process as Diana states, “there needs to be an academic focus and it needs to be for parents” (Diana, personal communication, October 19, 2015). Some of the challenges in Diana’s profession can be getting schools to involve their parents more. Many schools may have a good working relationship with parents and community members, but many other schools are lacking or falling behind. Each school may have a different relationship to the families of students and the community. She says:

Some schools really work hand in hand with their parents and that’s where we are trying to move all schools to is that true partnership model. Now the history hasn’t always been there so not all schools are there yet, so some, it is more checking in on certain things. So one of the things our office does is try to build the capacity of schools and of parents so that on both sides we can help create those partnerships and then we also help parents to learn what schools should be doing so that they can help keep them accountable for that too. So they know that they have the right to see the AAP they have a right to be a part of these different things (Diana, personal communication, October 19, 2015).

This office is important to the City Plan as well as the City’s Plans goals, but truly serves as a way to maintain the ORC code and maintain a relationship with parents.

2. Topics Discussed at Meetings and Interviews

The total count of all that was discussed during the meetings and interviews is noted on the following page in Figure 2. The three highest topics that were discussed at meetings and interviews during the time of the research study were Teacher and Principal Experience and Struggles,
Community Inclusion and Engagement, and Business Inclusion and Engagement. Teacher and Principal Experience and Struggles will be combined with the Community Inclusion and Engagement as a qualitative analysis is performed more in depth due to their intrinsic nature of being intertwined with one another.

Figure 2. Frequency of Nodes for Interviews

Sources: Various Interviews and Meetings

3. Community Input

During the time of the study, public input was collected from public school board meetings and transcribed. Public input alone was qualitatively analyzed and divided into categories based on what the data had shown.

Small Schools, new Curriculum, and Testing. During the process of re-building schools and changing the format of those schools and the school curriculum, several teachers, students,
and parents came to meetings and showed concern over the schools that were set to be re-built. Some schools were being forced into 3 small schools as stated earlier. One community member at a public meeting stated, “The [Dionysia] transformation plan did not say that all schools must follow a small school mode and this is a disservice to the entire district to force this change” (Community Member, public meeting, November 17 2015). This shows a lack of understanding at the community level of the district’s intentions as well as the district’s plans for re-building schools and is due in part to some of the specific future plans of these changes not being explicitly addressed within the City Plan document. At another meeting a parent expressed her concerns over the amount of testing for her kindergarten daughter. There were four tests between November 24th and December 15th. She states:

We are not helping to create productive citizens who succeed with success… To have kindergartners suffer through 57 reading questions and 57 math questions blows my mind and I wonder why the board thinks this is acceptable behavior. Other parents have confided in me with their concerns as well (Parent, public meeting, December 15 2015).

Lastly, a retired teacher and now community member also showed concerns about the amount of testing and the lack of teaching proper math courses to prepare students for being able to do simple tasks like balance a checkbook in their adult lives. He says:

Not much time can be made to reinforce those basic skills. No surprise, math and science scores, off…This is what you’ve done. You jammed [inaudible] Republican [NAME PROTECTED] saying the poor should shut their mouth and start saving for their child's health care and their college education, and their retirement. The fact of the matter is if you knew math, they can't. Not at .01% interest. Now that is what kids need to know about as well as parents (Retired Teacher/Community Member, public meeting, December 15 2015).

He then goes on to add that he used to teach a course called consumer math and advocates that this be added back into the school’s curriculum (Retired Teacher/Community Member, public meeting, December 15 2015). This adds to the study’s complexity about many of the teaching
staff that are either retired or nearly retired being forced to adjust to new curriculum changes throughout the district and not being in agreeance with some of those changes and policies along with parents. Testing is a requirement by Federal and State law due to the No Child Left Behind policies. These test scores help determine State Report Card grades. Testing has become the main means of showing school quality or improvement and within the City Plan, testing scores of students can determine the compensation of their teaching staff.

Nancy who once was a teacher for the school district and heavily involved in the teacher’s union explains:

Every year I did state wide tests. Even back in 1991 when I started. And you know it was a pain in the neck, you had all the rules and regulations of it, but it wasn’t this big trauma and drama either for the child or for the teacher because it was just what you did. And now it’s gotten to the point where it’s so instrumental to I mean a child won’t go to third grade if he doesn’t pass his third grade reading which was a policy I didn’t support, but has actually done a lot to help improve reading scores and making sure that all families are required to go to summer school who don’t…So I find that there should continue to be assessments because we have failed far too many kids, but it could be done a whole lot better. A lot more meaningful and it could be done in a way that compares apples to apples, doesn’t just set up poor urban schools to say look they’re failing why don’t you go to this charter why don’t you pick this lovely private school, and you know the political analysis ends there (Nancy, personal communication, October 21 2015).

School testing is not only mandatory for the state and federal laws, but also school testing may have some benefits in helping children, teachers, and parents, identify where there needs to be improvement in the curriculum. As one of the staff members at a local elementary school explained:

It tells the teacher exactly it’s not oh she struggles in reading okay what about reading? It just takes the teacher down to such fine details and indicators…You get that specific you know how to help a child if you just keep these blanket statements oh they struggle in reading or math it’s just not their subject you don’t know where to begin. Some of the tests really focus the teacher on this is exactly where you begin. Not all of them but a lot of them (Staff at elementary school, personal communication, March 16 2016).
The staff find that the NWEA National test and the CFL (Conditions for Learning), a test that surveys school climate, are better tests to be used to help the teachers define their curriculum other than the state tests (Staff at elementary school, personal communication, March 16 2016). The staff at this school also go through and explain to parents in more detail what the tests are being used for which may be the difference between why some parents are upset and how others have not complained. As one staff member described:

We have taken the time…to talk to the parents specifically about why do we keep giving tests so for example the 3rd grade guarantee that’s a huge one. We’ve met with them at the very beginning of the year 3rd grade parents you know we’re telling you today your child will not pass third grade if they don’t pass this test and here’s why. We explained in depth because they were you know pretty hot and heavy that there was such high stakes so we explained where it came from that it does begin with ODE [Ohio Department of Education] it’s a state law it’s not [THE CEO] made this up this is a state law. So we explained that and then we tried to shift their way of thinking of saying it’s a gift, it’s a benefit because we’re making sure no child walks out of 3rd grade without knowing how to read you’re not going to end up in 8th grade saying this kid can’t read because we’re stopping it now …And the parents I think they really got into it (Staff at local elementary school, personal communication, March 16 2016).

However, although testing has its benefits, both Nancy (October 21 2015) and the staff at the local elementary school (March 16 2016) explained that tests keep changing almost every year making it impossible to see true progress and can make it seem that some of these tests are not helping students and schools as much as they should. Even Vern an employee of the Neighborhood Progress Foundation stresses this point explaining why it is important to find “quality seats” and ensure schools focus on quality. He explains:

I would say that I don’t think anyone has identified a right way to do it yet. These schools that are failing now were failing ten years—before the [Dionysia’s] Plan so to say the [Dionysia’s] plan is the reason—there are more kids in quality schools now than there were before. For any argument around it’s not for teachers or anything like that I’m not going to get into that, but I would say is that I don’t think we can sit and say what’s right or what’s a right approach, but I think as long as we are providing more quality schools, more quality education to students that’s the right thing to do. I mean I think that’s at the heart of it… and quality is being defined by the state. So from a state level that’s—
they’ve changed quality 3 or 4 times…in the last like couple of years (Vern, personal communication, January 22 2016).

New policies with regards to school testing and what tests that should be used may need to be implemented in the future and schools need to have a closer relationship with their parents to explain how testing is a reflection of state and federal laws.

*Newly Re-built Schools and the Effects on School Climate.* Again, during the process of re-building schools and changing the format of those schools and the school curriculum, several teachers, students, and parents came to meetings and showed concern over the schools that were set to be re-built. Besides a lack of understanding the changes, many parents, students, and community members expressed loss, anger, and disappointment at losing the school climate within the school buildings that they believed were precious to the school. One student replied,

…the changes in [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] will create [a] new identity [inaudible]. We do not want a new identity. [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] has history, pride and hundreds of graduates that support our cause to protect our school from becoming a big experiment. Once you separate into small schools, [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] [the] system will fall apart. It will be hard to keep sports teams strong and programs in all different schools get out at different times. They won’t get enough money to provide all the different elective programs (Student, public meeting, November 17 2015).

A parent at another school expressed that the changes that his child’s school has undergone were terrible and went so far as to state that he and other parents felt ignored. He states:

We have at least three-quarters of a million dollars in leadership over there and nobody knows what they are doing. We have no sense of family. We have a new building. We have hurting parents, afraid, angry teachers and students. Everything that you thought it was, it’s not… If you remember at the ribbon cutting ceremony, that even the parents spoke of how important the sense of family was to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], but the board and everybody else keeps ignoring this. There have [been] 14 fights this, not even 90 days into it. 14 fights. We had to force the administration to do a meet and greet with the parents. Are you going to keep ignoring us? (Parent, public meeting November 17 2015).
Another parent from the same school expressed concerns about not having the teachers and
dance instructors at this art school needed to instruct their children. She states:

We the parents of the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] are afraid that we're going to
lose students in the school because of the fact that a lot of our students are there because
of the dance department. And we don't want to see them leave. We want them to be
compensated because that's why a lot of them came, and they came from very far away,
just to be in the dance department. We have not had a director as [NAME
PROTECTED] said. The kids are becoming very fidgety, bored, and causing problems
between themselves (Parent, public meeting, November 17 2015).

At another meeting another parent expressed her concerns about how her child no longer enjoys
coming to school and how she feels that students who like to advance in their artistic studies
especially in dance, are unable to do so. She states:

I have an 8th grader that goes here and I always introduce her as a student that’s been
there for 10 years, probably longer than a lot of our teachers and administrators. She
loves [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. When I ask her about it, she’ll say she never
ever wanted not to be here. She could have went to be in the high school where she is
now, but it broke my heart earlier this year and last year. She was sad a lot and didn't
want to be here and that never happened, and it really really surprised me… These kids
are very very experienced about their art and for it to be cut. I don't understand how they
can tell the kids that there isn't enough time for their art …if the student is in remedial
math but they could do trigonometry, they would not keep them in remedial math. We
have students here who dance with world class adults, and they are in remedial dance,
and they are frustrated and they are not able to advance because of that (Parent, public
meeting, January 26, 2016).

Many students also seemed to express that they did not feel welcomed at their new school
or did not feel that they wanted to continue going to their new school:

We don't care about a new building, we mainly care about our art and getting our
education. It seems as if the soul is gone from our school. We would much rather be
back at the building where we had rats and roaches… We cannot express ourselves
artistically. If for an artist, myself, that is very restricting and it's very insulting. It's like a
slap in the face to me… I would just like to know what you guys are going to do about
our administration. It seems as if nobody, as far as our administration, they haven't even
introduced themselves to us (Student, public meeting, November 17 2015).
At another meeting another student stated as another example some of their concerns about the same school. He states:

As a senior, I should not want to wake up and look at my alarm clock hit the snooze and want to go back to sleep because I don't want to go to school. Old [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], I set my alarm early just to get here early. It was fun. It's not fun. I know that education does not mean fun but I can't get my education and have a good time doing it? Then that’s ya’ll failing us and that’s going to be us failing ya’ll because ya’ll look at test scores and the look you got going…. I can’t use my studio to work on my art, and I go to an art school. That doesn't make sense. It doesn't at all… All we're asking for is for us to be able to showcase our art and have that family to do it. I can't come to school where I don't know who my administration is (Student, public meeting, January 26 2016).

Lastly, parents do not feel welcome with the new school as well.

Also disturbing is the school culture that has changed. Even in the [inaudible] report…it says, that welcoming and loving students in the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] culture is something that is to be preserved and protected. During the transition from the old [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] to the new [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], that is not happening. Students do not feel welcome, parents do not feel welcome and it's just disorganized and just not clear (Parent, public meeting, January 26 2016).

The last seven quotes all dealt with the same school, however, a member of an advisory design team at another school that was re-built and redesigned to be three separate schools also had concerns about the new school building and explains some of the reactions she has felt and seen from students and faculty since the rebuild. She also was an alumni of the school and used to be teacher. She states:

There needs to be one person in charge of the campus to communicate with, disseminate info to the schools… Within the schools, this seems like a house divided. No one person can get a definitive answer… Having a teacher on another floor in social studies working with a teacher on another floor in social studies, it only makes the education process much better, and it's not apparent. Among the students, there's few mixed classes between schools. There's no growth. I feel it’s almost a form of segregation that affects all of our students, not just racially. We're supposed to be preparing our students for their future with life skills and workplace skills, and I don't feel that here. Morale is low among the staff, parents, and students. Few parents attend monthly meetings. Students chose to come to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] because of what siblings have
described, are now disappointed because they don't seem to be getting what their siblings
talked about. Teachers don't know each other. They only know them by face or by ID
tag that they belong in this building. There's no camaraderie (Community Member,
public meeting, February 23 2016).

All of these responses as well as several others not listed here seem to indicate that the new
building initiatives are presenting several problems with regards to the implementation of the
new curriculum and new building structure as well as being able to transition from the old
building structure amongst faculty, students, parents, and members of the community.

In addition to, it seems that changes to the school climate of a school can have
detrimental effects on the mental state and feelings of students. As Diana from the FACE
department has explained to me:

I think consistency is really important for students…There’s a lot to be said about a stable
learning environment where the expectations are clear and you know what you need to do
and it takes time to make changes in a building too. So. For a principal to come in and
try to change culture, try to change academics and then be gone in a couple years I mean
that poses some challenges too…it’s an emotional process especially a lot of the west
side schools and I am sure it’s true for some of the east neighborhoods too, there’s been
generations of families going to these same schools and so if you learn that that school is
going to be [closed] or merged or moved, people feel really strongly about it (Diana,
personal communication, October 21 2015).

The new school building approach in which schools are divided into three buildings is not
explicitly stated as part of the City Plan which also can leave parents and community members
feeling lied to. However, the new three building approach is not supposed to divide and make it
impossible for students to still get an overall comprehensive school. As Beatrice, another
Foundation member and education program officer who has also been a representative on
committees associated with school re-build projects and the master facilities plan, explained that
they are still learning all the basics through the “lens” of their specific school and reassures that
students are still “taking the same curriculum” and may have extra coursework and lab work in
the process (Beatrice, personal communication, November 4 2015). However, this knowledge
may not be spread to the parents and community members in a manner in which these populations can understand the material thoroughly.

*The Politics of Schools.* The school district has been merged with the mayoral office and has teachers and staff that belong to several different unions. As one can imagine there are political elements that become intertwined with the school district’s policies at the local level, within the school district itself, and at the federal level of government. What emerged during the public’s comments were issues concerning the mayoral takeover of funds or a belief that the mayor was using funds that should go to students for private uses. This was particularly a concern that was stated at one meeting, but was reiterated at other meetings as well. For example, one community member and retired teacher stated:

> Now, one of the major concerns of House Bill 269, Mayoral Control, was that if the mayor got access to the children's money, he would use it for other purposes and the anointed school board would let him do it. Well, funny thing, after ordinance 925 A 95 parking and admission tax which brings in well over 30 million dollars a year, it is said that the children should get 2 million dollars to compensate for the money that was lost to the tax evading gimmick, the football stadium. Now, in 2009, the mayor stole a million dollars of that money, you hid it, and he used it for football. He has done so every year since, with full approval of the board (Community Member and Retired Teacher, public meeting, January 26 2016).

Another political element that occurred during the time of the case study involved conflict over the new teacher’s union contract in which members of the teacher’s union and the school district failed to reach a compromise during negotiations. A student spoke urging the CEO to continue negotiations with the teacher’s union at one of the meetings stating:

> I attend a lot of our student advisory meetings. You have said multiple times that here in our school district students make the decisions. Students have a say. The students get a choice. Mr. [CEO], you gave us no choice when you decided to walk away from the [Dionysia’s] Teachers Union… Mr. [CEO], on behalf of [inaudible] School, on behalf of every student, every parent, and every teacher, we ask you to return to negotiations with the [Dionysia’s] Teachers Union (Student, public meeting, February 23 2016).
Also at this same meeting the President of the city’s teacher’s union made clear statements about the CEO “walking away” from negotiations and to not be fooled. He states:

I spoke to this board of education last March about how you and CEO [NAME PROTECTED] have not lived up to the promises made in 2013. I cautioned you about how the clock on the district's website kept counting down to the November levy. I also cautioned you about another clock that was ticking. That is a clock leading to the expiration of our collective bargaining agreement on June 30th of this year… Don't be fooled. Negotiations between the [SCHOOL DISTRICT] and the [TEACHER’S UNION] did not break down. Your CEO and his team walked away (President of teacher’s union, public meeting, February 23 2016).

According to district sources, there are other political reasons for why the negotiations may have crumbled and the details about the failure to have a new contract. Nancy was with the teacher’s union during the time the City Plan was collectively bargained. She explains that the City Plan along with mayoral control were both collectively bargained (Nancy, personal communication, February 26 2016) and notes that there is an election for the new teacher’s union president coming up that may have had an impact at one of the meetings and why many teachers showed up to protest the City Plan, and the CEO of the district (Nancy, personal communication, February 26 2016).

So we have a benevolent leader who uses the new tools sparingly, we have a union leader who is getting the crap kicked out of him because not only did he agree to these plans he didn’t bring it up for a vote for his members; their whole lives are changing, he is not spending all his days in the buildings explaining the changes explaining that we had a gun to our head and we would have had no union rights we would have been Youngstown without this…So while all of those things are happening you have a growing faction of teachers who are ticked off not only at [THE UNION PRESIDENT] but at the whole American Federation of Teachers Union …SO here is a union that says we will bring voice to the workers and they’re collectively shutting off all voices by making decisions internally. And not getting that message out and spending time with the members (Nancy, personal communication, February 26 2016).

The union president during the time of the study was facing some concerns by the teachers that were a part of the union and was facing opposition which can be found on public resources on the web which I am unable to hide due to their public nature found on Facebook and blog sites.
(Pogrebinsky, February 15 and March 10 2016; Švigelj-Smith 2015, July 12). Also, there may be a political element to why students are speaking at these meetings and what they are stating. Nancy explains, “I know when I worked at the union they would have asked me to find three parents and three students to speak at that microphone and help coach them on what to say. I am not saying that that happened I’m just saying that that’s how it used to be when I was there a few years ago” (Nancy, personal communication, February 26 2016). This ensures that student voices are not heard and re-instates age discrimination in which student voices are ignored due to the historical usage of student voices as political epithets to adult agendas. The student’s voices are then not to be considered as their own even if they may be their own, which would lead to all political parties and sides believing that when a student speaks for or against the school district that the student may be just a mouthpiece to any particular side. This would be reflective of students who speak positively as well as negatively about their schools or school districts and makes collecting student input troublesome. In this study it is believed students speak for themselves as well as their own interests, but acknowledges through interviewed data that students may be being used by political parties who seek to have student voices serve other interests than their own.

**Unequal Sharing of Resources.** At public meetings it was conveyed that many community members, teachers, and parents felt there was still a divide between the East side of the city and the West and poor neighborhoods being left behind, and conveyed frustration over the disappearance of valuable resources like libraries. One teacher commented:

Now, you stand here and you say that we're in the 21st century, but you have classrooms that have no books. You have classrooms in which the principal will ask literally and says, "I'm not buying books for this class. I’m not buying books for the school. If you think that's happening, it's not happening." But the kids get a T-shirt (Teachers, personal communication, February 23 2016).
A librarian at another meeting also felt that the lack of libraries and books was detrimental to students. He states:

We wonder how we can justify to the community that cutting the library services, spaces, and budgets, with low reading scores call for more attention to literacy supports, not less. We know that the highest performing suburban districts in the state of Ohio are not cutting, but rather, they are adding to library services, and we wonder why this is not happening at [the SCHOOL DISTRICT]. We wonder what parent wants their child denied access to books, technology, information, and digital instruction (Librarian, public meeting, December 15 2015).

Some of the lack of shared resources also conveys the differences in neighborhoods and geographic regions. One retired teacher and community member stated:

I live in [inaudible] Creek and our average tax bill is over 3,000 dollars a year. We literally pay tuition and for me to have you prioritize the internationals and give them all the money from the sale of the board of education… and I come before this board, how many times the in-house suspension lady nearly fell down the steps last week and I told you we cannot keep having these babies carry their lunches from the basement upwards while other people have this [she is referring to the current nice new school building the meeting is taking place in] with our tax dollars… Have your next board meeting at [City Neighborhood PROTECTED]. I invite you to come to [City Neighborhood PROTECTED neighborhood is on the east side] because I invite you to see what your child has vs. what my child has” (Community Member, public meeting, December 15 2015).

One parent at another meeting stated there was a clear difference in how East side schools and West side schools were treated.

That school, the old school of arts, was just a little bitty old shabby place that you had to sit, you sit on the bleachers, that's where you sat…With building this school this school should have everything that they need. Why you don’t have it? I am upset how you treat our east side schools [inaudible]. You treat our east side schools like they don't matter (Parent, public meeting, January 26 2016).

A community member and retired teacher also noted a discrepancy in the ability to give students the equal opportunities afforded to them to embrace the arts. She states:

Why is it that I came up in poverty, I came up in a poor city, I came up in the same [Dionysia] public schools, but if I wanted to, I could have marched in a 100-piece
marching band. We will have the Republicans show up and probably [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED, a school from the capital city of Ohio] will parade them in, but we are a premier school district (Community Member, public meeting, February 23 2016).

According to Nancy, “when you look at our highest performing school it’s on the East side, [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. When you look at how many new schools are built east versus west most of the new schools are the east side” (Nancy, personal communication, February 26 2016). However, due to the City Plan’s policy of student based budgeting many school’s budgets have varying differences which inadvertently seems to cause conflict amongst community members who feel that their school is being slighted and money is being wasted or not shared proportionally. Furthermore, many people in the audience may not know that performance stages and a few other amenities are now not built into the school on state funds, but by private donors. The West side has historically had some more wealthier neighborhoods. However, the East side schools may not have that wealth and therefore may see some disenfranchisement. An analysis comparing schools and blight showing the major differences within the city between east and west can be found in chapter IV.

Lack of Transparency. Throughout all the public meetings there were comments made by community members and parents about the lack of transparency throughout the school district’s policies. Kevin who has had a long history living within the school district and in particular on the west side, was part of a re-build project on one of the city’s high schools and was once involved in creating a community committee that focused on the city’s schools. In a personal interview Kevin describes a situation in which the community seems to be unaware of some of the school district’s plans in relation to city developers plans. He also is discussing the need for a relief high school on the West side due to so many schools on the West side being filled to capacity. He states:
I went out to [PLACE PROTECTED] where they do their retreat . . . out towards [PLACE PROTECTED] which they can talk about the transformation plan in a public meeting where most people in [Dionysia] wouldn’t attend. I attend it. I was the only community representative that sat at the table. He (The CEO) took [City Neighborhood PROTECTED] kind of a working class neighborhood now. . . . the four lakefront millenial gentrified neighborhoods risking a lot of money to bring in the right kind of people white professionals who are moving to transform the city. I said, “[THE CEO] that was never brought up.” He blew up at me I mean irritated he says “Mr. Kevin you’ve been to all those meetings, you know we were clear about this when we did our plan in May 4th 2014”—well they weren’t clear about it. They never said anything. And he didn’t include that on the emails as part of the information. . . . that was not consistent (Kevin, personal communication, October 28 2015).

This lack of transparency also leaves many neighborhoods undermined due to schools that are now being built that cannot sustain or serve the population that are currently in those neighborhoods.

If you make the kind of high school he wants, an enclave for the professional class it’s not going to happen. Now they’re saying that will relieve some of it, but it’s just going to make it worse . . . What they’ve done there is continued the process by which those neighborhoods on the South of I-90 you know going up to 150th are being undermined those are going to become neighborhoods just like any other neighborhoods where the kids living there are going to be . . . moved from those gentrified areas or town because they can’t live in any other and their neighborhoods are going to become undermined and they would not have the neighborhood support. All [THE CEO] sees is those neighborhoods aren’t sending as many kids and are thinning out. Well they’re thinning out because they’re not viable neighborhoods. His plan is going to make that worse. Contribute to the problem. The plans that he has will continue the segregation. There will be successes, but they’ll be primarily successes for those that have already and only secondary for the successes for the majority of kids. But we’ll remember this as a success 20 years from now when we’re trying to deal with why all of these poor Afro Americans or Hispanic kids not learning as well? We had that reform are they that dumb? Blaming the victim. He doesn’t see it ( Kevin, personal communication, October 28 2015).

Other comments about the lack of transparency are from a retired teacher and community member and a parent. They are as follows:

I asked way back when for some updates on what was going on at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and this was a way long time ago and what was happening and how you were addressing the situation at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. And I still haven’t received those . . . This makes me believe where you hide things (Community member, public meeting, January 26 2016).
“Transparency. Where is it? I can't see it. Where is the transparency? (Parent, public meeting, February 23 2016).

These voices about the lack of transparency can also be explained within the vagueness of the City Plan documents and how certain elements such as the three separate school’s initiatives and how high stakes testing is part of state and federal laws are not fully addressed. Furthermore, due to the lack of control from the central office to control what goes on in schools which was established by the City Plan, it is possible that the lack of transparency is simply a problem with communication being transferred from middle groups to all members of the community. At this point there is no evidence that the lack of transparency is done on purpose, however, the vagueness of the City Plan and some of the important initiatives the district is creating may need further explanation to the public in ways in which the public can easily understand which may at this time not be present.

Lack of a Voice. In understanding the role of the community, this study seeks to follow the guidelines of communities of practice (Barton & Trusting 2005). In order to be following a communities of practice approach members must have mutual engagement, a common task or joint enterprise, shared resources and aspects of their identity like language and routine (Barton & Trusting 2005). More importantly, there should be full participation among members of the community (Creese 2005). However, the communities in this district seem to not have the type of involvement that they would like to have in the process or outcomes of their schools. As Kevin describes, the district seems to insinuate community involvement and engagement really means encouraging members of the community to partner with a business or group on a particular agenda. He states:

…if you start talking about community organizing. Involvement. What you’re gonna get here, 99% of what you would here, is events or initiatives that have sponsors and so the
sponsors are organizing around their interests or how they might turn this event into their interest. Now the district is one and sometimes their directly involved in the organizing, in the involvement issue the parent university or the parent school councils whatever they’re called. Sometimes they’re doing it with partners like United Way or the CDCs or sometimes they’re contracts, contracting to a consultant or an organization to do a piece of work for them those always come under the genre that have the fallacy of the organizational models, scripts, meeting the community and trying to get community into those scripts and they get the community into the interest of the sponsor, eventually (Kevin, personal communication, October 28 2015).

Kevin also states that other stakeholders like the unions do the same thing as the school district with regards to community involvement and engagement.

The union, another interest group, they also have direct organizing involvement called community involvement, they have partners, and they have contracts. So the last two or three times there’s been a community initiative. Both of those dollars went back to the union giving the dollars to people in Washington and New York to be the organizations to organize parents around what it turns out really to see how important the unions agenda is and so that’s organizing (Kevin, personal communication, October 28 2015).

Kevin even suggests that members of the school board believe that the concept of public relations is the same as community involvement even though it is not (Kevin, personal communication, October 28 2015).

In addition to this, parents, teachers, and students do not feel that their voice matters and is implemented within school district policy. One parent describes a lack of consideration as a school board for the need and voice of parents. She states:

We have been told to take off our parent hats too many times I don’t know what kind of foolishness that is. We are parents first, first and foremost. Parents first…You want parent engagement, not disengagement (Parent, public meeting, January 26 2016).

Teachers do not feel their voice is being considered in policies that are set to build new schools. One teacher depicts the members on design teams for new schools as “dangerous” since most of these members are inexperienced. She states:

We have a problem with the members of the design advisory team. They are only two teachers on advisory team and no administrators. The other people are from the hospitals, clergy, from [Dionysia] Metro Parks et cetera…In fact, you would not ask a
teacher or a member of the board for their advice on surgery. That would be dangerous. Why are our schools asking for potential advice from businesses and from clergy and from hospital? It's foolish. It's dangerous, not to mention dis-respectful (Teacher, public meeting, November 17 2015).

Lastly, students do not feel they have enough of a voice in the decisions and policies of the school district, especially with the new school that is to be built in their neighborhoods. One student states:

What I've learned is that the district does not care about our voices. They do not value what we have to say or what we need to be successful...In the [Dionysia's] Plan you promised to involve parents, students, and community and create a new school model, but that was a lie. There was nothing democratic about a bunch of overpaid people from downtown hand-selected people who were just going to say what's told to them...It seems like [Dionysia’s] plan is just long fancy document to cover up the real plan with more money and good [inaudible 00:34:37] and to pay outside people that think our school is crummy... Think about the message you're sending to hundreds of students. If you do choose to ignore us in our input for this new school, if you choose to ignore all the kids who are trying to be heard, then you're going to fail us. You're teaching us not to trust leadership (Student, public meeting, November 17 2015).

To be fair, after speaking with Nancy (personal communication, October 21 2015) at the school district and Beatrice (personal communication, November 4 2015) who has served on design advisory committees, there is still a lack of community input due to a lack of community presence at important meetings and events that are designed to get parents involved. Kevin states that this lack of involvement is based on education being more like a business in neoliberal society, but by doing so could actually decrease business. He states:

…we don’t model of community we know how to live organization...We say let’s put the community aspect more in an organization type control. That will solve it. It doesn’t solve it. In fact, it makes it harder. Because it fragments the community... Yes, poor parents have a hard time coming into an organization and being able to see the whole perspective and to make decisions. The answer isn’t taking more decision away from them, it’s how do you address that problem. When we’re in organizations we can’t. We can’t address those problems. It would help though if we at least recognize that and say there’s only so much we can do here. How do we get the other piece rather than being arrogant and say well we can fix that? Make it more like a business. Well it’s not a
A business depends on there being a healthy community (Kevin, personal communication, October 28 2015).

The fact remains however, is that the community, teachers, parents, and students do not feel their voices are heard and have no mutual engagement when creating school policy which may be a direct source of many of conflicts expressed at these meetings.

4. Business and Community Partnerships

Businesses and foundations had a history already with the school district in being involved in school investment. One of the reasons for this has been due to the nature of economic development and its reliance on a good education system. Tina states that one of the reasons her foundation, which is also the chamber of commerce within the city became involved in schools is because “in addition to being kind of your traditional chamber of commerce we also focus on economic development in the region and in the city of [Dionysia] so for us education is critical.” She adds:

…we have education as talent as one of the strategic priorities that we work on in the organization…with the [City] plan that was really our I won’t say our first, but definitely our most successful attempt at being …systematic. A lot of chambers a lot of business organizations do things like get a company to pay events at a school or get um a group of employees to go in and do a read to students in kindergarten and all of that is great, but our members…they wanted to do something that was more systematic and impactful and have a larger impact at the whole district (Tina, personal communication, September 15 2015).

This partnership allowed for other foundations along with Tina’s group to become crucially involved in community development projects or school rebuild projects and to be members on the Transformation Alliance to aid in holding schools accountable. Other organizations that have partnered with the city focus on initiatives that are helping the district seek to help every parent have access to good quality schools and preschools.
Preschool Program in Dionysia. Due to the historical nature of the city itself and the inherent connection that schools are tied to their neighborhoods and the economic climate of the nation as well as the city, it was imperative to speak to other foundation members regarding their involvement in Dionysia’s schools. Vern is an employee of the Neighborhood Progress Foundation and also a native to the city. He is part of one of several organizations that work to increase the number of students enrolled in quality preschools throughout the district. One of the ways in which he does this is by analyzing transportation routes for students and the feasibility of ensuring students have access to high quality schools. His project he states is:

looking at where kids are going to school and the transportation overlaying transportation and RTA over that to see if they are assessable, how they’re assessable, or how long does it take to get to a preschool...That’s a project we are currently working on and we’re developing in partnership with our place making team so it’s kind of a where the integration piece comes in, a lot of it is the place making and economic opportunity piece is looking at the relationship that the built environment has with people and identifying ways to increase access, to increase opportunity (Vern, personal communication, January 22 2016).

To Vern many of the issues regarding the city’s schools is not necessarily to be found in choosing what type of school is best for a child, but by giving them the opportunity to have a decent education. He states:

…you know we have charter schools, we have failing charter schools, we have good charter schools, and we have charter schools somewhere in the middle. I think the key is not differentiating between private, public, or charter I think it’s focusing on quality, and like you know regardless of charter regardless of district school or private school, it’s just access to quality schools is the key (Vern, personal communication, January 22 2016).

The opportunity for a child is based on the community infrastructure as well as the connection between schools, the community, and CDCs. Speaking on behalf of his organization he states:

So I think from my point of view and when I think about education and community development in [Dionysia] there is an issue of access and there’s an issue of quality. We all know this. Everyone. If you live in [Dionysia] there’s an issue of access and there’s an issue of quality. And it’s difficult to subscribe one or two things to fix any of them, but what I think is encouraging is that there are organizations who are partnering and
collaborating to provide more access and to provide more quality. And I think as a community development intermediary we have the opportunity to kind of bring CDCs along in that space, in a way that we haven’t done in the past. SO I think that’s where there’s a benefit of community. We fund community development organizations, we work with community development in [Dionysia] and education hasn’t been a piece of it in the past or it’s been a minor piece of it in the past. Now that we make that a priority we have the opportunity to move that along and be able to come together in a more synergistic way, I guess. (Vern, personal communication, January 22 2016).

This may include knowing where to place students that may not necessarily be in a high performing school. The City Plan and school district has an open enrollment policy to both charter schools and public schools. By using the open enrollment system, the Foundations and their business partners and the school district are trying to open up opportunities for students, but the end result of their investment is not always clear. As Vern states:

…we’re doing the school of choice piece and understanding how we can increase access to high quality schools, but also how do we increase quality schools because as you know some of the neighborhoods in [Dionysia] are void of a technical quality school …. maybe the school is identified as a failing school but are there quality seats within that failing school. Are there bright spots within that school that we can pull out and use to increase the quality of the school? And this is all like you know, we don’t know…We’re working with the district and working with folks to identify how best do we do that but I think it’s um it’s hard. Because no one has it figured out (Vern, personal communication, January 22 2016).

One of the main factors to note from Vern’s statements is that business and foundations or community groups are just starting to look at community development and combine these initiatives with education and education quality (Vern, personal communication, January 22 2016). Vern’s organization mainly works on place based initiatives, but now these initiatives include education and are seeking ways to partner with their school districts and seek to support and fulfill the City Plan’s goals.

Community Development and School Rebuild. Other foundations and business involvement has been to aid the school district in building new schools. As stated earlier there has been a long relationship with businesses and foundations to aid school development and
therefore community development as new schools are built in their neighborhoods. There are state requirements in Ohio that dictate that if renovation costs more than 70% of what a new building would cost then the school district must build a new school (Beatrice, personal communication, November 4 2015). The state will also not build the entire school and the school district will need outside donors to aid in the costs or the use of local taxes. As Beatrice states:

> Our new high schools are built---with the state money—our new high schools are built without a lot of things they used to have, swimming pools for example, track, field space things like that. If the district wants to spend money on that it has to exclusively come from the local share so in a newer renovated building the state pays 2/3 of the cost and local tax payers pay 1/3. If they want to add anything it comes out of the local share exclusively (Beatrice, personal communication, November 4 2015).

In one school in particular a re-build was set. Many of the local community were upset about the re-build because it also meant that the old school would be torn down (Beatrice, personal communication, November 4 2015). Also due to the nature of the old school as seen as not as high performing as it could have been, the new school was also not made as a comprehensive high school, but was rather recreated as a set of smaller schools (Beatrice, personal communication, November 4 2015). Beatrice explains:

> …there were a lot of false starts of that process. There were a lot of I would say oh I have an idea, oh I have, I have an idea, none of which were grounded in…the jobs of the 21st century, what we know works etc. and it was really viewed sort of as well as we’ll do this program and this program. So about 2 years ago because the community was deeply unsatisfied with that strategy for academics there was a demand put on the district to have sort of a fresh start. So the portfolio office in the which is the entity that deals with new school start up took over the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] re-design process, the academic re-design. So the facilities is building a building and the portfolio is now taking hold of what’s going to go in it (Beatrice, personal communication, November 4 2015).

Once the portfolio office took over the academic re-purpose of the building, a committee, who already knew of the possibility of creating three smaller schools, was tasked with analyzing the
design and the community as a whole within the city, and from that group, a smaller committee was formed. Beatrice explains:

From that group of 24 or so, people stepped back, 6 people from that group and a couple of additional people were then charged with using the design principles what recommendations would there be about the actual schools so what kind of schools would go in there. So that smaller design team looked at 4 things it looked at the design principles, it looked at the assets of the [NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTED] community, it looked at the report commissioned from the [Dionysia] foundation organization called [NAME PROTECTED] which identified high need high growth high wage jobs in [Dionysia] and we looked at the districts overall portfolio so what were we missing. And after about 6 more months of work that team—I was on that team as well, recommended a school of engineering, school of IT a broad range of IT, everything from coding to networking to computer repair, and a school of civic and business leadership. We brought those recommendations back to that larger advisory committee of 24 or so people they signed off on that then the district or the portfolio office brought that to [ THE CEO] who signed off of that as well and that’s how the 3 new schools at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] came to be (Beatrice, personal communication, November 4 2015).

From the start this committee had members of the community as part of its membership along with student alumni from the school, local businesses, members of city council, CDCs, teachers, and other neighborhood associations to name a few as well as Beatrice who was also on the advisory team (Beatrice, personal communication, November 4 2015). Building new schools is part of the City Plan in its development of the Master Facilities Plan or Recommended Scenarios for District School Facilities (2014), which is a part of its legislation and therefore is part of the City’s Plan to create higher quality schools within the district.

Transformation Alliance. As stated earlier the city’s Transformation Alliance is a liaison group that works to keep schools accountable and shares information to parents and the community about their schools. This group facilitates in creating the enrollment catalog for parents and students to determine which are the best schools in the district and also keep parents informed of individual school progress. Nancy who works for the transformation alliance, explains that the transformation alliance is meant to bridge the gap between city councilmen,
businessmen, and foundations with parents and students and other community members. She says:

… it’s about making sure parents have choice. We actually share levy dollars with charter schools based on quality. So we’re trying to desegregate schools again on just having quality schools open for public or charter schools so that families that choose can choose based on the academic programming and be able to get a quality education regardless on which neighborhood they live in… What I do now for the transformation alliance is to kind of support the CEO and his stakeholders, I don’t serve on the board, but I help make sure that whether it’s a faith based community, whether it’s west side councilmen, east side councilmen, I keep them in the loop on what opportunities the transformation alliance has. I also go down and work with the transformation alliance in Columbus to advocate for better policy that puts quality education at the forefront. Whether it’s public or charter. And we try and make sure that public gets a little sliver of funding here and there. As we continue to make improvements (Nancy, personal communication, October 21 2015).

The transformation alliance attempts to ensure that there are jobs for students once they graduate and aid in the academic visioning of the school re-build processes (Nancy, personal communication, October 21 2015). As Nancy describes:

I try [to] make sure to keep it transparent…So especially around things like building these new schools, making sure that we’re not saying okay you guys are going to get a brand new school and it’s gonna be blue and it’s going to have you know—making sure that even if it’s the facilities piece and the academic specialization, that it’s not dictated from us to them, but that it fits in with their community development corporation, their vision with their councilmen… we are more intentional on not just parents who use the school, but to preserve the history of the school that was there before and making sure that residents who may not use the school for their children, see a reason for their tax dollars to be spent on improving the face of their community (Nancy, personal communication, October 21 2015).

These brand new schools and academic restructuring tries to push high tech manufacturing jobs and to find what are the best jobs for the community that students and the city are striving toward in the present day (Nancy, personal communication, October 21 2015). As Nancy states:

we are working on making sure that the pendulum is not just for swinging towards college readiness, but that it’s career and college readiness. Because there was a time in the district I think where everyone was going to college, that’s not the case…we have a moral responsibility to make sure that families when you leave ours schools you have
choices of either school or a position that you can feed a family on (Nancy, personal communication, October 21 2015).

As part of the transformation alliance legislation to the City Plan, a report is filed and shared publicly with the community on how the school district is improving and on the academic improvement of each school within the district to keep parents informed.

5. Policy Document Analysis

Some of these personal conflicts that can be seen expressed at meetings can now be seen in the policy documents that do not qualitatively show any endorsement in getting the community involved or engaged except in joining the transformation alliance. Through analysis after all the interviews were coded, three key documents were also coded, the City Plan or ------ *Plan for Transforming Schools reinventing public education in our city and serving as a model of innovation for the state of Ohio* (2012), the city’s Transformation Alliance report (June 20 2015), and the latest *Recommended Scenarios for District School Facilities* (2014).

By coding these documents, the frequency of codes showed that the top three nodes that were found in the documents were *Education Quality Improvement Initiatives, Community Development, and Business and Foundation Inclusion. Community Inclusion and Engagement* ranked 8th on the list (please see Figure 3: Frequency of Nodes for Policy Documents on the following page). Within the policy documents, there is no mention that the community will be directly engaged or involved in the policy making process of the school district except within their participation within the Transformation Alliance and in the re-building of schools. The policy documents do not address how the district will increase community engagement or how these members of the community will be reached and invited to join the Transformation Alliance team or how many community members must be on the team and what qualifies as a community member.
Figure 3. Frequency of Nodes for Policy Documents


Compared to interviews, many other topics of interest like school climate and teacher and parent experiences were addressed more. Lastly a Pearson Coefficient was rendered using NVivo and looked for word similarity between nodes or codes. Anything above 70% similarity was considered valid. This showed that within the policy documents Community Inclusion was more linked with Business and Foundation inclusion based on wording similarity, which may confirm the statements by Kevin that community inclusion mostly relied on seeking businesses to be included to support the schools rather than the community (see Table 1: Pearson’s Coefficient Output of Policy Document Node Word Similarity on the following page, full table of all results can be found in Appendix C). The word similarity also may confirm Nancy’s statements that the new district initiatives focus more heavily on community development, which would involve
those communities’ leaders on decisions due to *Education Quality Improvement Initiatives* being linked with *Community Development*.

Table 1. Pearson’s Coefficient Output of Policy Document Node Word Similarity

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Node A</th>
<th>Node B</th>
<th>Pearson correlation coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edu Quality Improvement Initiatives</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>0.824471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Inclusion and Engagement</td>
<td>Business and Foundation Inclusion</td>
<td>0.798165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Investment</td>
<td>Edu Quality Improvement Initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Investment</td>
<td>Deteriorating Neighborhoods</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Investment</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>0.71082</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Policy Documents: *---Plan for Transforming Schools reinventing public education in our city and serving as a model of innovation for the state of Ohio* (2012), the *Recommended Scenarios for District School Facilities* (2014), and Transformation Alliance Report (June 20 2015).

**Results**

Results from the interviews and meetings, policy documents, and Pearson’s Coefficient reveal that in answering the research question, *What policies is the school district pursuing to improve education quality, equality and access to high performing schools for minorities and the poor, and is the community sharing equal power in engagement or having an open relationship with the district in implementing these policies? Do these policies seem to be working from the community’s point of view?* There are several policies that the school district attempts to put into action to help reduce the achievement gap and are designed to help improve outcomes of students by increasing the number of students enrolled in quality schools. The major implementer of these policies is within the City Plan and includes: increasing testing and teacher accountability, student based budgeting, more autonomy to school principals and individual schools in hiring and running the school, an investment strategy to help the poor or failing schools and re-structures the school’s activities to produce more productivity and student success, support and the establishment of a parent organization known as the FACE office to keep parents informed and engaged, the establishment of the transformation alliance to keep
schools accountability and facilitate in community development and aid in re-build projects, and a preschool access program established with help from local CDCs and organizations. However, with all of these initiatives none of the policies deliberately address minorities and the poor, although it is implied. These initiatives seem to also have mixed results. Not every school has full autonomy or only schools that are successful have this type of autonomy over their school budget. Also many parents and some teachers and district staff feel that although accountability is important, there is far too much school testing throughout the district with very little of the tests helping the students.

Within the school district, school re-build projects are also showing mixed results with administration not sure of their own responsibilities and new school models not adequately showing a positive impact on the community to ensure community support, not to mention the changes in school atmospheres that can have major impacts on the communal spirit within school buildings and can lead to social conflict between students, parents, and the staff, making the community less likely to support levies or initiatives in the future. Also, with the student based budgeting system and autonomy not being equal across the district, many schools have more resources than others making parents and students enraged or disheartened and also making it unlikely that the community will vote on levies or school board initiatives in the future. After analyzing the policy documents and interviews it is clear that the district does have plans to alleviate problems for students in receiving a decent education, but it follows a business model that has several problems. The initiatives being implemented by the school district like the Preschool plan, the rebuild of schools, and creating the Transformation Alliance all seem to be feasible and beneficial however, when considering community input, the student based budgeting system and the autonomy given to schools who are already performing well these
policies seem to create an unfair advantage amongst the students in the schools with some school buildings struggling to acquire resources while other schools have better resources. There is also still a lack of transparency within the documents and consistency amongst the City plan and other school district initiatives that seems not to show the grand picture for residents about the school district’s initiatives in a meaningful way that will encourage community involvement and understanding. This leads to the conclusion that my hypothesis is true in that improvement to the educational outcomes will benefit the students that already are receiving a benefit and may continue to leave other students behind.

By analyzing the interviews alone there is not enough community voice in district policies and there is not enough community input in the implementation of those policies. There seems to be a formation of two kinds of meanings for the word “community” being created. There is a community that is centered on the businesses, foundations, city leadership, and developers and there is a community of ordinary citizens who may not have any experience in education or have a higher degree. While the city alliance team is including the first community in policy decisions and working with councilmen members, the other level of community is still being left behind. The additional analysis of Pearson’s Coefficient on the policy documents themselves shows that the district initiatives do focus on community development, but community is more closely linked with the businesses and foundation members, leaving the meaning as to what type of community they will be including rather vague. There is also no evidence in the documents that community members could be involved in school district policy making except with the re-building new schools and by serving on the Transformation Alliance. It is also not stated clearly enough how many parents or what defines a community member in their inclusion. In addition to this, there is no evidence in the documents on how community
members will be reached or how many community members must serve on the Transformation Alliance that do not also belong to a business, foundation, or other political entity. Therefore, with the evidence provided in the data the hypothesis is true in that the community (as being represented as neighbors, residents, parents, and locals) is not being included equally in the decision making process and therefore the policies erected by the school district do not support communities of practice theories. The issue 4 levy was passed in 2012 to aid the school district in being able to implement the City Plan and improve the school district (Nancy, personal communication, October 21 2015). This was vital due to the district being placed under ‘Academic Watch’ in 2011, with an alarming budget of spending $15,000 per student (Dorchak 2012). By not including the community, this may create definite problems to receive support from the community and can impact future investment funds or levies that need direct community support to be passed which may result in more debt or reliance on state and Federal funds.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYZING BLIGHT AND ITS EFFECT ON URBAN EDUCATION

Introduction

There are implications that education inequalities are possibly linked to poor community development and infrastructure (Coleman & Hoffer 1987; Battistich et al 1995) and economic opportunity (Tate IV 2008). Under this assumption large public city schools who are offered title funding allow for the appropriate exploratory analysis focusing on the affects and relationships between urban schools and their neighborhoods. It is known that positive neighborhoods produce positive school environments (McNeely et al 2002; Bridgeland et al 2006; Youngblade et al 2007, S50). Developmental brain plasticity takes places during the time of childhood when the brain is more likely to be influenced by experience and can create connections within the brain or “circuits” that once formed “is difficult if not impossible to change” (Nelson III & Sheridan 2011, 30). This is very important when it comes to school attendance and performance. Students that witness violence or experience traumatic stress in their home or neighborhoods will be impacted and the effects will establish how they perform, how they work, and how they choose to live their lives well into adulthood (Nelson III & Sheridan 2011). This thesis seeks to study public schools in Dionysia and comparing site locations of schools with their perspective neighborhoods.

As stated earlier, there is a strong relationship between neighborhood disorder and stress, which can lead to “psychologic distress, then to drug use and from drug use to sexual risk
behaviors” (Latkin et al 2007, S238). These conditions are linked to high unemployment and economic pressures that may assuaged with urban renewal reforms, improving the relationship between residents and police, and creating economic opportunities for residents (Latkin et al 2007). With an increase in neighborhood disorder within communities, students that may engage in criminal activity may be more likely to drop high school (Kirk & Sampson 2011) which will further continue the process of community disenfranchisement. Few studies that examine if there is a correlation between levels of blight or crime in the community and if it affects school attendance. However, proving the neighborhood is broken or needs repair is part of analyzing the problem with regards to school policy, education quality, and equal opportunity. An in-depth analysis that incorporates blight and crime within the area surrounding the schools compared to school performance needs to be implemented along with studying school policy which was discussed in the previous chapter.

Data

1. Blight Data

Data for blight comes from the exclusive access to the NST database with exclusive access with the most recent download dated April 18th 2016. NST stands for the Neighborhood Stabilization Team Web Application (2016). It is part of the NEO CANDO database that stands for the Northeast Ohio Community and Neighborhood Data for Organizing (2016). NEO CANDO is free to the public and anyone can access the data collected by the Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development which is a research institute created by Case Western Reserve University and in particular the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences. NEO CANDO allows a person to access data regarding all the counties in Northeast Ohio. Unlike NEO CANDO, NST is owned and run by private entities, information is available upon request.
Through the NST application the Active Condemnations spatial layer was downloaded to complete the analysis. Data collected by NST included geographic coordinates of blight as well as when violations were filed and the current status of those violations, applications awaiting review or awaiting re-inspection, when violation notices were approved, and when buildings were set for demolition (Neighborhood Stabilization Team Web Application 2016). The data is a combined effort of data collection from the County’s Fiscal Office, The City’s Department of Building and Housing, the County’s Court of Common Pleas, the County’s Sheriff’s Department, the United States Postal Service, the City’s Department of Community Development, the County’s Metropolitan Housing Authority, the County’s Land Bank, and others. The data is also updated weekly (Neighborhood Stabilization Team Web Application 2016). There were buildings that were condemned before the time frame of study (2012-2014) and the full data set was from 2008-2015, however, buildings may have had paperwork filed against them before the year 2012, but could still be condemned and vacant at the time of the study, hence blight dated back to 2008 was included. All 2015 blight condemned building data was eliminated and all records that were declared as non-condemned and in compliance were eliminated according to their status making them no longer condemned building structures.

2. Neighborhood Data

Data for the neighborhood was taken from the NEO CANDO database (2016). Data that was collected included the variables: total populations of Hispanics, Non-Hispanic Whites, those who identify as African American or Non-Hispanic Black, and the percentages of those populations by their neighborhood. Other variables included families with children under 18 years of age below poverty the number and percentages by neighborhood as well taken from American Community Survey 5-year estimation which was found in the NEO CANDO database.
Data relating to poverty levels were later excluded when it was discovered that all the student populations throughout the urban school were considered 100% poor. Schools were linked to their neighborhood using the Metropolitan School District School Quality Guide created by the city’s Transformation Alliance (2015).

3. Crime Data

Data was collected from the Office of Criminal Justice Services affiliated with the Ohio Department of Public Safety by request November 17th, 2015. This data is a collection of crimes that were reported by the Police Department from 2010-2014. This information was voluntary and also the accuracy of this crime data is based on the information that can be found in the Ohio Department of Public Safety Database at the time of the data request which was made November 17th of 2015. These crimes have not been verified through all participating agencies and also can change as more data is reported year to year as more law enforcement agencies begin to participate. The years of the data that were analyzed were from 2012-2014. Crimes were analyzed according to the Ohio Revised Code and using the codebook received from the Ohio Department of Public Safety to pick out the crimes that would be analyzed as part of the analysis.

The crimes that were chosen related to crimes that were known to cause PTSD in children. Events that could cause PTSD in children were decided from qualitatively analyzing the information found from the National Center for PTSD in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (Hamblen & Barnett February 13, 2016). Crimes that are known to cause PTSD in children are abuse (sexual, violent, or physical), experiencing a violent crime [emphasis my own] such as a school shooting or vehicular crime or accident; and lastly other events that can impact a child, causing trauma in children such as experiencing kidnapping or witnessing a crime such as domestic violence or community violence (Hamblen & Barnett February 13, 2016).
February 13, 2016). Significant trauma has an impact on brain development and educational performance and eventually impacts career opportunities and performance (Nelson III & Sheridan 2011). During this study it is assumed that witnessing trauma and being exposed to trauma is similar to being exposed to the events that cause PTSD and that PTSD in children can cause significant brain development damage in young children. There has been research that shows that children who have experienced child abuse will show symptoms of other mental illnesses like depression and anxiety, and younger children who have PTSD may re-enact events much like adolescents (Hamblen & Barnett February 13, 2016). This study is not assuming that depression and PTSD are the same diagnoses, but rather that PTSD is related to depression and other mental illnesses in some ways, with victims exhibiting similar symptoms.

The crimes that were selected were crimes defined in combination by the National Center for PTSD in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs and other violent crimes as defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting Program (Federal Bureau of Investigation n.d., “2014 Crime in the United States”). This was done because violent crimes were not clearly defined by the National Center for PTSD. The UCR program defines violent crimes as “murder and non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault” (Federal Bureau of Investigation n.d., “2014 Crime in the United States”). Overall, crimes that were then chosen were abduction, felonious assault, aggravated assault, child enticement (encouraging or coaxing a child under 14 years of age into sexual activity), kidnapping, robbery, murders, rape, sexual conduct with a minor, permitting child abuse, involuntary/voluntary manslaughter, aggravated vehicular homicide, vehicular homicide, vehicular manslaughter, child endangerment, and domestic violence. In trying to combine these two definitions for crimes created by the National Center for PTSD in conjunction with the U.S.
Department of Veteran Affairs and the FBI, felonious assault was added and combined with the total number of aggravated assaults because it can be seen that felonious assault and aggravated assault can be considered violent crimes according to an interpretation of Ohio law. Aggravated assault allows for the inclusion of acting out in a heated rage to be included as part of the sentence or adherence to the crime, but both types of assault include causing serious harm to a victim and may include the use of a weapon or deadly weapon (LAWriter Ohio Laws and Rules n.d., please see Lawriter - ORC - 2903.11 Felonious Assault and Lawriter - ORC - 2903.12 Aggravated Assault). The rest of these crimes were because of their adherence to the definitions as defined as what crimes cause PTSD in children through the National Center for PTSD in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (Hamblen & Barnett 2016) and what is considered a violent crime by the FBI and the UCR program (Federal Bureau of Investigation n.d., “2014 Crime in the United States”). Any crime involving children directly was also included due to the subjective nature of children as part of this study.

All of these crimes were collected in separate excel/csv files and non-address data was erased so any crime that only had a street name was eliminated to be prepared for cluster analysis. When addresses were missing zip codes or were irregular (i.e. same address different zip codes), address were verified in google maps and found their correct zip code. Addresses were erased that could not be confirmed (i.e. spelled incorrectly and couldn’t verify address in google maps). Apartment numbers were also erased since they were unnecessary to perform Kernel Density Analysis in ArcGIS. In preparation for the analysis, crime spreadsheets that had less than 10 events of crimes throughout the city were eliminated. This included involuntary manslaughter, voluntary manslaughter, all the vehicular crimes, and the permitting child abuse crime. The rest of the crimes were included in the analysis. All of these crimes were geocoded.
in ArcGIS with a 100% (29,626 entries) of the addresses match and only 46 entries were tied with each other and mapped only once.

4. School Data

School data was collected through the Ohio Department of Education website and databases (n.d.) for the years 2012 through 2014. School report cards that showed the performance index rate and school characteristics (ethnicity, enrollment numbers, absence rate, literacy rate, number of students who were disabled, number of students with economic disadvantage, and the number of students with language barriers) for each elementary school were collected. Schools that were considered elementary schools useful for the study were PreK-8, K-2, K-4, K-5, K-6, K-7, K-8, and K-12 schools. At first all private schools were included along with public schools due to the nature of the school district’s open-enrollment and school choice policy. Schools were labeled a false name by use of the numbers and the alphabet to protect their identity. A total of 110 schools in the district were found and the school labeling order went as follows: A through Z, 0.A through 0.Z, 0.1A through 0.1Z, 0.2A through 0.2Z, and finally 0.3A through 0.3Z. However, private schools did not contain the performance rate or school building data for the 2012-2013 school year within the school district’s website archives and were hence eliminated from the study. The D schools were also eliminated due to the comparison approach that was necessary to compare good performing schools (B and C performance index grades) and poor performing schools (F graded schools). Some of this data was used for the GIS analysis and some was used for qualitative analysis and other considerations.
Limitations

This study assumes that students go to their neighborhood schools or the neighborhood in which they are assigned and although the school district is an open district with school of choice, this study does not take into account students that travel to a school away from their neighborhood. This study looks at blight and crime around the school building itself and does not analyze the assigned neighborhoods proximity to blight and crime which would impact familial and home life activities. Assigned neighborhoods were compared to school composition based on variables of race/ethnicity and families with children under 18 in poverty only. Also, this study can only prove that blight and crime may be a factor, but as stated in the previous chapters there are many more factors that can cause a student’s performance or a school’s performance to decrease. Lastly, there are limitations to the data itself with regards to blight and crime data. Data was taken from databases that are constantly being updated. While this provides a wonderful opportunity in urban research to analyze data that is new and accessible, data may have altered or more data could have been added after the data request and download dates, which limits the analysis’ accuracy.

Methods and Analysis

Most crime analyses attempt to discover hot spots or perform hot spot analyses using Getis Ord Gi* statistical analysis or Kernel Density Analysis (Getis & Ord 1992, 1996; Weaver & Bagchi-Sen 2013) and both are the preferred methods encouraged by Esri Press textbook by Wilpen L. Gorr and Kristen S. Kurland (2012) to analyze crime. Some studies have combined disorder with crime and assume they are together due to “Broken windows” theory (Wilson & Kelling 1982, Braga & Bond 2008). Disorder can be interpreted as areas of blight since disorder follows broken windows theory by describing abandoned buildings, metal bars on windows,
graffiti, signs of vandalism, signs of property neglect, trash, or broken windows as signs of disorder according to Catherine E. Ross and John Mirowsky’s (1999). However, like Jacinta M. Gau and Travis C. Pratt (2010) this study assumes that blight and crime are associated with each other sequentially, but should not be considered having a causal relationship and therefore should be evaluated separately. To make them comparable the same method must be performed on both levels of data. Also, there is no definitive right way to perform KDE and many do not know the proper number of classes to choose and there is no set rule on choosing an appropriate search radius (Gorr & Kurland 2012). Some studies choose to use Getis Ord Gi* in conjunction with KDE (Kuo & Zeng & Lord 2011). For this study it was chosen to perform Kernel Density Analysis and Getis Ord Gi* as means of comparison and for finding the right number of clusters and classes needed to analyze the data along with repetition and trial and error. This study also uses GIS exploratory analysis’ methods from Murray et al (2001) to compare schools and their neighborhoods with relationship to populations of Hispanics, Non-Hispanic Whites, and those who identify as African American or Non-Hispanic Black.

The first research question for this chapter is exploring if there is a relationship between poor performing schools with high levels of blight and crime. Hypothesis one states:

H1: There is a positive relationship between blighted and crime areas with poor performing schools within a half a mile radius. Poor performance will be determined and defined by using the Performance index found on Ohio School Report Cards (n.d.) for the years 2012-2014.

The second research question explores if the poor performing schools that are surrounded by blight and crime have high levels of minority students and if blighted and crime ridden neighborhoods are predominately surrounded by African American or minority populations within the city.
H2: The second hypothesis predicts that there is more blight and crime in African American and minority neighborhoods and that there are more poor performing schools within African American and minority neighborhoods.

To begin, the first research question for this chapter is exploring if there is a relationship between poor performing schools with high levels of blight and crime. Crimes and their verified addresses were geocoded. It was determined through ArcGIS that the crimes from 2012-2014 were too spatially spread out across the city and did not create any clustering to be able to complete clustering analysis of KDE. Therefore, from this point on in the study crime was excluded. However, in Figure 4: Frequency of Crimes throughout the City on the following page, it shows of which crimes affected civilians in the city the most with Domestic Violence being the highest which may be contributing to PTSD in children and adolescents throughout the city. Assaults (felonious and aggravated) and robberies were the second and third highest crimes known to cause PTSD in children and adolescents that could be greatly affecting the mental health of children throughout the city.

All the Performance Index rates for the school years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 were gathered for each school. There was an attempt to gather the Literacy Rate for schools, but the Literacy Rate for 2012-2013 was missing and therefore excluded. Then the median value of each school was calculated and using the grading chart found on the same Ohio School Report Card, the new grade was calculated for the school. This was deemed necessary since 10 out of the total 69 schools had a grade change that went up or down in 2013-2014 compared to the previous year of 2012-2013. All schools were eliminated that lacked having performance index rates for both school years recorded and only having the recent 2015 performance index rate available online through Ohio Department of Education website (n.d.). This included all public charter schools and new schools.
Source: Ohio Department of Public Safety request made November 17th of 2015

According to the Ohio School Report Card a school gets a B if it meets standards and only schools that exceed those standards outlined by the Ohio Department of Education received an A, hence both B graded schools and C graded schools were included with a total of 14 schools. F grade schools or poor performing schools had a total of 11 schools. Schools of B/C grades or good performing schools were compared with F grade or poor performing schools to ensure that schools that were poor performing truly might be affected by the blight and crime in their prospective or assigned neighborhoods. If there were good schools surrounded by blight and crime then clearly the poor grade might have nothing to do with surrounding neighborhood,
but a host of other factors related to family involvement, classroom size, or school climate for example. Once the median values were calculated for each school and their grades, the B and C schools were geocoded and made ready for comparison. Each location was checked to ensure they presided in the neighborhood or neighborhoods that were assigned to them using ArcGIS. Only one school, School K and K2 (K2 refers to the second building of the same school) had a neighborhood that was close to the school buildings, but did not include other neighborhoods surrounding the school. It was determined that this was due to this school and other schools being assigned neighborhoods that were in close proximity that did not have any other elementary schools present. School assigned neighborhoods could be a part of the hot spot blight cluster even though the school building was not.

Lastly, the blight level data was displayed in ArcGIS. Kernel Density Estimation was then performed with the bandwidth of 804.67 meters or roughly a half a mile to match the linear unit of the map. After several tests and by analyzing the histogram of the dataset it was determined to use Quantile classification with five classes. This means that during the analysis with regards to Kernel Density Estimation, a histogram of the data is created and then the raw data is broken up into 5 classes based on the bandwidth of 804.67 meters. The KDE analysis was then compared to an Optimized Hot Spot Analysis tool found within ArcGIS 10.4 toolbox to confirm and test the KDE analysis. This tool utilizes the Getis Ord Gi* statistic and incidents were counted within polygons from the neighborhood level and neighborhood shapefile. Getis Ord Gi* analyzed the number of blight incidents within the polygons and creates a z-score value.

In ArcGIS a confidence value is given that marks the statistical significance of that value. This can be seen most clearly in Figures 5a and 5b. It was confirmed that the KDE and the Getis Ord Gi* results were roughly the same in confirming the hot spots within the city (please see
figures 5a and 5b: KDE and Getis Ord Gi* Comparison on the following pages). Kernel Density Estimation typically finds more clusters than in Getis Ord Gi* statistic, but both are useful for comparison as well as ensuring the validity of the KDE results when compared to the Getis Ord Gi* Statistical results. The major differences found were the shape of hot spots in some areas. KDE was able to discover minor clustering more so than Getis Ord Gi* analysis, but these minor clusters proved irrelevant in this study do to their geographic locations being far removed from the schools chosen for the analysis. Examples of this can be seen in figures 5a and 5b: KDE and Getis Ord Gi*. In figures 5a and 5b one can see the KDE and the Getis Ord Gi* test matches with two major hotspots on the East side of the city.

The second research question relates to poor performing schools that are surrounded by blight and crime and questions if they have high levels of minority students and if blighted and crime ridden neighborhoods are predominately surrounded by African American or minority populations within the city. For this question only the most recent School Report Card year 2013-2014 was used. This was answered by creating a series of choropleth maps following GIS exploratory analysis’ methods (Murray et al 2001), but taking into account raw numbers of neighborhoods and combined neighborhoods for schools as outlined by the city’s Transformation Alliance School Quality Guide (2015) and used to compare. Maps were created in ArcGIS using five classes in Quantile and can be found on the following pages. The percentages of each neighborhood relating Non-Hispanic whites, non-Hispanic blacks, and Hispanics were compared with poor performing schools and their percentages in the schools themselves. School composition in relationship to their assigned neighborhood was analyzed.
Figure 5a. KDE and Getis Ord Gi* Comparison

Caption: Getis Ord Gi* statistic compared to KDE analysis using school data performance grades medians from the Ohio Department of Education, blight data from NST, and NEO CANDO database neighborhood shapefile. East side is shown here.
Figure 5b. KDE and Getis Ord Gi* Comparison

Caption: Getis Ord Gi* statistic compared to KDE analysis using school data performance grades medians from the Ohio Department of Education, blight data from NST, and NEO CANDO database neighborhood shapefile. West side is shown here.
Results

The first hypothesis is that there is a positive relationship between blight and crime areas with poor performing schools within a half a mile radius. Good performing schools (B and C median grade schools) were compared to F schools to determine which schools could be found in blight hot spots. Schools that were found in hotspots can be shown in Table 2: Hot Spot Analysis Results below.

Table 2. Hot Spot Analysis Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blind Name</th>
<th>Median Performance Index</th>
<th>Performance Index Grade</th>
<th>Hotspot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School K</td>
<td>82.55</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School K2</td>
<td>82.55</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1</td>
<td>80.85</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1K</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2I</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School G</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School J</td>
<td>74.25</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School U</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1C</td>
<td>76.95</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2Q</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2S</td>
<td>78.15</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2Y</td>
<td>73.35</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.3E</td>
<td>76.25</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1J</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>46.95</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School E</td>
<td>45.75</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School H</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.0</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.P</td>
<td>45.05</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1L</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1O</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1U</td>
<td>49.35</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1W</td>
<td>47.55</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2F</td>
<td>45.6</td>
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<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2P</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Transformation Alliance School Quality Guide (2015) and GIS.
A school had to be in a hot spot exactly and not simply outside of a hotspot. Hotspots were determined to be the darkest areas of the map produced by KDE. Examples of schools found in hotspots can also be seen in Figure 6: School Grades and Blight (on the following page), but again the city and school district could not be released for this study hence the maps are divided and separated from the East and West. From the top figure or the east side of the city, one can see four failing schools in the heart of the blight clusters. The school at the southern point of the map, on the East side, shows a C graded school that is just barely within the blight cluster. In the second image of Figure 6 which shows the East side we see predominately less F graded schools and no F school within a blight cluster.

Given the results, the hypothesis is somewhat true in that there is a positive relationship between blight with poor performing schools due to more F schools being clustered on the east side of the city and near blighted areas. However, in proving that there is a positive relationship between blight and crime areas with poor performing schools within a half a mile radius, the results only show four F schools within blighted areas, and also crime that causes PTSD was too spatially dispersed and not clustered around schools. One can also see that there is a C graded school also within a blighted hot spot, therefore, there may always be other factors that also contribute to a school’s poor performance or good performance unrelated to their neighborhood surroundings. From the data shown here, four out of 11 schools or 36% of F graded schools were surrounded by blight and blight could be affecting these children and their learning outcomes. Only direct contact with students can truly determine what is/are the main factor(s) affecting children’s learning outcomes and contributing to PTSD in children.
Figure 6. School Grades and Blight

The second research question explores if the poor performing schools that are surrounded by blight and crime have high levels of minority students (within the school) and if blight and crime ridden neighborhoods are predominately surrounded by African American or minority populations within the city. Again, due to the spatial distribution of crime surrounding the entire area, crime is eliminated as a point of analysis for this portion of the study here as well for it seems all neighborhoods could be affected by those crimes. This is not true for all cities, but is for this particular location. Figures 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d (pp. 92-99) show the results of the maps showing poor performing schools and blight in relation to their neighborhood racial composition using exploratory techniques. By analyzing the maps it is clear that F schools are near or in neighborhoods with high percentages of Non-Hispanic Blacks and Hispanics.
Figure 7a. Exploratory Analysis: Blight and Schools on East Side

Caption: Exploratory Analysis of the East side of the city. KDE analysis using school data performance grades medians from the Ohio Department of Education, blight data from NST, and NEO CANDO database neighborhood shapefile.
Figure 7b. Exploratory Analysis: Racial Composition of East Side

Figure 7c. Exploratory Analysis: Racial Composition of East Side

Caption: Exploratory Analysis of the West side of the city. KDE analysis using school data performance grades medians from the Ohio Department of Education, blight data from NST, and NEO CANDO database neighborhood shapefile.
Figure 8b. Exploratory Analysis: Racial Composition of West Side

Figure 8c. Exploratory Analysis: Racial Composition of West Side

Figure 8d. Exploratory Analysis: Racial Composition of West Side

Table 3: Schools in Hot Spots compared to their Neighborhood in the table below details that four F schools in blight hotspots all schools are predominately Black with Black percentages ranging from 82.7-99.6 percent within the school buildings themselves. The one C graded school has over 90% of the students within the school predominately Black. Neighborhoods show more variation with two schools in these neighborhoods that reflect the same racial composition for their schools, School 0.2F and School 0.1U with over 90% of their students as Non-Hispanic Black students. Schools 0.O and School 0.1W have Non-Hispanic white students just above 40% and have just above 50% Non-Hispanic Black students along with School 0.2Y.

Table 3. Schools in Hot Spots compared to their Neighborhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blind Name</th>
<th>Median Performance Grade</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Black School Percent</th>
<th>Hispanic School Percent</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White School Percent</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Black Neighborhood Percent</th>
<th>Hispanic Neighborhood Percent</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White Neighborhood Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2Y</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>52.23</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.O</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52.23</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1U</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>96.98</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1W</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>52.23</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>99.6</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>97.27</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Caption: Population percentages in schools are from the school quality guide (Transformation Alliance 2015). The same population percentages within the neighborhoods from NEO CANDO (2016). NC means there was less than 10 students of that race/ethnicity and was therefore not counted.

In Table 4: All Schools compared to their Neighborhood Racial Composition on the following page, it shows all schools and their racial composition in relation to their neighborhoods with rounded neighborhood data and raw school data. This table shows recent census data from 2010 and the percentages of racial groups compared to percentages of racial groups using 2014-2015 school year school percentages. Table 4 shows that all F graded schools have high levels of minority populations within the schools, but also shows that these schools do not always equally reflect their neighborhood. For example, School 0.2P and School 0.1L are predominately
Hispanic schools, but are in predominately white neighborhoods, but with School 0.2P having nearly a 35% Non-White Hispanic population and close to the white population in size.

*Table 4. All Schools compared to their Neighborhood Racial Composition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blind Name</th>
<th>Median Performance Grade</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Black School Percent</th>
<th>Hispanic School Percent</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White School Percent</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Black Neighborhood Percent</th>
<th>Hispanic Neighborhood Percent</th>
<th>Hispanic Neighborhood Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School K</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>23.5/78.3</td>
<td>10.7/4.9</td>
<td>35.7/16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School K2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>23.5/78.3</td>
<td>10.7/4.9</td>
<td>35.7/16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1K</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>32.4/20.7</td>
<td>19.5/8.7</td>
<td>43.8/68.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2I</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School G</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School J</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School U</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2Q</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2Y</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.3E</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1J</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>School B</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School H</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>95.8/23.4</td>
<td>0.6/2.3</td>
<td>2.5/55.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.0</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0. P</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>99.2</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1L</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1O</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1U</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1W</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>99.6</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>School 0.2P</td>
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<td>58.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Caption: Raw data population percentages in schools are from the school quality guide (Transformation Alliance 2015). Population percentages within the neighborhoods were rounded to the nearest tenth and are from NEO CANDO (2016), a database that collects from the US Census/American Community Survey. A NC means there was less than 10 students of that race/ethnicity and was therefore not counted. Schools H, K, and K2 were assigned multiple neighborhoods and were compared to each neighborhood separately.

Table 4 also shows that most B graded schools have predominately Black students.

School K and School K2 are the same school with two locations and serve two neighborhoods
with one of those neighborhoods being predominately black and is part of a hot spot cluster much farther away from the school. This neighborhood was assigned to the school through the city’s Transformation Alliance catalog (---Transformation Alliance 2015) even though it is farther away from the school’s locations while all the other schools resided in the neighborhood were assigned or were on the border of their neighborhood, this may complicate the analysis further for this school even more so than school choice already adds an unknown element to the study with the data that is provided in this study. It is uncertain just how much blight is a factor in school performance as stated earlier as much as it is uncertain that school performance is improved due to the school’s location outside and away from blight or if it is due to the school’s climate, teacher performance, and school social environment, but this is worth noting.

As by the list, other B schools and C graded schools may be having predominately Black students, but may not be in predominately Black neighborhoods. While it is true that all F graded schools are predominately filled with minorities there are several other schools that are predominately filled with minorities that are higher performing. Eight of the B/C schools were filled predominately with minorities equaling roughly 57% of high performing schools having predominately a higher percentage of minorities, but the range for minorities within these schools is only from 40-65% and only one high performing school had 97% Black or minority students. There is however, a stronger relationship with most of the F schools and their prevalence near blighted areas. There is no relationship between school performance and crime due to the spatial distribution of crime being far too spread out across the city.

To conclude and answer the second hypothesis which questioned whether there is more blight and crime in African American and minority neighborhoods and that there are more poor performing schools within African American and minority neighborhoods one could argue that
the hypothesis is only partly true. Most of the F graded schools are near blighted areas, but only four are in blight ridden hotspots and of those four, they are all predominately filled with Black students, but there was still a C graded school within a blight cluster. There is also no relationship with crime that can be seen amongst any of the schools. Lastly, whether or not poor performing schools have predominately African American and minority neighborhoods is inconclusive because there is also a significant portion of good performing schools that have predominately Black or minority students. However, more poor performing schools that have predominately Black students and Hispanic students are in predominately Black or minority neighborhoods which does indeed prove the hypothesis.

It is also worth noting that through a personal interview with Nancy on October 21, 2015 and Diana on October 19, 2015, literacy rates, absent rates, language barriers, and the number of disabled children would be a factor to consider for school performance, but literacy rates were not included due to a lack of literacy rates for the 2012-2013 school year. Table 5: School Grades compared to Other Factors on the following page, there seems to be a relationship between F school grades and absence rates and schools that have higher percentages of students with disabilities with a range from 20.1%-29.9%. Language barriers was also associated with F schools such as School 0.2P. School Report Card grades collected by the State that tests students based on state-wide tests do not seem to properly measure these factors and be creating a severe disadvantage to schools with high populations of students who have disabilities, high absence rates, and language barriers. This institutional and normative process could be disadvantageous and inadvertently penalizing schools who have special education programs and may make them seem worse than other schools in the state and local area than they really are. Future state policy makers who are with the Ohio Department of Education should address this and find a means of
comparing schools equally with each other instead of allowing schools that are already good to be successful, leaving poor F grade schools without a chance of showing signs of improvement even if the school has indeed been improving.

Table 5. School Grades compared to Other Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blind Name</th>
<th>Median Performance Grade</th>
<th>Disability Percent</th>
<th>Limit English Percent</th>
<th>Absent Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School K</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School K2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0. I</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1K</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2I</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School G</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School J</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School U</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>School 0.2Q</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>NC</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.2Y</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.3E</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 0.1J</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>45.7</td>
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</tr>
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<td>46.6</td>
<td>44.4</td>
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<td>School 0.1O</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>28.7</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>NC</td>
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</tr>
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<td>F</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Caption: Population percentages in schools are from the school quality guide (Transformation Alliance 2015). The same population percentages within the neighborhoods from NEO CANDO (2016). NC means there was less than 10 students of that race/ethnicity and was therefore not counted.

Concluding Discussion

As stated in chapter two, family background, school district and federal policy, and inequitable community policy are important factors in determining student outcomes. As
previous studies have suggested, as disorder increases so does the likelihood of crime or the perception of crime (Wilson & Kelling 1982, Gault & Silver, 2008). This is based on the assumption that neighborhoods practice self-efficacy approaches to monitoring and preventing crime, and once a neighborhood falls into disorder, residents believe the neighborhood to have an increase in crime and withdraw, allowing for crime to actually occur. However, disorder is not linked to crime, but rather one happens before the other in a series of time and they do not imply that disorder causes crime (Gault & Silver 2008). Homicidal crime increase is however linked to a decrease in available jobs and spatial city growth (McDowall 1986, Matthews et al 2001).

Regardless, “disorder undermines informal social control, which in turn leads to an increase in crime” (Gault & Silver, 2008, p. 243). Disorder, which is typically defined as a “violation of public ordinances” (Gault & Silver, 2008, p. 241) can have great impacts on inner city youth. There is a strong relationship between neighborhood disorder and stress, which can lead to “psychologic distress, then to drug use and from drug use to sexual risk behaviors” (Latkin et al 2007, p. S238). Other studies have also been able to demonstrate that perceived disorder and actual disorder in the neighborhood both have adverse effects resulting in lower self-esteem, decreased participation in activities in the neighborhood which leads to depression, and mental illness (Haney 2007, Eamon 2002, Aneshensel & Sucoff 1996). More importantly, there is evidence to suggest that blighted and vacant housing, a symptom of disorder, has a direct negative consequence on youth and their associations with defining violence in their neighborhoods (Yonas et al 2007). These vacant houses are associated with anger and depression which causes young people “to value themselves and others around them less… ‘causing’ young people to engage in high-risk violence-related activities” (Yonas et al 2007, p. 677).
In this chapter it was discovered that many families and children in Dionysia experience domestic violence throughout, but homicides or murder was actually extremely low during the study period which contradicts previous studies mentioned above and in chapter II. Furthermore, no crime could be linked to any individual school’s spatial area due to the evenly spread spatiality of crimes across the entire city. Therefore, spatial crime analysis was eliminated. It is also deeply uncertain as to whether or not there is a direct causal relationship between blight and why some schools are performing poorly, however, schools with a median F school grade were nearby blighted areas and were predominately found on the East side of the city which is also known for its higher percentages of black students. This is reflective of previous studies that show minorities and especially African American students are still deeply affected by blight, neighborhood disorder, and poor performing schools. There were exceptions to this rule however with some of the best schools having a majority of black students.

Ultimately, one of the biggest factors for understanding school education inequalities is understanding why those children are not showing up to school as Table 5 addresses. These F schools also had high populations of disabled children which could be another factor for why school absences were high and two schools in particular that had a high percentage of students where English proficiency was a challenge, one being 46.6% of students and the other being 98.3% of the student body. Absence rates in the State of Ohio help produce the grade for the school, ensuring that schools who have high populations of students with disabilities to be misrepresented on the state level grading system and are incredibly disadvantaged because of its effect on student policy both at the state and Federal level. Understanding why these children are not going to school and how state testing tests disabled individuals must be analyzed in future studies to prove with certainty if schools with special education programs are being
disadvantaged and by how much. Also interviews with parents, teachers, or community members and students is required to understand just how crime and blight affect students mentally and physically and what the direct cause is that explains why the children do not go to school.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

Introduction

Dionysia once stood proud as a manufacturing city, but after national economic changes the manufacturing belt declined and with it, its population and economic stability. The region and the city was riddled with a net loss of 42.4% of manufacturing jobs (1970-1990) (Wilson & Wouters 2003), income and housing price decline (Hartley 2013), and an increase in poverty and interurban debt (Warf & Holly 1997). Crime is more likely to increase as many were left unemployed (McDowall 1986, Matthews et al 2001). These were the conditions of Dionysia when the school district was forced to desegregate and due to poor financial policies and a lack of support from the surrounding the community, the school district fell into collapse along with the city. These conditions spurred businesses and their foundations into action, striving to save their livelihoods, the livelihoods of their communities, and eventually to save the failing school district. It is very reasonable and understandable for the school district to become so reliant on these businesses, organizations, and foundations after the community refused to pass any levy to support the schools and be able to make the federal mandate of desegregating schools a true and ideal reality. This also proves the importance of community inclusion and engagement to ensure that the school district can continue to be supported, allowing for growth within the community and hopefully to spur economic and community development throughout Dionysia.
Schools remain segregated due to the institutional structures of our current society in general (Horsford 2011). When segregation occurs, minority dominated schools are associated with higher dropout rates and lower achievement scores. Neighborhoods, like their schools, are racialized through the process of both individual choice and “residential stratification” (Sampson & Sharkey 2008, p. 25). This stratification is based on cultural and structural factors like income, economic status, and education (Sampson & Sharkey, 2008). White parents and families are unlikely to attend “multiracial schools” (p. 12) and these communities are often surrounded by poor infrastructure, housing decay, and no jobs (Orfield & Lee 2005). Even low-income whites can be victims of housing discrimination showing that this issue is not purely racial, but also economical, and intensifies racial disparity in the community and in society (Orfield & Lee 2005). There are also funding disparities that continue in the education system as students that belong to predominately white schools receive more funding per child and have better resources (Ladson-Billings 2006, Kozol 1991). Education privileges for one particular social group creates a disadvantage with other social groups simultaneously (Waters 2012).

One way this was done is through privatization (Bartlett et al 2002), but with schools in Dionysia, it is through student based budgeting systems and not being able to give all schools full autonomy in order to encourage accountability. Wealth for students and citizens is derived from student outcomes once students graduate high school if they choose to do so. A wealth gap creates a “gap” in community development as well and will impact the city as a whole due to the lack of investment in poor urban communities with high percentages of African Americans. Poor urban environments that produce economically poor citizens will further be associated with crime and disorder which will continue to disenfranchise the community. Including minorities to participate more heavily in the city’s economy by helping more minorities have access to high
quality education can only aid Dionysia in increasing its economic wealth. If minorities are still left under-educated, this will inhibit a possible source of highly-skilled laborers. This destroys growth and communities, leaving many unqualified for the type of high-tech jobs available in the private sector at the present day (Tate IV 2008).

Dionysia needs more positive communities to improve its current state of population decline and economic decline. As stated earlier, a positive community in low-SES communities will have a positive impact on schools and student achievement (Coleman & Hoffer 1987, Battistich et al 1995). School policies therefore become all the more important at the present time. Some have argued that school of choice not only is done to eliminate the affiliation to local schools, but to undermine the community’s ability to partake heavily in discourse (Hursh 2007), but as we have seen in Dionysia, it may also increase community discourse in response to community school changes even if the discourse is directed at the wrong audience. Policies will not change for the discourse is kept at a local level, but the policies are being made at the Federal and state level of government. New policy and more open dialogue with an engaged community will be more important as Dionysia attempts to overcome its economic pitfalls as a city.

Discussion

The third chapter attempted to answer the question, what policies is the school district pursuing to improve education quality, equality and access to high performing schools for minorities and the poor, and is the community sharing equal power in engagement or having an open relationship with the district in implementing these policies? Do these policies seem to be working from the community’s point of view? It was discovered that although there are several policies that the school district attempts to put into action to help reduce the achievement gap and help improve outcomes of students, none of the policies address minorities and the poor
explicitly. After analyzing the policy documents and interviews it is clear that the district does have plans to alleviate problems for students and pushing students toward receiving a decent education, but it follows a business model that has several problems. The initiatives being implemented by the school district like the Preschool plan, the rebuild of schools, and creating the Transformation Alliance all seem beneficial however, when considering community input, the student based budgeting system and the autonomy given to schools who are already performing well, there is an unfair advantage amongst the students in the schools with some school buildings struggling to acquire resources while other schools have better resources. There is also still a lack of transparency and consistency within the City Plan and other school district initiatives that is not made easily understandable to the community. This leads to the conclusion that my hypothesis is true in that improvement to the educational outcomes will benefit the students that already are receiving a benefit and may continue to leave other students behind. Through in-depth analysis of interviews, it was determined that there is not enough community input in the implementation of those policies and there are two forms of “community” being created. While the city alliance team is including the businesses, city leadership, and foundation members as a “community” in policy decisions, there is no evidence that the district is including the residents and locals that live in Dionysia that do not have political affiliations. The additional analysis of Pearson’s Coefficient on the policy documents themselves shows that the district initiatives do focus on community development, but community is linked with the businesses and foundation members, leaving the meaning as to what type of community they will be including rather vague, especially when considering that Education Quality Improvement Initiatives were also linked to Community Development. Also there was no evidence in the documents that community members could be involved in school district policy making except
in the re-build process of new schools and by serving on the Transformation Alliance. In addition to this, there is no evidence in the documents that shows how community members will be reached or how many community members must serve on the Transformation Alliance that do not also belong to a business, foundation, or another political entity. Again, this concludes that the type of “community” that is being referred to in communities of practice approaches refers to all members of a society or local group and the school district, as seen through interviews, meetings, and policy documents, is leaving a significant portion of the community left out of the decision-making and policy building process.

Second, this study attempted to ask the questions is there a relationship between poor performing schools with high levels of blight and crime and if the poor performing schools that are surrounded by blight and crime have high levels of minority students and if blighted and crime ridden neighborhoods are predominately surrounded by African American or minority populations within the city? The results of the fourth chapter conclude it is somewhat true in that there is a positive relationship between blight with poor performing schools due to more F schools being clustered on the east side of the city and near blighted areas. However, in proving that there is a positive relationship between blight and crime areas with poor performing schools within a half a mile radius, the results only show four F schools within blighted areas, and also crime that causes PTSD was too spatially dispersed and not clustered around schools. One can also see that there is a C graded school also within a blighted hot spot. Therefore, there may be other factors that contribute to a school’s poor performance or good performance unrelated to their neighborhood surroundings. Only direct contact with students can truly determine what is/are the main factor(s) affecting children’s learning outcomes and contributing to PTSD in children.
The fourth chapter also concluded that it is only partly true that there is more blight in African American and minority neighborhoods and that there are more poor performing schools nearby African American and minority neighborhoods. Most of the F graded schools are near blighted areas, but only four are in blight ridden hotspots and of those four, they are all predominately filled with Black students, but there was still a C graded school within a blight cluster. There is also no relationship with crime that can be seen amongst any of the schools. Whether or not poor performing schools have predominately African American and minority neighborhoods is inconclusive because there is also a significant portion of good performing schools that have predominately Black or minority students. However, more poor performing schools that have predominately Black students are in predominately Black neighborhoods which does indeed prove the hypothesis. Perceptions by the community say that the west side schools are better than east side schools and that there are disparities—not every school is equal. This data shows that there is validity to their claims since most of the F schools are on the East side and only two F schools are on the West. And even though there is a B school located on the East side it mostly resides in the middle and is an outlier among the other groups.

In chapter four neither hypothesis was true due to the lack of being able to interview students and speak to them directly about the effects of blight and crime in their neighborhoods. However, one can see that the absence rates are higher in low performing schools and blight is more closely associated with F graded schools save for a single outlier C grade school. It was also determined that all the F schools had predominately minority children school populations and were from minority neighborhoods. They had significantly higher amounts of minority children although some B and C graded schools had high levels of minority children as well. It is easy to understand why the school district desperately needs the businesses and foundation
members as investors and partners to their enterprise and, it seems, they have a mutual
benefitting relationship. However, during the time of this case study, based on what was
discussed at public meetings, the history of Dionysia’s schools, as well as the approaching
renewal of the levy in November of 2016, having the community support the school district will
be more important in the future to ensure that Dionysia’s schools will survive and will not be
taken over by the state. At the moment it is uncertain whether this will be beneficial to students
if the district loses its autonomy, however, in any system, the school system must improve on
how it reaches the needs of *every* student, especially students who are of minority decent. This
can only aid the city as a whole if more minorities are allowed to participate in spurring the
economy.

**Implications and Future Research**

Although this study primarily focuses on education, the findings and methods can be
applied to other future research projects that seek to understand and/or resolve conflict between
policy makers and the community or sub-groups within. These methods can be used in any
future study that focuses on community development initiatives that have struggled to instigate
equality amongst minorities as well as how to develop healthy and empowering communication
between policy makers and all members of the community. Interviews from the school district
and its affiliates were necessary and important to the findings, but attending public meetings
were just as important. It is imperative for any researcher seeking to implement these methods to
have close contact with policy makers and their affiliates as well as seeking the community’s
opinion, obtain an in-depth look at the policy documents themselves found on public internet
sources, and incorporate spatial analysis between where these populations live and their
neighborhood conditions to discover the community’s perspective. All spatial data is public and useful for this type of analysis.

Dionysia’s school district has suffered terribly with economic losses and has historically struggled to keep expenses low and enrollment high since 1978. Furthermore, initiatives that are passed follow Federal and State guidelines like No Child Left Behind that seem to hinder minority students, disabled students, and students with a poor foundation in the English language from being successful. Poor urban school districts have very little community support as well as State and Federal support under the current testing policies and with regards to student based budgeting systems that leave many failing schools behind. This school district does however, implement an investment plan strategy that seems to be working well and any future policy created should be structured to do a massive investment plan strategy for the entire school district, with more funds going to the poorest schools and disadvantaged populations that are near gentrified neighborhoods and areas on the East side of the city. Furthermore, more parental involvement and community involvement must be included and a mandatory number of parents, teachers, and community members must be included within the Transformation Alliance, giving more autonomy and information to parents and members of the community.

Resources distributed throughout the district must be open to the public and connect all the district policies and initiatives together in a simplified context, allowing members of the community who do not have a background in education or have a school degree to quickly and easily understand how development projects in the city are related to and effect their school district and its budget. In addition, a deeper understanding of historical processes and collective bargaining decisions explaining how the school district has come to the decisions it must make at the present day that many community members do not necessarily understand or agree with must
be explained to the public in order to go forward in bipartisanship and to create a healthy community environment. One of the biggest problems facing this district has been and always will be public support and money. Oversight measures must be taken to ensure money is being spent on initiatives that are working and also there needs to be a greater focus on acquiring community support to ensure that the public will support a future levy. Federal and state laws and initiatives in support of state testing need to ensure that the tests allow for equal comparisons among schools, especially schools with high populations of disabled children and children with language barriers. More research needs to be conducted on a national scale that examines the root causes of absenteeism in schools and what policies or strategies can be created to ensure more children go to school on a regular basis.
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APPENDIX A
CODEBOOK

Codebook:
Themes that come to light using the grounded theory approach:

Codebook:

Community inclusion/engagement—District policies that include community engagement or inclusion. Community is defined as neighbors or families. Businesses and foundations are not part of this group. Examples and community feedback or feedback from families is included here that are not exactly parents.

Business and Foundation Inclusion and Engagement—policies and interactions that include businesses and foundation engagement. Also includes unions.

Community development—anything dealing with the re-build or reinvestment into failing schools. Only focused on the actual buildings themselves. This assumes that the re-build of schools will uplift the community bringing investment as structures are then built around the schools. It also deals with community development within the area.

Reduce achievement gap—any evidence to support decreasing the achievement gap or policies that are about reducing the achievement gap. Any challenges facing students that help increase the achievement gap such as poverty, signs of poverty, transportation, attendance, crime, blight, and a lack of good teachers or teacher relationships.

School Climate—policies challenges opinions and initiatives set to speak of or improve school climate.

Minority education—Aspects, challenges, and struggles that minorities face and any policies to eliminate or reduce those challenges.

Deteriorating neighborhoods—School policies and how they pertain to, influence, discourage, or encourage deteriorating neighborhoods. Deteriorating deals with blight, crime, and reduced and underserved populations.

Education quality improvement initiatives.—all the various policies the districts are implementing to improve reading writing and math scores and to improve schools. This also may include recommendations by foundations, businesses, and other entities working with the district.

West vs. East Side—any mention of the racial and historical significance repeated and used as a representation of how schools are now compared to back then.

School Desegregation—historical relevance to the cities school policies and issues being reflected still to this day.

High Stakes Test—any policies that utilize the state based or district based tests.
**Student experiences and struggles**—any mention by students of their feelings about district policies shared openly at public meetings, any disgruntled feelings, any positive feelings shared by them, any known struggles the district has with their students.

**School Investment**---Policies that deal with the districts investment plan strategy that deals with the negatives and positives of preserving schools rather than closing them and building new schools.

**Teacher and Principal experience and struggles**--any mention by faculty or about these faculty that deals with their feelings about district policies shared openly at public meetings, any disgruntled feelings, any positive feelings shared by them, any known struggles the district has with their staff.

**Parent experience and struggles**—any feedback from parents about the schools

**State policy**—anything dealing with state policy

**Teacher Matriculation**---policies dealing with eliminating poor teachers and replacing them with new.

Looking for words and meaning. Used grounded theory approach to defining the terms used and in choosing the codes.
APPENDIX B
TRANSCRIPTS

Total time: 1:05:18 10.21.2015

Nancy*: So Yeah so. I’ll give you my card and stuff too. As the policy and neighborhood liaison for the CEO a lot of the things that I touch are do have a little bit of a high level but then my background is a 22-year teacher in the district and a former political director for the [Dionysia ‘s] teachers’ union. That kind of gives a little bit more on scope on some of the things I’ve been able to reach and touch in terms of facilities, in terms of student success.

(she signs the IRB form. She is fully aware she is being recorded and agrees to this.)

Nancy*: This is starting my 25th year with the district minus 11 months when I worked in Washington D.C. with the AFT president, American federation of teacher’s president [NAME PROTECTED]. Came back because D.C. was not for me.

(she asks for the date…we talk unrelated to interview but about the interview process and [school district] website)

Nancy*: And then also I want to make sure that you have access to I’m going to show you on our website there’s a lot of things with the Master Facilities Planning how we’re trying to do things a little different. Let me just pull up the [school district] website too. So if you navigate through the website you can see a lot of all the things we’re working on it really does come from the [City] Plan and [Dionysia ‘s] plan for transforming schools and you can kind of see where we are in terms of the legislation that passed in 2012. I always like to start with those pieces specifically because as a student in [Dionysia ‘s] schools in the early 1970s my parents because of the desegregation policies of the 1970s put me into a catholic school even though we lived in [Dionysia] and then I went to [Dionysia] State University and I wanted to start teaching in [Dionysia] to kind of get back to where I was yanked out of in the middle of third grade and when you look at the timeline of education especially around [Dionysia] you have these big landmark pieces and basically desegregation, then mayoral control, mayoral control happened in the mid-90s and in 2012 under mayoral control, a republican governor, and a democratic mayor, with the help of the business community and the union, we had a law passed that really was a game changer in terms of education reform across the country it took away seniority as the sole judge for raises and it also really transformed education in giving management rights back and turning around low performing schools it also made sure that no one was a forced placement in the classroom. These are big huge issues that somehow we’re going to touch in this study in some ways but because of those legislation pieces we ended up being able to pass the levy in 2012 which gave us an operations levy and then in 2014 two years later the issue 4 levy which has given us the opportunity to build 20 new buildings and fit remodel the older ones and right size the district that has a foot print of about 100,000 students but now we’re sitting at around 39,000. So finding a way to make sure that the academic sauce and the facilities work together to provide choices that families choose from and then removing the schools that were not successful from the district and making sure that we look at both the physical as well as the academic, social emotional, opportunities for a child within the context of the community to kind of help resurrect education to what it once was back in the 70s before desegregation kind of pulled a rug out from under us.

So I tell you all that so that when you look at the—there’s only 383 days you see this clock ticking down to our next levy if the levy is not passed in 383 we don’t just continue where we are, we go from here down to here so it was a very risky levy. And so when you look at the master facilities plan (she refers to the website for a bit) this master’s facilities plan and capital programs kind of gives you a little bit of—segment 7 is the segment we’re currently in to build new buildings, building assessments and while the [Dionysia’s] plan which is this plan for transforming took place two years ago it promised the citizens that every child in every neighborhood would have access to quality transformation so then they got the building pieces together so this year we opened up the New [SCHOOL NAME
PROTECTED], new [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] new [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and going in the ground in the summer of 2016 are 8 new buildings.

Megan: Okay which ones? [6:19] Is [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] possibly on that list?

Nancy*: [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] is one we’re still working on (she names the schools on the list) [6:55]

Megan: So [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] isn’t on the ballot yet but we’re trying.

Nancy*: [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] is. This is all the rest of the segments they’re right here. (she eats her lunch) [7:14] [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] is in there somewhere and there was just some community work that we needed to determine if we want to re-build or remodel. But the OFCC will only pay for new buildings so I think we have to get the community to understand that we either keep this old hunk of metal which is a very ugly old building—it’s rough. [7:37]. The CEO has been very intentional about how—or making sure the community decides what it wants and not us to tell the community what to do. So we can put a little money into to remodel it or tear it down and a new building. But if that tear happens with [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] then the pool’s not going to be there so then we have to connect to the recreation center. Which is supposed to get a new recreation center so that may lift that burden off for not having that pool but if you don’t build a new building then all of that space it’s just it’s not attracting anyone anymore. Meanwhile you have the new [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] which is completely overcrowded because they’re picking a building that can have transformative education in that building versus the old style reputation and bad reputation of a comprehensive high school. [8:38] So in ways for us to start increasing our draw to those schools we’ve got put a new high school on that [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] site and also I think it would very helpful is to somehow get a new [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and not just the facilities but the academic programming as well.

Megan: [8:59] Okay, sorry just to recap so you’re going to put a new building where the old [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] building is?

Nancy*: That’s the plan the board has voted on for now.

Megan: Alright yeah [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] is pretty interesting. So to go back a little bit because you spelled out so nicely for the history of it so you’re saying segregation policies or desegregation policies for the school district was actually bad for the district? How so?

Nancy*: [9:30] If—are you from [Dionysia]?

Megan: No

Nancy*: Okay, so. Well you know enough to know that [Dionysia] is East side or West Side right?

Megan: Hmm mm Yeah

Nancy*: Alright so I was a West sider my husband was an East sider it’s very territorial. What happened with the desegregation was a federal mandate—it reminds me a lot of the mandate that’s happening with the police department right now in [Dionysia]. So you have the federal mandate that says you guys have been doing a horrible job in closing the achievement gap, horrible job providing equitable opportunities for students east side or west side, desegregate this school. And I was a third grader at the time. And so I don’t know—the district wasn’t ready to—they didn’t link arm and arm and do this with the feds to do this. It was basically this is a court order do it. And so you had huge flight out of the city because basically you were telling families I’m going to take your third grade child and put them on a bus across town to the east side and there’s nothing you can do about it. And they also desegregated the teachers so one day the teacher was Mrs. Jones who you knew lived in that community who knew your grandmother and everything else and they moved her out and all the African American teachers were brought here, all the white teachers were brought there it wasn’t a thoughtful community driven process, it was responding
to the federal court order. So we lost thousands and thousands and thousands of students as a result of the desegregation the quality of education also went down, we went through a series of superintendents. People decided to get catholic education. Picked catholic education. And then they were also given vouchers for catholic education. Because in effect it deemed that the school district was so poor that the then Governor-I think it was then governor and then mayor [NAME PROTECTED] gave school vouchers to families to pick a local catholic school to pay their tuition instead of going to a public school. I mean a lot of it was our strongest families were moving out of the city were moving into different schools, refusing to follow through with the court order one way or another. I think the mandate was there but the resources weren’t there to make sure it was done well. [12:18].

Megan: So it was a good idea per say but it wasn’t implemented correctly?

Nancy*: I don’t know. I wouldn’t say it was a good idea. I would say that—

Megan: To keep it segregated?

Nancy*: No let me be very clear. To desegregate the schools in order to provide a better opportunity for low income African American children I think there are ways it could have been done a lot better. And I think forced placement of students regardless if it’s in for the best reasons, is not necessarily the best you know I mean I think forced placement of students now has even brought us to some—I think choice has to be there. And if parents were to choose a school... [13:10]

Megan: Yeah it’s always the catch 22.

Nancy*: Yup.

Megan: There’s so many studies that are saying that you know students have diverse classrooms it’s proven to benefit them for academic improvement but then at the same time....

Nancy*: [13:29] Well when you pick a college you pick a college and you want diversity so I mean I completely agree, but the idea of forced placement, and transportation away from your family, is not—

Megan: Because even if you were African American you know you wouldn’t want to get on a bus and go all the way—

Nancy*: Exactly

Megan Because that’s what’s going on in Chicago right now.

Nancy*: Exactly. And then there’s also the idea of your family and friends are still here and you’re on a bus—you know what I mean. [13:57] So-- the desegregated schools in classrooms should be a priority but how do you get there and how you plan your community around that, I don’t know if it’s the school districts’ responsibility. If the school district is providing quality education in all of those pockets which it wasn’t, if the quality was there throughout, I would think they would desegregate themselves. Or at least I would hope so. But to force people across—I mean we’re dealing with the new [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] opened up and there are still people from— that will not support a school levy because of busing. And this had been since 1973.

Megan: And [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] is a really good school.

Nancy*: It’s a great school. But you know there’s old habits die hard busing in just many ways destroyed the city of [Dionysia] altogether. [14:55]

Nancy*: [15:01] so you see these policies that have good intent, but if the orchestration isn’t done well it can backfire.

(I share some of my personal experiences showing that I understand where she is coming from)
Nancy*: [15:17] So again back to the transformation plan, the [Dionysia 'S] Plan it’s about making sure parents have choice. We actually share levy dollars with charter schools based on quality. So we’re trying to desegregate schools again on just having quality schools open for public or charter schools so that families that choose can choose based on the academic programming and be able to get a quality education regardless on which neighborhood they live in [15:49].

Megan: How does the information get to the parents exactly besides the websites? Like how do you ensure the parents are getting that information? Especially if they’re low SES you know they probably don’t necessarily have computers or any of that?

Nancy*: We still have a problem with communication with parents. I mean even in our attempts to use text messaging and to use IVR’s messaging we’ve become more intentional on providing a family choice night just like so that parents can choose their high school. So every 8th grader has an open portal and has a day off to go visit different schools and see different opportunities so far 8th grade choosing high school for 9th grade is much more intentional and for the last two years we’ve gone through a lot of change in terms of you just kind of go to the school that is in your neighborhood. So people that—and that’s one of the reasons there’s a lot of declining enrollment at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. People now have options and the people that live in the neighborhood of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] are choosing with their feet somewhere else.

(I talk for bit about exploring some of the neighborhoods and schools)

Nancy*: [17:40] We do provide free transportation for um high school students on the RTA. But some families still don’t want to send them on the RTA so. I taught in [NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTED] and [NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTED] families were not choosing [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] even though it was one of the best schools around because it was on the East side. SO and there is still very a couple of in my opinion, some racist neighborhoods. That doesn’t mean to say that it is what it was, but there are still some. We have to be very careful with our marketing because we want to make sure that we are showing a very diverse group because if families don’t see themselves in some of our marketing materials for schools they will not choose them. SO. We are still living through the after effects of desegregation and busing.

Megan: [18:41] So then the understanding I’m under from that standpoint is that kind of like you can lead a horse to water but you can’t make it drink?

Nancy*: hmm mm.

Megan: Especially if the horse doesn’t want to drink any water.

Megan: SO the transformation alliance it’s like kind of a group in which everybody gets together with the businesses and the community to try to get this information out? IF I’m understanding it correctly? Cause’ I’ve read all this stuff online but you seem to be helping me a lot with understanding what it is I am reading, ‘cause I have a geography background not an education background so this makes it a little bit of a jump I have to make in order to understand these policies, but with regards to that as well SO your job in particular with that, what is it that you do specifically? [19:34]

Nancy*: One of the things that kind of got me to this position was during um when I was working with the [CITY] teachers’ union on senate bill um I was a director of political action and helped run the Obama campaign for the first time and the second time I was actually in DC but there was a collective bargaining law that tried to be imposed on 2011 senate bill 5 it was the law that Wisconsin tried to get rid of collective bargaining law Scott Walker was the governor. Wisconsin the law passed in Wisconsin. In Ohio we defeated it and I was one of the organizers and one of the leaders of that campaign and to preserve collective bargaining rights. So very high profile election it came right on the heels of Wisconsin we defeated it and as a result that’s when they decided that they wanted me to work in the Washington dc on the national level. And I tell you all of this because on Nov. 4th 2011 that was Election Day
and we defeated senate bill 5 and by Jan 1st the [CITY] plan started to roll out and part of the plan was to remove collective bargaining and unions altogether. And it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to see the connection between education reform and the union getting in the way of the reform or at least the idea of the union getting in the way of the reform and I think that’s pretty factual. It had in many ways, but at the same time I don’t think the intent was to not educate children the intent was to preserve workers’ rights but it does play into it. So on from Nov 11th or Nov 4th 2011 Jan 1st the [CITY] plan and part of the [CITY] plan was the construction of the transformation alliance. [Dionysia 'S] teachers’ union was not at the table but because of some of the relationships we had during senate bill 5 we got some state legislators to get us at the table and I was lucky enough to be at the table and seeing the national landscape of look this plan is going to take away our collective bargaining rights it’s going to completely get rid of unions and their starting with us. So we try to get rid of collective bargaining rights within the whole state and what better way than to start locally with the group that was the most vocal. And we organized over 500,000 phone calls and thousands of voters I mean and it’s a very strong democratic hold is [NAME PROTECTED] county. And one of the biggest power players in [NAME PROTECTED] County in the vote out is the [Dionysia ‘S] Teachers Union. So I mean you just have to understand it’s not all good guys and bad guys but there is this political element that came in and that’s why it’s so important that when the [CITY] plan finally passed in the spring-- it was signed into law in July of 2012. So I was exiting to go work in DC but spent time at the table with the Mayor representing the union [23:03] with the president of the union and supporting the union and also the legislators that were on the table to make the [City] Plan better. So we were given a plan in January that was rough and a lot of the members from the [Dionysia ‘S] Teachers Union still blame us for accepting these conditions of the [CITY] Plan, but as I said it was the only thing since desegregation that would keep public education alive. Cause we were going down. Anyways so the transformation alliance is one piece. [23:38]

(there is a congratulatory meeting takin place in the office for customer service and our interview was halted for a bit—I noticed the mayor had come down and was there)

[25:34]

Nancy*: So, we were in a bad place at [Dionysia ‘S] Teachers Union and there were a lot of people that wanted to just say screw it, we’ll fight them. We fought them 3 months ago, we’ll fight them on this. And so what we were able to do with [NAME PROTECTED] Partnership and the legislators and the democratic mayor and the republican governor was to come up with a better plan that did bring in those elements of letting—of control over transforming schools given directly to the CEO, but did have voice from the unions that’s still a part of it. They wanted us to get rid of every piece of collective bargaining and start fresh, we couldn’t agree to that. But we did agree to share any levy dollars that we might get with charter schools and to get rid of that seniority for step raises and have a complete teachers’ evaluation where my evaluation was not based on how many years I taught or by my college degree, but by how well my students were succeeding. Big changes. Landmark. So we okayed those things because basically it was like you know you can say no and you will be extinct or yes, but we some modifications so this kept the voice of the unions working. My transformation from working for the unions to now working for administration came during my time in Washington DC I was seeing in [Dionysia]—I was there when they signed the plan and behind the scenes and making it work, but then I had left to go to Washington DC and I didn’t get to see—just like we talked about with desegregation, the plan might have been great, but the roll-out and the operations of it and how it was done really made it a horribly policy. [27:21] So I was fighting a lot of dissatisfaction with working for the national union I was seeing a lot of things that I really couldn’t swallow anymore because as a student of [Dionysia] schools and as a teacher of [Dionysia] schools, I taught at a high performing school and I really did buy into this unions are going to make schools better for children and I just seen some things and felt very miscast in this piece. SO then I thought really felt that my mission was to be back in [Dionysia], found an opportunity to come back and work with the CEO, who knew that I had a lot of connections and political opportunities with mobilizing teachers to do things. He also knew that you know to me more important than mobilizing all those educators was creating a plan that I really believed in that would make the schools that were the comprehensive schools given a chance to invest in them not
by moving the students around, but by investing in time, extra time, more money and better talent so that every teacher that was there could be re-interviewed and make sure that they’re mission driven and given opportunities for success.

Transformation Alliance. What I do now for the transformation alliance is to kind of support the CEO and his stakeholders, I don’t serve on the board, but I help make sure that whether it’s a faith based community, whether it’s west side councilmen east side councilmen I keep them in the loop on what opportunities the transformation alliance has. I also go down and work with the transformation alliance in Columbus to advocate for better policy that puts quality education at the forefront. Whether it’s public or charter. And we try and make sure that public gets a little sliver of funding here and there. As we continue to make improvements. [29:16]

(We talk for a bit. I start to thank here for this information)

[29:33]

Nancy*: Yeah so imagine you know I’m the union president’s number one person and now I work with the CEO to provide that same support that I did for the union president in dealings both with unions and labor as well as with political pieces. Because we’re under mayoral control the Mayor always says to [THE CEO], I do politics you do school. And the district is not political at all. But I try to make sure that we are a little more porous in that if whether it’s a community, a parent, a stakeholder for boys and girls club or whoever needs something from the district or has an opportunity to help the district I try to make sure that that road is smoother. And also make sure that we as a district are serving councilmen, city leaders because they are elected from their voters not that they serve us. So I try makes sure to keep it transparent and open opportunity. So especially around things like building these new schools, making sure that we’re not saying okay you guys are going to get a brand new school and it’s gonna be blue and it’s going to have you know—making sure that even if it’s the facilities piece and the academic specialization that it’s not dictated from us to them, but that it fits in with their community development corporation, their vision with their councilmen, help make sure the roads [are not] backed up or where the parking is so that it doesn’t have buses idling in front of houses, or try to make sure that we are more intentional on not just parents who use the school, but to preserve the history of the school that was there before and making sure that residents who may not use the school for their children, see a reason for their tax dollars to be spent on improving the face of their community. [31:29].

(we talk about other people I could possibly talk to)

[31:57]

Nancy*: It doesn’t mean it’s always harmonious either.

Megan: Yeah I can gather that. Because there’s too many different scales you have the large district as a whole and then going further down to that specific school. And then this also ties into academic curriculum sometimes you said so how are trying to improve academic curriculum exactly? Or is it just like because I know sometimes schools would center towards like trade schools right? So are we still trying to push that or are we trying to push for the higher education route because I know the problem is the manufacturing economy is just gone we don’t have it anymore in [Dionysia]. [32:32]

Nancy*: But we still have so many jobs that go in filled in [Dionysia] so our—we try to make sure that we are changing and being able to be thoughtful with people that are hiring.

Megan: Like high tech industry?

Nancy*: Right. So at the new [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] right you have a School of Science and Engineering, you have the School of Business, then you have the first real computer science school in Ohio, but we got to make sure that the kids are able to be successful in them and if they have not had the coursework from grades 1-8 to be successful in that—we got to make sure that it’s not tracking. But we are working on making sure that the pendulum
is not just for swinging towards college readiness, but that its career and college readiness. Because there was a time in the district I think where everyone was going to college that’s not the case and doesn’t necessarily need the case. I mean we are the second poorest city in the nation and second only to Detroit and we’ve got to make sure we have a moral responsibility to make sure that families when you leave ours schools you have choices of either school or a position that you can feed a family on. [33:45]

So we’re called a Portfolio district, a portfolio of different options. That’s something you might want to look into and as a first grade teacher for 22 years I don’t know what the special sauce is. I mean to me it’s kind of like we’re going to do a STEM school okay. You have to remember since I’ve been teaching in [Dionysia], I was at primary achievement school, I was at a best practices school, I was at a magnet school, I was at a—we had the seven models of learning types of schools, and so I’ve seen a lot of gimmicks. And through all of them I taught first grade and you know learning how to read is fundamental of all of them. That’s pretty much what you do in first grade. So we’re trying to find different choices, I know the International bachelorette is one that people really want, [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] is where you can get two years of college in under two years is another real sexy one. But we also have to make sure that when you that we’re providing enough options so that it’s not so specialized that you can’t you know if its 7th grade you’re not sure what you want that you’re still learning enough to provide you to the next steps. [35:02]. So. We go through some things with these new buildings called academic visioning so that’s when kind of try to and make sure that we have the operations people in the room, the community, councilmen, CDC person in the room, neighbors, and parents and teachers in the room, that work together to kind of determine what is the best fit for this community. Keeping in mind what are the rest of the schools, I mean if everyone wants an art school, we can’t do that. But keeping in mind what we have nearby in terms of choices and what some of the options are for manufacturing jobs or the IT jobs that are still in the future too.

Megan: Yeah because I know that [Dionysia] does want to push that more.

Nancy*: hmm mm.

Megan: It’s like a focus group kind of thing?

Nancy*: It’s probably like a series of meetings.

Megan: A series of meetings?

Nancy*: Hmm mm.

Megan: Because I’m also trying to cover it a little bit in terms of the public policy and the aspects obviously.

Nancy*: And they’ve gone through some successful visioning processes [36:01] with all three new schools [SCHOOL NAMES PROTECTED] and we’re starting up—it’s not as easy with the K-8s because again K-8s you kind of wanna a quality school. You know do you want to have some STEM opportunities but there are some backlash that are just kind of wanna more liberal arts opportunities in education. And then also to kind of oversees the redesign to include a grade level change-- do we wanna go back and have a few schools be a K-3 sort of a primary focus, we want to have some middle schools, we got rid of all middle schools in the early 2000s. [36:40]

Megan: oh yeah?

Nancy*: hmm?

Megan: Why did you do that?

Nancy*: They were not bastions of success. And so we ended up making everybody a K-8 or a high school.

(we talk about my hometown and little bit and about other places)
Nancy*: [37:19] And then we also have to be thoughtful about where our special education students are because I’m worried that our former middle schools which were bigger and had more space we ended up putting a lot of our special needs kids in those schools because we had more space and they had a full time nurse there. But at the same time when a school is being compared with a school down the street, and their not necessarily comparing apples to apples if all the special needs kids go to this school and all the gifted and talented kids go to this school, so I mean. By the way of comparison you have to compare attendance and by virtue of your special needs classroom with high medical fragile needs you are going to have more absences. So therefore you’re already doomed to fail. You may have more t-saler, English as a second language classes there you but you don’t already have the opportunity to compete with their school up the street. [38:11].

Megan: Well what do you think about this and I have brought this up to my adviser as well, I didn’t know it was so controversial when I mentioned it but I found out very quickly it was that I actually thought that it was actually wrong to have this kind of report card thing. Because how on earth— it’s just like when you get stupid and you skip classes or something, how on earth can you get back up there? Once you’re here they kind of keep you down, is that kind of how the process works?

Nancy*: Well [38:42] accountability is something that I strongly support. You have to because we were going through—we were just going through years and years of years without any accountability at all and I mean and so through No Child Left Behind the law that came out in 2003 unfunded but there were a lot of mandates there and a lot of the mandates were, especially in special education where you have to give assessments and they had to perform well. So yes there was a level that we were never going to achieve on based on these populations we have so we were set up for failure and were not funded, however, you saw classrooms change and you saw classrooms become—I did. I saw classrooms become a little more rigorous. Studies were a lot more rigorous as a result. So. The state report card is completely flawed we’re not even getting it until Jan for last year. It’s not comparing apples to apples it’s not using value add data the correct way that would show if a teacher—if my influence over a child gave them a full year of growth. But now that teachers pay is tied to student performance is now one of the reasons you get so much of the backlash on testing. [40:18]

Every year I did state wide tests. Even back in 1991 when I started. And you know it was a pain in the neck, you had all the rules and regulations of it, but it wasn’t this big trauma and drama either for the child or for the teacher because it was just what you did. And now it’s gotten to the point where it’s so instrumental to I mean a child won’t go to third grade if he doesn’t pass his third grade reading which was a policy I didn’t support, but is actually done a lot to help improve reading scores and making sure that all families are required to go to summer school who don’t I mean—basically taking that decision making out on failing a child is really helped us make more children learn to read. So it’s not personal like you’re not looking at oh my gosh joe’s not going to go to third grade with his buddies maybe he’ll pass if he gets some extra help in the summer alright I’m going to pass him because he’s over age or he’s big for his age so now that is the decision making is totally out of your hands. You will not go on to third grade without passing. So I mean basically we are going to end up seeing some more learning take place and it’s not just the teachers responsibility now, now it’s the families now it’s the community’s because they are all going like whooo we can’t let Johnny fail. Alright well, he’s got to read. So the State report card while its flawed and while we are over-testing I still think that as a professional you have to be able to create an atmosphere that says well joe we’re going to test this test and you hear all these stories of they’re just ruining these children’s lives and everything and it’s like well you know add to the drama by making it a ruined life other than saying like alright we’re going to take this test now, let’s go to gym. So I find that there should continue to be assessments because we have failed far too many kids but it could be done a whole lot better. A lot more meaningful and it could be done in a way that compares apples to apples, doesn’t just set up poor urban schools to say look they’re failing why don’t you go to this charter why don’t you pick this lovely private school, and you know the political analysis ends there. [42:43]
Megan: So I was going to I’ll be honest in my variables of whether or not to determine how poor the neighborhood is in terms of development to its school I was going to look into report card grades, but you’re saying they’re not really that valid so I just be looking at dropout rates?

Nancy*: I think you should look at report card grades, I think you should also take into account what’s the school design make up and I think the transformational alliance will help you on that. I mean if you’re comparing a K-3 all-girls school with a K-8 former middle school that has you know just make sure you tease out the number of special education students that are there, the level of high incidents versus low incidents, how many languages are spoken at the school, some of those things so that you can really you do get at more of an apples to apples comparison. And also what’s the school rating for the last 3 years what it is now.

Megan: Incident reports will be hard to get though, because I know I need to go through Principals.

Nancy*: Conditions for learning would be helpful too. It tells you a little bit about how students feel about their safety in school, academic rigor and those are public.

(we talk a little bit of the other sources for information to complete the study and some other contacts I can contact)

Interview is over
Nancy*: Okay for me the idea of Tuesdays meeting had to happen and it has to happen because the people who were so progressive at the onset of the [Dionysia’s] plan are now saddled with the results of the [Dionysia’s] plan, the good ones and the bad ones. And the intention of the [Dionysia’s] plan was to change working conditions beyond the opportunity of changing the working conditions through the collectively bargained working agreement. So as we talked before and when you look at the big timeline of [Dionysia’s] school history you have [Dionysia’s] schools 1979 desegregation boom and I was a student there and as a student I was [taken] out of [Dionysia’s] schools and sent to Catholic school even though I wasn’t catholic as were many many many other families. Anyone that could move out of [Dionysia] did anyone that couldn’t move out of [Dionysia] put their kids in a catholic schools and those who couldn’t do either bused their children across town and there were I am sure some of those families that were I love this idea but there weren’t that many and I think that when you look at the police reform that’s happening the feds told [Dionysia] you need to change the [Dionysia’s] police union did not necessarily go that’s a great idea same with the [Dionysia’s] teachers union same with the employees of the district so if you look at parallel the employees of the police department the employees of the schools had to change with the mandate but when there’s not a lot of buy in around the change and you’re not at the table helping to make sure the change goes well you have some disenfranchisement of it. [2:07].

So when you look at the desegregation they were from people that I’ve heard from along the way that you know it basically said in a 3-month period you took a snow globe of the [Dionysia] metropolitan school district and the flakes were the teachers and the students and you shook it all up and then put it down and whoever landed where landed there. And when you think of educational policy and the impact the mobility rate has on children today imagine that being all condensed into a 3 month period even though the intentions were to provide a better or adequate education for families and children of all parts of town the implementation of the policy was done in a way that left a vacuum of leadership and a compliance driven school board and compliance driven work rules that were done at the federal level not at the tweaking in the way it works so it wasn’t able to be rolled out well. So you had protests you had families that were just not going to go along with this federal mandate [3:16]. So from the 80s into the early 90s you had just a real a fleeing from the school system a churning of educational leaders that could not go against the mandates but could also not go around them either in a way that says that part of their main goal was focusing on that mandate and the rest was teaching and learning.

Megan: Can I ask a follow up? So because from my understanding its [3:49] this is an issue with public policy in general you can never have a perfect policy because you can never factor in individual choice. Every time they try to do some blanket white wash policy there’s always going to be an issue with choices and so from my understanding of what you’re saying and also what I’m seeing too with some of my findings with regards to this research is that there’s the state law and there’s the federal law and I’m guessing that we’re trying to as the [SCHOOL DISTRICT] we’re trying to combat this with opening up those doors with school of choice or we’re doing that also because of the No child Left Behind policies----

Nancy*: Which is now changing.

Megan: Yeah which I’m happy for in some ways.

Nancy*: As long as we don’t water down the academic rigor or the high expectations for urban poor children and that’s one of the reasons we created No Child Left Behind and then left up to the states to decide how we do that. I think that we are more vulnerable by the state’s control of this because we live in Ohio. And I feel that there will be huge generations of children that could once again be left behind because the state policy is now...So who are going to be our advocates again? It’s not going to be the well-intentioned but underfunded metropolitan school district it’s going to be left to those with big pockets which include the unions, the foundations, and the charter school lobbyists. [5:24]. SO when you go down to state house on any given Tuesday there’s a party going down there and because you have term limits you have state senators and state representatives and the parties that are held in the
Megan: Right and that’s what I noticed at the meeting people would come up and yell at [THE CEO] for these things and I’m like that isn’t his area at all.

Nancy*: Right. [6:16] So I’m bringing up the desegregation and bringing up the police reform because I want you to see or I see there’s trends, I don’t know if you’ll see them or not but I see there’s trends and tensions that went with that reform that are happening with the police reform and that paints a picture about what’s happening now so we had that in 79, 80-90 turning of leadership mandates and not a lot of data on how children learn better it was kind of like you know children went from a traditional classroom to keep in mind all the other changes around technology around how children learn around research around brain development so all of these things are happening between 79 let’s say 92. In the mid to late 90s [7:07] one way of getting hold of the declining enrollment the declining academic success of the school district do in part to the massive snowball shake up effects of desegregation one attempt to fix it was mayoral control. Again it was piloted in [Dionysia] and then voted on so people couldn’t vote for there to be mayoral control it was thrust upon us through the state legislature but then after a series of two years and it did bring a sense of stability because we had a decent a good leader in the mayor and an appointed school board the residents of [Dionysia] along with support of the [Dionysia’s] Teachers Union endorsed keeping mayoral control. We had some different collective bargaining struggles with Mayor [NAME PROTECTED] but between Mayor [NAME PROTECTED] and now there was no strike but there were some tensions with the unions at the time. So went for Mayoral control to the transformation plan in 2010 which was shut down by the unions by taking it to court the collective bargaining agreement overruled the transformation plan which was instituted in the [Dionysia] arena only so we did not have the state on our side we had local control of the board and we had a CEO whose CAO was [NAME PROTECTED THE CURRENT CEO]. That CEO tried to get this to go through the unions took it to court and the unions won. [8:47]. It was dead on arrival. That was 2010 and then again you go back to 2012 the CEO leaves the CAO which is kind of surprising seems like a man off the street not necessarily as polished as other—they did a national search and everything else and they ended up saying look you got a guy that knows the system inside and out understands the ideas of where we want to be has a good relationship with the board and the mayor they tapped him it was [THE CURRENT CEO]. So he’s got the strength of having some stability understanding academically what some of the triggers are that need to be changed and understands what real life practices in terms of living and dealing with the union as well as the other stakeholders the city council and the crazy political pieces of [Dionysia] but then the mayor says to [THE CEO] one thing I do politics, you do school. And [THE CEO] is like great because I don’t know politics. And he’s like (referring to Mayor) and I don’t know school. So when 2012 comes they introduce the [CITY] plan on the backs of Senate Bill 5 like 6 weeks later—we already talked about this, it came through and the union came back and was like oh look we did this great we had over 500,000 phone calls remember Nancy* one of the leaders of Senate Bill 5 gets scooped up and sent to D.C. and because it was so amazing at the same time the [CITY] plan’s coming I worked with [CEO] and the Mayor on [UNION PRESIDENT]’s behalf [10:57] of the union to help sit and kind of make the initial [CITY] plan a better bill. SO basically the [CITY] Plan was collective bargained to be better for the educators so keep all those things in mind [10:35]. So I leave I don’t like D.C. I come back, I work for [THE CEO] in the implementation of the [CITY] Plan policy a year later. In the meantime, all the good will around the [Dionysia] plan signing helped turn into good will around the levy and we got the levy to passed. Without the levy the [Dionysia’s] Plan would have none of the financial opportunities to be successful. Without the contract coming on the heels of the [Dionysia’s] plan and the right before the levy you wouldn’t have had the working conditions. SO the levy was passed in 2013. [11:16] So you had the [Dionysia’s] plan in the summer of 2012, levy in November of 2012, contract in May of 2013. So between may of 2013 you had all of the [Dionysia’s] plan changes as well as some state level changes in terms of teacher evaluations, pay for performance, and different kinds of changes some of them were the [Dionysia’s] plan changes some of them were the contract in which they negotiated changes and some of them were state wide testing changes and things. [11:50]. So I’m Joe (made up name) classroom teacher
and I’m going now now wait a minute now I have to do all these things because of the 3rd grade reading guarantee which is a state law and I have 200 minutes added onto my day which was because of the contract and my paycheck is determined how well Sally (made up name) does in my classroom as well as how the principal feels about me and 10,000 other things and I’m not happy. [12:15]. Because my whole world has changed and who am I to blame but the union president that’s signed me up for these things. Now he did not sign you up for all 6 of those things he did make the [Dionysia’s] Plan better because what it was going to be originally was going to take the whole contract and throw it in the garbage and start fresh. That’s that fresh start. [12:37] [TEACHER’S UNION PRESIDENT] worked hard to make sure that Fresh Start we got rid of but we did have to share levy dollars with charter schools and there were other working condition rules like the corrective action plans which gave us our investment schools which you know that law that law— [THE CEO] has been a very benevolent leader. He could have come in and closed schools [12:56] he could have done a lot of different things but he uses it cautiously as a tool to improve education in the comprehensive schools. Instead of doing what others would have and would have probably advised him to which was just close them down shut them down move the kids from [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] into [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED, a well performing school] and into [PLACE PROTECTED].

Megan: That’s what they did in Grand Rapids.

Nancy*: Yes. [13:22] So we have a benevolent leader who uses the new tools sparingly we have a union leader who is getting the crap kicked out of him because not only did he agree to these plans he didn’t bring it up for a vote for his members their whole lives are changing he is not spending all his days in the buildings explaining the changes explaining that we had a gun to our head and we would have had no union rights we would have been Youngstown without this he spends his days doing whatever union presidents do. [13:55] after they become union presidents which is not a lot of time in the buildings getting the message out. 14:01

So while all of those things are happening you have a growing faction of teachers who are ticked off not only at [THE UNION PRESIDENT] but at the whole American Federation of Teachers Union and then you tie in the political realm of Bernie Sanders versus Hillary Clinton and they’re mad that because the union [UNION PRESIDENT] and his AFT president endorsed Hillary Clinton without even bringing that up to a vote for the members. [14:24] SO here is a union that says we will bring voice to the workers and they’re collectively shutting off all voices by making decision internally. And not getting that message out and spending time with the members [14:37]. So what you saw on Tuesday was not so much an uproar against the negotiations process but an election of [THE UNION PRESIDENT] and his executive board coming up within the next two weeks and his competition is very strong and they’re using the [THE CITY’S] Plan and all the changes that [THE UNION PRESIDENT] was part of as reason for why they need a new change in leadership.[15:11] SO you may have seen everybody yelling at one person [THE CEO] and so that’s what unions do best they collect your voice and they focus it on the administration and there are a lot of reasons that people are frustrated some of them are because of the [CITY] Plan many of them are because of changes in education these days but most of that was due to the fact that there’s an election in 3 weeks. And when the district made the decision to leave the table it caused a crisis for the [THE UNION] and part of that crisis was that the district has never there’s not been in the negotiation teams before which [UNION PRESIDENT] was a part of and [THE CEO] was a part of for like 4 of them there was definitely a relationship that they showed progress let’s just say. [16:20]. So the progress was not being made in part due to the fact that [THE UNION PRESIDENT] is getting his executive board are being challenged for why did you sign us up for this. [16:31]. Instead of saying look this is how things are and you have to understand that the executive board of the [Dionysia’ S] teachers’ union makes a great deal of money and they don’t have to teach so can you understand why if I don’t win this election I’m going to lose money and I have to go back to having my regular classroom school day.

Megan: SO they’re going to double down as much as they can?

Nancy*: Hmm mm. [16:59] Also keep in mind that [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED-school that the last meeting was just located] is a West side school. I want to know if looked at pictures of the room I do not see a fair amount of African
American representation in that room so you have an aging white set of teachers who many of whom were still around when desegregation happened or felt those impacts of that desegregation and they don’t want to go to an East side school they don’t want to go to an east side school to teach and they don’t want to go to an east side school at night either. [17:40]. And so it was the luck of the draw that the district had this school, you know we just scheduled board meetings when we schedule them, but I don’t think you would have seen that many folks if it would have been on the East side. You also have to understand that each building has a chapter chair and each chapter chair at each building goes to a monthly meeting with the [UNION] executive board so they spend their time listening to the people who are controlling the message saying I need you to come here to fight against the CEO on this. SO I mean it’s not as though there aren’t people there that are very upset that the district walked away from the negotiations but you don’t have a well-educated group of teachers who are there that understand beyond the rhetoric of the executive board. [18:37]

Nancy*: SO.

[19:05] [THE CEO] asked me to get this message out the day of when they decided to stop negotiating I do what he tells me to do and he wanted to make sure that any stakeholders understood this was not an easy decision. We didn’t walk away because you know we wanted to go on a trip, but there had been negotiations going on since November over 270 hours of negotiations 3 days a week all day long with the CEO, the union president, the head of the chief of talent in Human resources, the chief of finances, the chief of the portfolio office all day long we’re not allowed to be on their phones or computers but sat there negotiating so it wasn’t like we were all just sitting there going well we’re just rushing through this. They had been spending everyday all day together with no other appointments except doing the business of school basically. [20:00]

Nancy*: [20:30] So there was really nothing to we needed to be able to listen to them fuss and you know…that’s good.

Megan: Yeah there was some repeating comments that I’ve been hearing the last couple of days So some of the stuff that’s occurred since I started doing my research was the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] thing which we talked about already

Nancy*: Which is not the [CITY] Plan that is the portfolio plan he could have put that through with the [CITY] plan too he could have just said [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] you’re a corrective action school and this is what we’re doing but he didn’t want to do it that way.

Megan: The other thing was the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] complaints I heard some people obviously there’s this guy named [NAME HIDDEN] and then there was that situation and I heard people in the back of the room and I wanted to talk to them but I knew they probably wouldn’t talk to me because they were like this school’s doing fine some blah blah…I was going to ask you about that what’s going on---I don’t know how to phrase it in a proper question what’s the truth about that?

Nancy*: Basically what’s happening is [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] well they’ve got they had a rocky start and

Megan: Because from my understanding it’s just an adjustment thing?

Nancy*: I still strongly believe it’s still just an adjustment thing. [22:09] and so we’ve got our pulse on it and it’s one of these things that

Megan: And it’s also a particular person feels a particular way…?

Nancy*: Right and he’s not happy and he wants it to go back to the way it was but you have to remember that [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] was a small school that was kind of brought up from the ground grassroots in the 80s and keep in mind that a lot of the folks that were real happy at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] are not part of the leadership of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] anymore. And it takes a while for that to kind of catch up. There’s also
they want, the district was very intentional in that they want to open up this school to people beyond just the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] lower campus so we have a new principal we have a new artistic director we have a new dance teacher and we have kids who are like I miss my old school so even though it’s in this brand shining new building you’re always nostalgic for something that you used to have. And we have a parent who has just like the union you know that little boy from [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] that spoke at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] high school you have [NAME PROTECTED] whose the head of negotiations, and an high school teacher at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], same school the boy was from] you have [NAME PROTECTED] on the executive board at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], same school the boy was from] you have her assistant at whose name is [NAMES PROTECTED] is on the executive, so I mean [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] has like 12 paid and active union leaders. So the student, likelihood of this just being a you know I’m just in my class all day going oh I wanna go to the district and fuss at the school board and fuss at the CEO for what he’s putting my poor teachers through you know maybe not necessarily. I know when I worked at the union they would have asked me to find three parents and three students to speak at that microphone and help coach them on what to say. I am not saying that that happened I’m just saying that’s how it used to be when I was there a few years ago. [24:21]. And the likelihood of the gentlemen giving a lot of extra guidance of what to say and how to say probably happened I mean I wasn’t there I wouldn’t but...

Nancy*: Now do you know who the main person running against [THE UNION PRESIDENT] is? The union rep at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] High School and that [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] High school union rep got a lot of her students to walk out. [PARENT NAME PROTECTED] doesn’t like the changes at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] he’s in the school talking to students whooping up the rhetoric about how this is not fair and things, so I just want you to see this pattern of genuine engagement versus continuing of a cycle of I’m not getting what I want I’m going to continue to... You know so I think [PARENT NAME PROTECTED] I think he had some really important things to say last spring [25:20] probably in early august and September and there is reason to say that you don’t like things the way they are but there is also the opportunity for the district to say we’ve heard you, we’re continuing to investigate it but we feel that the goal of the district and the school needs to be beyond what it used to be. We still need to work on creating an environment where kids feel good and happy and social but at the same time in education everyone can use the word children just like every American can use the word freedom to do a whole host of different things. [25:56].

Megan: Same thing kind of with the art classes arts and music like people seem to be bringing up those issues and I’m starting to see a pattern where that’s a very common complaint kind of?

Nancy*: Hmm mmm. [26:10]

Megan: And they feel that if they throw that down everybody in the room kind of rallies---?

Nancy*: Oh children. Yeah well and that’s just it so when I find this thing I have to give to you this letter and the union did a public records request of who we sent this information out to so somebody came in and took my emails out to give to them for the public records request but that’s why I’m having trouble of where this thing is.

Nancy*: But anyways so for our stakeholders it’s important for them to understand that yes the district wanted them to know before they read it in the plain dealer that they were walking away, this is why but they will be committed to the next phase in the negotiation process and getting the school district where it needs to be and positioning itself to a fair contract. One that’s good for children, fair to teachers. The secretaries accepted the one-year agreement, the bus drivers, security guards, all the other unions have taken this for a vote to their members and have accepted it, the [Dionysia’s] teachers’ union did not bring it to a vote to their members. But part of the reason is is that there’s an election in 6 weeks and if that election turns out that people like [NAME PROTECTED] of negotiations or [UNION PRESIDENT] are no longer in charge then they have personal things that they will lose so why not prolong this as far as it will go past this election and bring it up to use leverage against the levy or against the Republican national convention so that they can get what they want [27:44].

Nancy*: So let me find this and then we can keep talking.
Nancy*: So local 244 agreed to the one year, the principal’s union did, secretaries, food service worker, building trades, all kinds of unions said yes and as the district threw the work rules changes at the [CITY] plan has gotten stronger [28:46]. Like our whole talent organization has completely flipped over and our whole the way we do financing so the [CITY] plan did working conditions that went beyond the collective bargaining to make changes and the district has gotten stronger and have been able to hire people that are experts in the field and the union’s voice has diminished. Remember the union’s voice grew strong after desegregation because everybody was everywhere and no one seemed to know what they were doing. The union’s voice got stronger and stronger and the [CITY] Plan minimizes the union voice [29:18]. And the union said okay to it because they would have had no voice. [29:22].

Nancy*: So basically since the launch of the [CITY] plan [THE CEO] has strived with city council and friends and supporters to keep everybody abreast of the changes on reform changes that many of you fought to bring to the Ohio legislature and the [Dionysia’s] School district because of the halt in the talks between the school district and [Dionysia ‘S] teachers union will likely be the subject of news stories this week, he wants to share the information first hand on the districts progress on collective bargaining efforts with all of the unions. Due to your support and support for citizens across the city have made education reform a priority in [Dionysia’s SCHOOL DISTRICT] is no longer in the dire position we were a few years ago when we had to lay off hundreds of people and managed devastating program cuts. While we are on a far better footing academically and financially, the district still cannot and will not commit to labor contracts that extend beyond the district’s current financial means. [31:44] (this is her reading the letter)

Nancy*: 2012 that was the first levy that was passed in 14 years it was a levy that was built different than other school levies. It was a big ask for a short period of time [31:52]. And at the short period of time if we don’t look better then it’s basically saying then we don’t deserve your money or your trust. [31:57]

Nancy*: SO the district’s levy that’s up for renewal November 2016, will not be it’s not like the district like other levies go like this and then you just stay, this one goes like this (she gestures with her hands) and if it doesn’t get renewed it (the district) doesn’t stay it goes down. So we have a lot at stake with his levy. So that’s why it’s illegal for him to do anything beyond a one-year contract. And the union (teacher’s union) keeps saying they want a 3-year contract. The district has said we will do a one year 2% cost of living and then after the levy we will be able to know how much money we have or not have, and you’ll still get that one year, I’m going to get a 2%, and everybody in the district besides the teachers are going to get a 2% effective next month. They are not they said we don’t want the 2%. [32:48]. We want language changes; we want more than one year. And so basically unions of principals, cleaning workers, everyone else, trade employees have agreed to [THE SCHOOL DISTRICT’S] offer of a one-year contract extension. Which means everything they have stays, they’re not getting rid of anything, and a 2% increase. [33:11].

Nancy*: Our offers of contract extensions and cost of living wages to unions representing employees have been in recognition and acceptance on both sides of the table. Unfortunately, the [Dionysia ‘S] Teacher’s union has been working with us for more than 270 hours since November with no progress. As a result, [THE SCHOOL DISTRICT] has ended face to face negotiations with [TEACHERS UNION] and the parties will move in April to the fact finding phase of the collective bargaining process. And basically the fact finder is somebody that the union and the district back in November when they first started both agreed would be the factfinder. SO it’s not the district got to pick em or the district hired him. He was already hired as part of the regular process. It’s not like the district spent more money on him or got to pick the fact finder, we already agreed on. SO fact finder was going to happen no matter what. It’s just [CEO] and the group saying we’re not getting anywhere, let’s got back to our work and let an expert who does this for a living help get us to our next step or phase. [34:09]. Because we’re not getting anywhere [34:11].
Nancy*: And they’re not going to negotiate away the things in the [CITY] Plan. So remember you’re the president of the union you’ve got you’ve sent out to pasture go back to classroom you got to get your members riled up and supportive of you and your election and vote for you. You need to channel their anger into someone or something you can’t channel to the board because the board is picked by the mayor. You can’t channel it to the state legislature because they are republican controlled, house and senate. You can’t control it to city council because they don’t vote or have anything to do but a courtesy of helping. So who do you channel it to? [34:57]

(we discuss previous meeting and what’s happened at them).

Megan: Am I wrong about that [35:53] it’s a school board meeting I think if you don’t want the mayor then that should be something you elect on at a totally separate venue. Is that a previous tension that a lot of teachers just don’t like mayoral control?

[36:09]

Nancy*: Remember if you look in your newspaper, if you go back in your research you will see that the [Dionysia’s] teacher’s union endorsed mayoral control. Permanent mayoral control. [36:18] SO they have not brought up legislation and they have not gone to the state house and asked for it to be receded. So they just yell at it. [36:26]

Nancy*: So a lot of folks have not paid a lot of attention because this is what happens in negotiations so this is part of the negotiations process there’s a lot of shadow boxing, but at the end of the day in the last 4 contracts they have reached an agreement before the contract runs out [36:49]

(we briefly discuss other cities with similar issues)

[37:02]

Nancy*: Well what’s at stake we have union leadership that could change. So they’re all up in arms. So if you look at (inaudible) I want to show you another thing. When you look at some of the rhetoric out there from the other people that want to run for his spot you’ll see that they blame him for not bringing them the opportunity to vote on these things. [37:24].

(she shows me the websites of the other people running for the teacher’s union president and reads)

Nancy*: So I can’t send this to you but—

Megan: yeah I talked to her, I have her phone number, she is the one running against him?

Nancy*: Hmm mm. Once again breaking news proven leadership in tough times, that’s the tag line for the competing political people. Demonstrated incompetence and unfitness and once again the experienced TEAM (that’s what they call themselves, teachers empowering all members, I remember I helped pick that name. Inflicted more damage on [TEACHER'S UNION] membership by not correcting past catastrophic negotiation failures during proven leadership in tough times the [TEACHER'S UNION] members working conditions deteriorated dramatically, we lost much and gained nothing, I have no confidence in [THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNION] and his team. By their incompetence and ineptitude to access and analyze the situation who put themselves out of the negotiation process. [38:25]

Nancy*: SO I wasn’t at the negotiations process but I can tell you between November and Feb 15th if you’ve got nothing going on there’s other negotiations across the country that they would have said let’s go back and get someone else in here to help that would move this. So the district walking away puts them at an unfair---they may think it’s a great idea because now they can show that district—I’m not hearing that kind of thing from anybody though it’s kind of one of those things they try to stall and didn’t necessarily move things along and the district had the right to mediate. There’s a clear path going back to negotiations and that path has to come from the mediator and the mediator was there and didn’t say to come back. [39:17]
Megan: And the mediator is the fact finder?

Nancy*: Mediator is somebody different. Mediator is around all the time and they have attorneys [THE TEACHER'S UNION] has an attorney the district has an attorney it’s not as though this is the first time they’ve gone and the first time we’ve gone this is the first time we’ve said we’re not showing any progress. [39:47]

Megan: That makes sense.

Nancy*: And then this is also the first time that all those other unions all said thank you. This is the first time we have a levy that will dramatically drop down any ability to or so it would be illegal to negotiate past anything past the financial resources. [40:11]

Nancy*: Oh and the other thing is the former president of the [40:18] union is now endorsing [THE RUNNING MATE OF THE CURRENT TEACHER'S UNION PRESIDENT]. But the former president he led when there wasn’t a time when you had to take it or leave it with the [CITY] plan. I mean it wasn’t as though they went after all teachers like they did in Senate Bill 5, they went after this one union so they [THE UNION] did what they had to do. 40:47

(we talk off topic about Obama and other political matters.)

[41:10]

Nancy*: So you’ve got a lot of members who feel that they’re put upon they pay their union dues and they want things to be better and you have a lot of people that have been in this position in union presidency for a long time and it’s kind of... [41:23]

Megan: And then there’s these rooted old narratives that are circulating the East vs. West Schools.

Nancy*: Did that come into play at all on Tuesday?

Megan: Yeah it’s been coming up to play a lot in the last couple of meetings.

Nancy*: Why?

Megan: I don’t know some people are still concerned that East Side schools are not as good as West side schools or people are still bringing up or tying into racism or tying into issues with school inequality it’s just been coming up briefly little tidbits here and there but you

Nancy*: Well when you look at our highest performing school it’s on the East side, [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. When you look at how many new schools are built east versus west most of the new schools are the east side. [42:10]

(I talk about my feelings about this for a bit and sociological elements and we get into a discussion about the police commissioner and other [THE CITY'S] politics)

Interview ends
Megan: So again, what do you do for the—

Vern*: So

Megan: It’s the [Dionysia’s] neighborhood progress?

Vern*: [Dionysia’s] Neighborhood progress so...i...my role is I am the economic opportunity integration manager so um to give you a little background [Dionysia’s] Neighborhood progress was started in 1988. Um based upon the three major foundations [Dionysia], [FOUNDATION NAMES PROTECTED]. There were a good amount of CDCs in [Dionysia] and the way they were being funded was going to the...they were going individually to the foundations for money whereas the foundations wanted to come together to have someone an intermediary to manage those funds and to be more streamlined so. [Dionysia’s] Neighborhood Progress was built out of that and then in about 3 or 4 years ago? I’m trying to remember—I was not here at the time obviously, but um a few years ago [Dionysia] Neighborhood Progress used to be Neighborhood Progress Inc. was what was developed in 1988. [Dionysia] neighborhood progress came about when Neighborhood Progress Inc merged with [NAME PROTECTED] as well as Live [Dionysia]. And so we became [Dionysia] Neighborhood Progress. After becoming [Dionysia] Neighborhood Progress there was an organizational assessment done and through that organizational assessment and through strategic planning following that there was a—a three portfolios that were created. Three portfolios of CDC services so that’s you know providing services to the development corporations in [Dionysia], place making which is a physical development and built environment pieces, and the third portfolio which is new to the work was economic opportunity and economic opportunity really is focused on the people in the neighborhoods and not just on the built environment and so, we call it the EO. The EO portfolio of [Dionysia] Neighborhood Progress is still really new and still really in its infancy and so there’s some different things that came about but one of the focuses of the EO portfolio is education. What that looks like and what that means isn’t fully baked yet I think there’s still a lot of room to grow and we’re actually, we’ve just completed another organizational assessment and we’ll be going through strategic planning in about a month or two for the rest of the year so. We’re kind of at a uh turning point here too that we can look back on what we’ve done in the last few years and where we want to go for the next few years.

Megan: Okay, and then so you said that you do ... that there were 8 (CDCs) you were going off on and then I cut you off... [here I was inferring on an a brief conversation we had before the recorder was turned on. When we met and I told him what I would be asking him about, he started to already answer my questions before the recording was turned on. When we met and I told him what I would be asking him about, he started to already answer my questions before the recording was turned on and participation papers were signed.]

Vern*: So we operationally fund 8 of the CDCs um so but we provide technical assistance to all CDCs in [Dionysia] and that’s through our CDCs services portfolio. So place making has been traditionally our place making and CDC services are like our two main big things. CDC services was done by [NAME PROTECTED], Neighborhood Progress inc., [Dionysia] Neighborhood Progress, was more focused on the place making side of things so physical development of things.

Megan: So what are the theories kind of like is it kind of like modern architecture theory where if you create a better environment the community will get the investment.

Vern*: Its place based initiatives so uh you know identifying opportunities of need and developing projects and things that will spur economic development and create a safer more prosperous neighborhood.

Megan: Does it work with the community or is kind of like a top down approach to their needs.

Vern*: I think it’s both, I think it’s probably a little bit of both and for our—you should look at our organizational assessment I think. It might be on our website before or at least our strategic plan is we also will be releasing our organizational assessment that we just finished in the next month or so. [4:21] That would also help kind of—
Megan: I haven’t looked because the jargon sometimes I’ve learned that with [Dionysia] I was reading all of this stuff and I was like okay I know what you’re saying but I don’t know what you’re saying. (we go off topic and talk about jargon and he asks me where I am from and we talk about my hometown a bit).

[4:44—6:13]

Megan: Describe a typical project that you would work on or have worked on and you’ve had some experience essentially.

Vern*: Um personally?

Megan: Yeah:

Vern*: So project—I think so as it pertains to education is the [PRESCHOOL PROGRAM IDENTITY PROTECTED] so managing that process and doing a transportation feasibility study for preschools and the access to high quality preschools um by looking at where kids are going to school and the transportation overlaying transportation and RTA over that to see if they are assessable, how they’re assessable, or how long does it take to get to a preschool. Because if a family without a car has to take a bus to get to work on the way they have to what how easy is it for a parent to drop a kid off when they have to take a bus to work and to preschool? And different things that so. That’s a project we are currently working on and we’re developing in partnership with our place making team so it’s kind of where the integration piece comes in, a lot of it is the place making and economic opportunity piece is looking at the relationship that the built environment has with people and identifying ways to increase access, to increase opportunity.

Megan: SO increasing social mobility eventually or striving towards it?

Vern*: yeah sure.

(we talk for a bit unrelated to interview)

[7:01—11:19]

Vern*: SO another thing, education is looking at we’re doing the school of choice piece and understanding how we can increase access to high quality schools but also how do we increase quality schools because as you know some of the neighborhoods in [Dionysia] are void of a technical quality school. And so how do we look at the schools and identify …. maybe the school is identified as a failing school but are there quality seats within that failing school. Are there bright spots within that school that we can pull out and use to increase the quality of the school? And this is all like you know, we don’t know. We’re just like trying I think um...We’re working with the district and working with folks to identify how best do we do that but I think it’s um it’s hard. Because no one has it figured out right?

Megan: Yeah and then we have private schools to deal which is another bag of worms.

Vern*: well, we have charter schools we have to work with in [Dionysia], you know we have charter schools, we have failing charter schools, we have good charter schools, and we have charter schools somewhere in the middle. I think the key is not differentiating between private, public, or charter I think it’s focusing on quality, and like you know regardless of charter regardless of district school or private school, it’s just access to quality schools is the key. And so that’s my thing, just quality.

Megan: And how hard is it to...So some of these problems that are happening within communities and that you’re trying that you’re purposely going in, how do you know—what’s the process of that? Do you do a survey, figure out what the problem is, talk to the community members, talk to the schools, get an idea of what their main concerns are and then go out and facilitate problem solving initiatives or?
Vern*: So we mostly work through our CDCs for the most part so the community development corporations are the ones who are on the ground that have the relationships with the residents and different block groups or street groups it changes from neighborhood to neighborhood what they’re called, but they’re the ones who are at that level where they’re working with the residents and doing that work. Like I said we operationally fund 8 of them so through that funding through that work the CDCs are able to do the work to do some of those place-making initiatives and different things around what some of the things our place making team does we it’s through analysis and data and analysis. It’s looking at the data and then we can look at neighborhoods and see where there’s a lot of blight and there’s a lot of need and there may be a lack of a presence in that neighborhood so its identifying strategies in that way to work with the neighborhood to develop solutions.

Megan: And then you send those back to the CDCS and then they implement it?

Vern*: We work with the CDCs so it’s like hand in hand I wouldn’t say it comes to us we come up with a plan we give it to the CDCs and CDCs do it or the CDCs come up with a plan give it to us, we okay it and then they do it. I think CDCs operate they’re their own separate 501C3s so they can do things on their own but a lot of the work that’s being done is doing is being done collaboratively and we meet with them regularly and we work with them regularly too to kind of work on these issues together. Some of the issues are coming from, some of the solutions are coming from the CDCs some of the solutions are not but I think for the most part it’s a joint effort.

Megan: So one of the problems I’m getting from this is that we’re just trying to find where kids can get access to quality schools do we try to tackle any other problems like community center development in terms of mentorship or high crime areas things of that nature?

Vern*: So we do a lot. TO get boxed into one thing is to simplistic I think. So we have education and that’s the stuff that I’m working on, but there’s like a ton of other stuff that everyone else is working on that I’m not like part of (chuckles). I think that’s the thing—like I’m giving you the things that I’m working on and that I’m focusing on but there are plenty of initiatives that are happening with our organization and the partnership with CDCs and what the CDCs are doing on their own that I couldn’t speak to. If that makes sense.

Megan: Yeah that makes sense. It’s probably on the website right.

Vern*: Yeah, some of things will be on the website, some will be on the organizational assessment too.

Megan: Okay, is there anything else you wanna share?

Vern*: So I think from my point of view and when I think about education and community development in [Dionysia] there is an issue of access and there’s an issue of quality. We all know this. Everyone. If you live in [Dionysia] there’s an issue of access and there’s an issue of quality. And it’s difficult to subscribe one or two things to fix any of them but what I think is encouraging is that there are organizations who are partnering and collaborating to provide more access and to provide more quality. And I think as a community development intermediary we have the opportunity to kind of bring CDCs along in that space. In a way that we haven’t done in the past. SO I think that’s where there’s a benefit of community. We fund community development organizations, we work with community development in [Dionysia] and education hasn’t been a piece of it in the past or it’s been a minor piece of it in the past. Now that we make that a priority we have the opportunity to move that along and be able to come together in a more synergistic way, I guess.

Megan: So if I play devil’s advocate some teachers from [Dionysia] who don’t work there anymore argue that this type of strategy or even the Portfolio plan in [Dionysia] which I’ve heard—I’ve heard the complaints—isn’t really for teachers or it isn’t really for building a good sense of community, it’s more commercialized, it’s a more capitalist in
approach it’s kind of like we just wanna do quality schools that’s why its competitive school of choice. What would you say to them in terms of what actually works and what doesn’t work on the ground?

Vern*: I would say that I don’t think anyone has identified a right way to do it yet. These schools that are failing now were failing ten years—before the [Dionysia’s] Plan so to say the [Dionysia’s] plan is the reason—there are more kids in quality schools now than there were before. For any argument around it’s not for teachers or anything like that I’m not going to get into that, but I would say is that I don’t think we can sit and say what’s right or what’s a right approach, but I think as long as we are providing more quality schools, more quality education to students that’s the right thing to do. I mean I think that’s at the heart of it. For the most part that’s at the heart of any plan you look at you know? The [Dionysia’s] plan—that’s the heart of it. That’s the heart of it is providing more quality schools and education.

Megan: People would probably argue that the defining the term of quality is the problem probably.

Vern*: Well and quality is being defined by the state. So from a state level that’s—they’ve changed quality 3 or 4 times 3 items in the last like couple of years.

Megan: And it’s going to change again because we have the ESSA, so.

Vern*: Quality changes. I can’t—can’t you know. That’s a moving target, but I think from a [THE CITY’S] perspective the district has the right idea of just moving and doing what they know works. I think. I don’t know. [16:11]

(we talk a lot about some of my findings, research, and personal opinions unrelated to interview. Interview subject begins to tell me what would be a more interesting project in terms of community development versus community engagement. We talk for another half hour about this. But the interview is over).
November 4th 2015 with Beatrice* at 1:00 PM total time 43:46

[We talk a little bit about my project]

M: [00:31] So I’ve read your documents, I’ve also been doing a lot of digging on the website for the [Dionysia SCHOOL] district and so I’ve but I only got a few questions. So to start can you tell me what your job is exactly and what it is you do for the district?

Beatrice*: I actually work for the ------Foundation which is a private foundation that was founded in [Dionysia] in 1952 and I’m the education program officer so the foundation gives away in education about 4 million dollars a year the vast majority of that in [Dionysia] in the city proper where our schools work. I’ve been here about 10 years, and 5 years before that at the [Dionysia] Foundation which is one of our partners. So we work with the [Dionysia] School District partnering with high performing charter schools and we work on state policy issues. We have some investments in higher education but it’s pretty rare and primarily is related to other work that we’re doing and then we also have investments in urban childhood education. SO I work with the district very closely [1:48] beginning in 2006 we began a strategy of opening new schools within the city with the [Dionysia] Foundation with the district as our preferred partner and with the high performing charter schools as a part of that. And then the first five years 2006-2011, in a number of different areas new school start up some central office, new organization analysis, state policy, and high performing charter school start up. Beginning in 2011 we saw the changes in the district began to focus on how to take what we were calling this portfolio of excellent new school starting strategy which was this new school start up [2:38] and extra placements for failing schools and really bringing it front and center to the district’s prioritization. In the fall of 2011 or rather winter of 2011- 2012, we were part of a team that worked the [Dionysia] Plan which I assume you have seen?

M: yup! I’ve seen it.

Beatrice*: Okay we wrote that and submitted it to the governor in Feb of 2012 worked on the legislation following that and now continue to now implement ---support the implementation of the [Dionysia] Plan.

M: Yup, I’ve been reading it it’s hard to understand sometimes especially since I don’t have an education background, but yes I got of all that and also the documents on the Master Facilities Plan as well. So when it comes to the master facilities plan now that we’re going to get right into it what is the deciding factor to maintain a building or build a new one exactly?

Beatrice*: The district is in the best position to answer that but there are state requirements the Ohio—it has a new name now the Ohio facilities commission has a different name but essentially there is a formula. I think it is if a building would cost more than 70% if the renovation costs are more than 70% of a new build the district must build new. I believe that’s the formula it’s pretty cut and dry from the state’s perspective. So the building has a decrepit building and it needs to be clean. It’s a cost of renovation exceeds 70% the cost of a new build it has to new build. DO you understand that? I believe that’s the figure. And then once it decides to renovate or build new and then when it builds new it has very particular restrictions also from the Ohio schools facilities commission around exactly what can be built [4:56]. Our new high schools are built---with the state money—our new high schools are built without a lot of things they used to have, swimming pools for example, track, field space things like that. If the district wants to spend money on that it has to exclusively come from the local share so in a newer renovated building the state pays 2/3 of the cost and local tax payers pay 1/3. If they want to add anything it comes out of the local share exclusively. [5:26]

M: That makes sense with the levy now.

Beatrice*: With the levy I just want to make sure there was a levy passed in 2012 which was a (inaudible) levy a 15 mil levy, the bond is a separate issue voted on first I believe in 2000 or 2001 and then just renewed in 20—actually
it was a 10 year, so the first one was I think in 2003 and it was renewed in 2013 or 2014 I can’t recall –it’s a separate issue.

M: And so you say since you work with the [NAME PROTECTED] foundation and so this was kind of interesting so you were not only part of writing the [THE CITY’S] Plan but you were also part of that push as the [THE CITY’S] plan gets implemented to work with these other foundations and community partners and business, which I find very fascinating, so were there any challenges that you came across when you were creating the [THE CITY’S] plan as well as when you were trying to work on your implementation?[6:43]

Beatrice*: I would say there was enormous challenges of getting the [THE CITY’S] Plan written and passed. As I said the district was our support and the [Dionysia] Foundation had been investing in the startup of new schools as replacements for failing schools that was our initial proposal back in 2006 under previous leadership. And our two foundations in 2006 agreed to fund that new schools work at over 10 million dollars over 5 years for each foundation, 20 million commitments. Those schools were attracting retaining families, they had a higher retention rate, they had higher academic performance they all had the ability to higher, to set their own calendar their own curriculum, so they were really demonstrating that over different circumstances kids could really do well in our public schools.

By 2008-09 we had a series of layoffs because the district continued to lose enrollment, the financial picture was very weak, and because those schools highered new, because of new teachers that were either specially trained, had agreed to work longer hours, longer school years etc., they were laid off first because the state law was the last in first out. So on average there were 14 new schools created between 2006-2011, they lost 50% of their staff some of them lost up to 90% of their staff 2 years in a row. At that time the district knew it had too many buildings and it approached the two foundations to do a study on how to close buildings and they were using a single measure of the building quality and after discussion with us [8:38], it was agreed that you would expand that look so you would look at school closings through the lens of building quality, demand at the school for enrollment and academic performance and social emotional measures so the district used that as their strategy to close schools [9:01].

M: I’m sorry not to cut you off but is this the same as the [Dionysia] performing school study or is that a completely that’s different correct?

Beatrice*: The [Dionysia] Performing School Study?

M: Yes, that one is on the website its talking about service gap demand, priority areas within the school district, focusing on reforms—

Beatrice*: Oh is that the IFF report?

M: Yeah.

Beatrice*: Yeah that’s different yeah that just came out, so this is back in 2008-09 that was a study or work done by Boston Consulting group. So anyway you have these examples of high performing, new innovative schools that were systematically being dismantled because of state law and the reinforcement of the collective bargaining agreement and that really led to a staff transition to the request of or into the movement of the [THE CITY] plan. So the challenges of the [THE CITY] plan were moving that new school strategy to being really a central school strategy at the district instead of one of several. [10:08]. We ultimately needed and got [Dionysia’s] teacher’s union support for the [CITY] plan there were lots of dynamics and difficulties but in the end we had a unified community and almost unified state legislative support for it.

M: Okay sorry I’m taking notes. [10:39] as I record too so that I can pick out little bits and pieces here. Okay now you were directly with the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] School and I remember that was my main interest when I first started because I had spoken to [A REPORTER] from the [THE CITY NEWSPAPER] just to give me some background when I first started because I feel that the [Dionysia’s] School District is probably the biggest iceberg I have ever seen
in my life there’s so much underneath the surface...Anyway, and I read your document too about [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], now [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] used to have part of their plans wasn’t there a relief building or a [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] relief plan because there was an issue with how to move all of these students to this new building was that part of the process?

Beatrice*: [11:40] SO my view of the history of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and this is my knowledge was that [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] was slated for a rebuild or a renovation the physical building was in terrible shape and that was known for some time and in 2000 it was identified for an investment from the facilities fund so the state local match. There was a lot of concern in the community that the district was going to tear down that old building which a lot of people in [CITY NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTED] attended had really fond memories of and so there was one issue related was the facilities where the district did look at the renovation cost and the renovation cost exceeded 70% of a new build. [12:32] And so there was a lot of community angst about whether to tear that building down or whether to renovate it and in the end the district made the decision to tear the building down and there’s still community members really upset about that.

At about the same time I mean [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] I is a low performing comprehensive high school it looks a little better than other district schools so for years it sort of flew under the radar because it wasn’t so low academically as compared to others, but it was a low failing graduation rate very low ACT scores, very low college entrance and completion and a school culture that was not always conducive to learning it was also overcrowded. All of the west side high schools are or most of them are full and overfull.

And so the phrase [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] relief school really meant that the district needed another school on the west side to handle the overflow of students at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and so dating back 10-15 years the district had years ago closed two west side high schools [13:53] decades ago and [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] was probably closed 15 or so years ago. And the immediate effect was that you had overcrowding in the other west side high schools so people began to talk about either a west side relief school or a [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] Relief School so when you hear that phrase it should mean another west side school to handle the overpopulation the overcrowding at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. So shifting back a moment to the facilities so when the district made the decision to tear down [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] it needed a safe support for its students in the meantime so it put its 9th graders at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] building it put the 10th, 11th and 12th at the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] building both in that neighborhood and so for I believe 3 years I think it was 3 years the building was torn down and all the other students were split between these two other swing sites that’s different than the idea of the relief school [15:07]. This is jumping ahead the district is planning to build a new west side high school at the site of another school which is just vacated around [STREETS PROTECTED]. That is called the new west side high school it’s called the west side relief school and some people would call that the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] relief school, but that’s a whole separate issue.

So that’s at [SCHOOL NAME]. So the kids are out there in a different building and the plan at the time was to rebuild a comprehensive high school and put 1200 kids in it and all of our work and research suggested that that was not an effective strategy to really give academic performance a head start that our work in the new schools suggested that smaller schools that you could build relationships with students where principals knew the kids where there was a cohesive staff centered around a particular mission was a more effective model not only in [Dionysia] but nationally and we had an example in [Dionysia] already. [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] which is a in the [CITY NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTED] neighborhood in [Dionysia] was a failing comprehensive high school it was closed the students were disbursed to other schools and it was renovated it was not a tear down it was a renovation but it was empty I think also for about 3 years and when it reopened it did not reopen as a comprehensive 1200 unit high school [16:44] it opened as 3 small schools with separate state identification numbers separate principals separate staff etc. so that had happened already in [Dionysia] so the districts academic team began to talk about what to put in the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] building once it was reopened. [17:04] An initial there were a lot of false starts of that process
there were a lot of I would say oh I have an idea, oh I have, I have an idea, none of which were grounded in the 21st century learning skills the jobs of the 21st century, what we know works etc. and it was really viewed sort of as well as we’ll do this program and this program. So about 2 years ago because the community was deeply unsatisfied with that strategy for academics there was a demand put on the district to have sort of a fresh start. So the portfolio office in the which is the entity that deals with new school start up took over the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] re-design process, the academic re-design. So the facilities is building a building and the portfolio is now taking hold of what’s going to go in it. [18:03]

And so the portfolio office under [NAME PROTECTED]? Pulled together about 24 advisory members [SCHOOL NAME] advisory members and they included myself, they included council members from that ward and surrounding wards, they had [SCHOOL NAME] alumni, [SCHOOL NAME] teachers, [SCHOOL NAME] students, neighborhood associations, CDCs, K-8 schools in the neighborhood and local businesses among others. And that team was assembled to really talk about and make some decisions around the design of the academic program. Very early on it became clear there would be a recommendation for 3 small schools and so the facilities team made an adjustment around how it would organize classrooms to be able to support 3 separate schools. So each floor has a science lab, an art lab, a music lab etc. And then common spaces that are shared. [19:00]

That process with the academic design team was about a year it came up then with the design principles which you may have made up in April 2014 or so. Do you have that?

M: The guiding principles?

Beatrice*: I can email that to you if you do not.

M: Yes, that would be great.

Beatrice*: Let me just make myself a note. So those guiding principles were developed and agreed upon by the district and the larger community. From that that group of 24 or so people stepped back, 6 people from that group and a couple of additional people were then charged with using the design principles what recommendations would there be about the actual schools so what kind of schools would go in there. So that smaller design team looked at 4 things it looked at the design principles, it looked at the assets of the [CITY NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTED] community, it looked at the report commissioned from the [Dionysia] foundation organization called [NAME PROTECTED] which identified high need high growth high wage jobs in [Dionysia] and we looked at the districts overall portfolio so what were we missing. And after about 6 more months of work that team—I was on that team as well recommended a school of engineering, school of IT a broad range of IT everything from coding to networking to computer repair, and a school of civic and business leadership. We brought those recommendations back to that larger advisory committee of 24 or so people they signed off on that then the district or the portfolio office brought that to [ THE CEO] who signed off of that as well and that’s how the 3 new schools at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] came to be [21:02].

They started this year with freshmen and sophomores in an ideal world you would have started new schools with freshmen and sophomores all by themselves. The situation at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] was such that you had to bring back 11th and 12th graders they had sat out in a very substandard –they had been in this other building they saw the construction of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] they were really excited to go back you could not deny them that. So when [THE SCHOOL NAME] re-opened this fall it opened with 1400 kids over capacity. About 250 kids in each of those 3 new schools I’m sorry freshmen and sophomores, and then 700 kids in the 11th and 12th grade they were calling that sort of the upper school or upper campus or upper level. Those students will graduate out of sort of the old rules of a comprehensive high school and then next year the three new schools will have freshmen sophomores and juniors and then the following year freshmen sophomore junior and senior. [22:24]
M: Okay so it’s still pretty full----

Beatrice*: It’s still very full which is why the district needs to build this other west side school which as I said is sometimes called a relief school.

M: IS that online as well?

Beatrice*: No because it is not begun yet there was a school building called [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED, different school] which is at [STREET NAMES PROTECTED] the district built a new [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] is a vocational technical training school with welding, construction, automotive, and IT. They built a new building for that school, that school holds about 700 kids at [STREETS PROTECTED]. The [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] building which is in terrible condition is sitting empty, it will be demolished in May and by the end of the summer the district is supposed to break ground for a new school there. [23:14]

[we talk for a bit I thank her for her help]

M: [23:30] So when you talked about your goals or at least when you sent the goal report I was really curious if this actually is working or how does this get implemented some of things struck out to me, one of them was the identification and providing intense remediation and acceleration of student learning needs prior to their high school experience and through some combination of summer school or year round school etc. and I’ve been talking to a few other people from the district like [NAME PROTECTED] she’s pretty new to the district or to the job but she was telling me about families being divided about year round schools and not year round and so I guess I’m curious about how well that goal is going and what’s currently happening how are we being able to implement that with [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] if you knew but if you don’t I can always talk to Nancy* or somebody else from the district.

Beatrice*: Parents do probably have a sort of normal reaction to thinking of school as 9 months but we have several year round schools and they are very highly sought after but when we discussed [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] we decided to recommend that the new schools begin, begin, as a traditional school year [24:55] so you have an extended day though, but at the end of this year it’d be revisited as to whether they would become a year round or they might wait and become a year round once they have a full cohort. So in the meantime the design principle did call for an intensive focus on remediation and acceleration. There was a plan to do summer school or summer boot camp for all 3 schools the timing was such that it made it really really difficult, we also had of the 3 new principals 2 were brand new principals to the district and the 3rd was having knee surgery over the summer so she’s just out of commission so what we were able to do over this first summer is that the older students the 11th and 12th graders and repeating 9th and 10th graders they call them 10R and 9R there was a cohort of them put in an intensive summer training session [25:51] But that mostly had to do with the older students the 11th and 12th graders. That is an ongoing plan even now so the way that these goals are handling remediation and acceleration varies. So one of the schools is implementing Sat. schools the school of civic and business leadership. The school of engineering has built in more time in a school day to put kids in intensive study and so the example that I can think of is there are students that are really struggling with algebra while they stay in algebra but they have basically a concurrent class of math remediation so you’re not pulling kids out of the subject that they’re supposed to be in but at the same time or in the same semester that they’re taking algebra they also have another 30 or 40 minutes or whatever it is of remediation in mathematics as an example. The school of IT I believe is doing after school programming around acceleration or remediation and then for those repeating students and the 11th and 12th graders who are behind in credits that school has implemented off-site one on one course work. So I think next year because they didn’t even get into the building until like 3 days before school opened, so for this upcoming summer assuming that it continues to be a traditional school year which I’m guessing it will this year that is when you would see a summer bridge program for entering 9th graders and any other students that are at risk of failing. Overall the district is trying to do more intervention in K-8 so that you have kids that are better prepared [27:41] but when you don’t they are
and that’s only one example I mean they’re all there’s 2 other schools that opened at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] on the East side they are doing massive remediation and acceleration basically by one on one project based learning and mastery assessment. [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] uses a mastery assessment you know basically where you are not getting a D or F, you have to learn 90% or so of the curriculum before you can move on so there are a number of schools doing different strategies. [28:16]

[we discuss the possibility of follow ups and we talk a bit]

M: [28:41] So How does [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] bring in the community I know you talked about how it did all this research there was all this research and assessments asking what the community needed and wanted can you explain a little bit more on that process.

Beatrice*: Yeah and I don’t know whether the community would say a whole bunch but I mean initially and I’m trying to think back the district early on before this got moved into the portfolio office had a couple of what they called community meetings I went to one of them hardly anybody came and it was not an incredibly productive or inspirational meeting and that’s really where the portfolio office stepped in and said okay we need to get smarter about this. So the community noise was initially as I said was around the facilities and then it was more difficult to engage the community around the academic programming because and this is an oversimplification but there were a number of different thoughts about [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. One of them was everything is fine it was good enough for me— I mean that sort of view point. Another view point of that neighborhood [30:00] was it doesn’t matter what you do at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] I will never send my child there. There was a sense that because it was overcrowded I think there was a sense that kids are coming from all over the city to this school which you know really it was still largely drawing from the neighborhood. SO once the district made the decision to pull together this advisory team that was intended to represent various constituencies in the community as I said [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] parents, alumni students, CDCS, local businesses etc. etc. city council, and then those individuals were to updates and keep their constituents comprised of what was going on.

One of those groups was [City Neighborhood PROTECTED], which is the CDC and [NAME PROTECTED] was the point person on that so he would be writing updates in the [City Neighborhood PROTECTED], newsletter or newspaper whenever he had a chance I mean there wasn’t a single publication I think that they put out that didn’t have an update on [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. So beyond that I mean there weren’t a lot of community meetings the next one that I can recall there may have been others that I missed was where there was a community meeting to show the upkeep on the building and then to talk about these 3 new schools that were going to go in and that was an evening meeting and I might say that there were 40 people there probably 10 of whom at least 10 worked for the district and there may have been 50 I can’t recall it was not a large group it was largely receptive I mean there was one person there really still upset about the fact that it was torn down but the others were pretty intrigued I thought by what the academic programming would be but that was sort of another example but again it’s very hard to get people out to the district meetings like I said to many many of them and typically there are way more district employees than anybody else. And then I guess I’d say the other example of the community support and interest is at the groundbreaking, not the groundbreaking but the grand opening in September there had to be at least 100 maybe a couple of 100 people for that event which you know were a series of speeches and then tours of the building later so I don’t know the numbers on that but I thought it was a good turnout. [32:43]

So that’s what I would say I don’t live in west park I live in the [City Neighborhood PROTECTED] neighborhood so I’m not as close to that neighborhood as others are but if you want to explore more about the community I might suggest contacting [NAME PROTECTED] at the [City Neighborhood PROTECTED], I can send you his contact information.

M: That would be awesome.

[we talk briefly about when the next board meetings will be]
M: I also noticed that—I am very curious about this small school system in which how does the student know which school they’re going to belong to it sounds like they’re so specific engineering or high tech or etc.

Beatrice*: they are more specific sounding than they are. Every 8th grade student has to choose a high school and that’s a change from previous years you were assigned to your local high school that’s changed so last year and in particular in this upcoming year all 8th grade students have to make a choice of the high school there are differences in those you know specificity and interests and outside experience but the Ohio requirements of the high school diploma are so tight that there is not a lot of time for extras so by the time every student has the 4 years of math, 3 or 4 of science, the English the social studies etc. it’s not like there’s a ton of extra time there so every new student goes to any new high school and gets the gull high school curriculum the difference is that in some cases as to how the curriculum is taught so you have schools where teachers primarily lecture as part of the classroom, students take notes, they test their level of knowledge. You have other schools that where the teacher is never lecturing it’s all student driven and student run with teachers advising you have schools with a particular focus on science and medicine their coursework still covers English social studies etc. it’s pretty consistent but you might have for example in their science classes partnerships with the [Dionysia] clinic university hospitals or case schools of medicine where students are doing more relevant experiment medicine. There’s other schools that have cross disciplinary so that you might pair a science with a math class or social studies and math class so some of the models do that. But the schools at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] the ideas of engineering which are to basically learn how do things work is you use engineering concepts to the greatest extent possible to expose kids to engineering principles [38:22]. I mean how they work which is One easy to do if you know what you’re doing because everything around us has engineering principles behind it. And so those students are still doing math, English social sciences etc. but they’re doing it through a lens of engineering you know how are things built how are they designed etc. In the IT school there is an heavy emphasis again on IT as a method for learning the orientation you know the problem solving how do you go through steps to solve a problem but they’re taking the same curriculum they have extra courses they have fab labs and things like that. And the school of business and civic leadership there again same curriculum through the lens of entrepreneurship and civic leadership so once of the things they are doing is opening a community coffee shop for the neighborhood and students are going to run it and learn how to run a small business they’re sort of orientation is sort of who am I who am I in my neighborhood, who am I in my city, who am I in the world, so it’s sort of like a I don’t know how to say it but it interests kids in different ways and gets them excited about it and they are still totally exposed to and should be mastering the regular core content. So I have a 7th grader for example and we have talked about the different [Dionysia] schools [39:49] and I described [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] in one way I described the school of engineering in another the school of arts and he’s thinking about my descriptions of those and what he’s interested in I don’t worry that if he chooses the school of arts for example that he’s not going to have math or social studies but also you know having a school between 400 and 600 kids where all the teacher know you you have them multiple times etc. the principals know you they know your family there are real advantages to that. [40:28] Particular and my son is not this but particularly for kids who don’t have a lot exposure outside their own neighborhood.

[40:51]

M: Last question is relating to the idea of the community and the importance of location so this is the geography in me about this, for my understanding these schools are not exactly placed in the exact neighborhoods given by the census by moving a school the assumption would be that you would also change the neighborhood dynamic because the neighborhood that was surrounding that school is no longer there therefore you would have a newer neighborhood surrounding the newer school. Is that true does that really actually happen especially which relates to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] because we talked about having the relief school we talked about having so many
kids and I know that the district has free busing and that’s not an issue how does that impact the community — this may be a question for the other man but I don’t know.

Beatrice*: Well all the districts are rebuilding schools in the same neighborhoods so [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] is in the exact same neighborhood it is in the exact same site it did not move the new schools at [SCHOOL NAME] did not move but they are being incubated in a different space but they will be right down the street the new schools of John Hay are in the same place so when the district is there is a period of time to swing the kids out which is a pain for everybody nobody likes tat but they are building them in the same neighborhood so I can’t think of an example of when that happened. [42:44]. I mean the 3 years that the kids had to be transported to another school I mean it was only 5 minutes away and I’m sure it was an annoyance to everybody but it was rebuilt on the same property [43:04].

[I thank her and we talk about other contacts for the remainder of the interview]
Interview with SPO leader worker

Total time: 32:47 both recordings added

(we talk briefly about the complications about the project and how the interview process is going to go)

[1:00] Megan: For starters let’s build the situational background, so who you are, how long you’ve worked there, what it is you do?

Diana*: Okay, so I started there in August of 2014 so it’s been a little bit over a year and I work in the family and community engagement office. I am what’s called a family and community engagement coordinator. So that means there’s 4 of us for the district so we each have two clusters of schools which are divided up by location. So I have two clusters on the west side we call them the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] high school cluster and the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] high school cluster so that covers a number of different neighborhoods and our role—there’s kind of a few different parts. One is that we all of our schools receive a title one RA parent involvement funds so that is funds solely to be used for engaging our parents so there needs to be an academic focus and it needs to be for parents. We help with compliance for those funds so you know with the federal money there’s a lot of different documentation and policies and procedures that need to be followed and then we also help the schools with planning their events help with different strategies and models that could be effective in engaging our parents so all of our schools have some sort of parent group either an SPO which is a school parent organization kind of like the old PTA just a little bit different. Or they have a PAC which is a parent advisory committee and that’s just—the SPO has officers—it’s a little more structured. The PAC is more of a group that they can help with decision making help with um—all of our schools have a plan called the A plan or the AAP called the academic achievement plan and so that’s kind of the blue print for the whole school year and so a parent needs to be involved in that process. So it can be parents from these groups or whatever. So yeah, I guess that’s a quick little summary if you have questions.

[2:58].

Megan: Yeah… is the district really taking information from parents and figuring out how to and actually making changes to their schools or is it kind of more like the schools access the parents over certain things but not everything?

Diana*: I think that with a 105 different schools there is no one answer for everything in the district. So there’s also a couple of district level parent groups. So we do SPO leadership meetings where like the officers and the PAC parents come together and then there’s also a district parent advisory committee and so those they will come usually over specific information like one of the meetings last year the chief academic officer came and went over the preliminary campaign for this year and asked like do you want parent teacher conferences to be in the evening or the morning so you want high school and elementary school to be on the same day or different and you did see those changes reflected in the calendar on a school level it really honestly can vary from school to school. Some schools really work hand in hand with their parents and that’s where we are trying to move all schools too is that true partnership model. Now the history hasn’t always been there so not all schools are there yet so some it is more checking in on certain things. So one of the things our office does is try to build the capacity of schools and of parents so that on both sides we can help create those partnerships and then we also help parents to learn what schools should be doing so that they can help keep them accountable for that too. So they know that they have the right to see the AAP they have a right to be a part of these different things.

Megan: I’m sorry so you said, just in case the recording doesn’t so well. So you’re saying that they sometimes ask them when to do parent teacher conferences and what was the other example?

Diana*: Well they switched the time of conferences they asked if they wanted high schools and elementary schools to be on the same day or different day for conferences. So they went through the calendar in terms of the school year what the length is going to be and whether parents would want to move to an all year round school [5:18] which was really interesting there was a very clear divide among the parents. Some were really for it and some were
not for it at all. I mean we have a few right now that you can select to go to but obviously it’s not district wide at this point so they were like you know it’s an idea what do you guys think like not saying this is happening next year just throwing it out there.

Megan: So and then on top of that I was reading [CITY REPORTER’S] work, cause that’s how I started you know you got to start somewhere,

Diana*: Yeah

Megan: So I know there was this testing issue, the placement tests, was that also brought up at these meetings?

Diana*: The placement test for.....? Just the general standardized testing?

Megan Oh yes.

Diana*: So that’s not, it doesn’t place students...unless there’s a different — there’re so many and my background is social work, not education so I kind of learn all of that as it comes. So last year we had the PARCC test and this year we are still waiting it’s going to be something from the air, but the state keeps changing it, and that is, it does get brought up, parents will bring up—about the test and that’s one that there’s not as much the district can do about it because it comes from the state so that’s where we just try to give the parents information that’s something a lot of the schools will do is try and work with the parents on, we can just help the kids prepare and not be stressed about the test because they can feel a lot of pressure but it is definitely something the parents bring up. And have varying opinions on.

Megan: Yeah I’ve read about that.

Diana*: Yeah

Megan: So what kind of challenges do you think a lot of your students from your cluster deal with on a daily basis that can infringe on whether or not they graduate whether or not they drop out?

Diana*: Well I think one, I have a lot of the Spanish speaking neighborhoods so I think language is something that we’re working on. Like we have couple duel language schools and so we have some really successful models but that’s also clearly a barrier. If you don’t speak English well if your parents don’t speak English well. So that’s one. Another I mean obviously we had that huge attendance campaign going on and that is something that the schools— it’s been promising so far this year but historically they have struggled with and if the kids aren’t there—and it’s for a number of different reasons. I have highs schools where those students have to stay home and watch younger students if their sick. Sometimes it’s a transportation issue because we are an open choice district where you can go to any school but you do need to be able to get there so and for families that are like oh I have a car I can get my kids there and if the car breaks down and they can’t go to fix it then [8:13] you know there’s some huge attendance barriers. Let’s see what else. I think parent engagement is one area where we have some overgrowth too some of our schools have really excellent programing, but you hear a lot from parents, especially common core math, you learn to do things so differently and I feel the same way sometimes, I look at a piece of homework and think well I can get you to the right answer but not the right way and it’s all about that critical thinking so building up the ability of our parents and families to help kids in that way too because if you go home and try to get help on your homework and don’t know how to do common core it’s a whole new way of looking at things.[9:01]

Megan: (I introduce her to the concept and literature of critical race theory) So how does it — Does that come into your work a lot where you feel like you get a lot of criticism from the people that you are not really taking in the community perspective or the cultural perspective of those families and students that you’re serving?

Diana*: I think that’s something that our office is very aware of and conscious of and it’s something that we’re always thinking about. We have a pretty diverse staff so that helps too so we’ll always say well what about the language
what about the family background—so that helps us but it is again building up that capacity of the schools. You know our teachers have a wide variety of backgrounds too but there are a good amount that come in from the suburbs that don’t necessarily understand the struggles that our families experience or what their lives have been like so we do try and help them understand that too that it’s not that parents don’t care it’s not a blame game on them but it’s just how can we work with them where they are. [10:29].

Megan: Do you guys have a lot of teacher circulation as well does that make that a problem—matriculation excuse me. Like do they leave a lot or do they stay?

Diana*: I don’t know the data on that. I think it really depends. I think a good amount of people stay. A lot of teachers I know have been here for a while. SO I think it’s—yeah I don’t know those specific data. SO I don’t want to speak to it too much.

Megan: Okay, that’s fine I didn’t think so, but it’s hard to know.

Diana*: yeah it’s hard to get that data. We do get a lot of people that have been here for a while though. We do have some new people coming in too. Especially the last couple of years there’s been a good amount of retirements and the same thing with principals we had a good amount of new principals this year.

Megan: Yeah you guys move them around a lot because the one principal I had to agree to do my study doesn’t even go to that school anymore.

Diana*: Yeah they do get moved around. Sometimes they want to sometimes its other factors—I don’t really know (laughs). But it does. Things change.

Megan: So is that difficult you think for the students that things change or no?

Diana*: I think consistency is really important for students and so sometimes change can be good, if you have someone who’s not effective in that building and maybe needs to be or would be a better fit somewhere else, it could be good. There’s a lot to be said about a stable learning environment where the expectations are clear and you know what you need to do and it takes time to make changes in a building too. So. For a principal to come in and try to change culture, try to change academics and then be gone in a couple years I mean that poses some challenges too.

(we talk causally for a bit unrelated to project about the coffee shop we are in)

Megan: Well some of the other things I had dealt with the [THE CITY’S] Plan and also new schools. So where does your job fit into with regards to that how does that work with the [THE CITY’S] Plan?

Diana*: So in terms of the new buildings or the [CITY] Plan in general?

Megan: Both. We’ll start with the [CITY] Plan.

Diana*: Okay, well the [CITY] plan---everything is related to the [CITY] Plan so helping our schools to improve there’s a ton of research that shows that real partnerships between schools and families and authentic family engagement—not just that surface hey come in for a party okay great bye, but really helping educate our parents about how they can help the kids that moves not just individual students but schools. So we are always working with our parents, but we also work with teachers. We do professional development with schools on certain dates to help them strengthen what their family engagement looks like and to help them understand that research so.

Megan: So do you do focus groups with those families or seminars or something? [13:31]

Diana*: Well some of those like that district parent advisory committee and the district SPO leadership we do summer parent leadership institute too and this year actually a good amount of educators that also came so that was a good opportunity to have everyone in one room and let them know about just different ways to do parent
engagement that are really going to help move the needle. And then we also do parent university and so that is a couple of components. One is college bus tours, so we take students but they need to be occupied by a parent or guardian so that we’re bridging that information gap so we’re going to four schools this fall, we usually do about 4 in the fall and 4 in the spring and its one day, lunch is always provided its free to the family so we just want to get that college exposure. And then Parent University is traditionally it was two Saturday sessions. We’re working on revamping it a little bit giving it a little fresh touch this year so it would just be in the spring. But that is a one-day session where we invite parents, community members, whoever interested to come out and we have all kinds of different sessions we always have a keynote speaker parents can pick whatever they want so whether its learning about Noviance our online system or third grade reading guarantee or anywhere we’ve had yoga, Zumba, we have a chef who does healthy cooking and there are ways we integrate math with that so that’s another way.

Megan: Can I go to that?

Diana*: Yeah you can. We don’t have the date for that yet since we’re revamping it, but it will probably be in April. But yeah you’re welcome to come.

Megan: Yeah I want to do that.

Diana*: Yeah it will be on the website. They put things on the banner so it will be on the banner. It’s free just register. Sign up lunch and breakfast is included. It’s a really nice event.

Megan: And then can I also go to these meetings? Do you have any more district committee meetings?

Diana*: Yeah we have a district SPO meeting coming up on Nov. 12th. And that’s going to be at (names the school) school which is right around (a high school) do you know where that is? I have a flier I will give you it. It has the address and everything too. So yeah. I’m trying to think about what else goes with the [CITY] Plan. We also at our office we have student family recruiters so they’re kind of our counterpart so there’s the face coordinators and then there’s the student recruiters. And they focus on recruiting but also retention and really helping families find the right fit and that is a big part of the [CITY] plan making sure that every neighborhoods have good schools and that students and families choose and find the school that’s the right fit for them to what their needs are. And so they really help families go through that process. [16:20]

Megan: And is it, do they get to choose which neighborhood because I know they closed a lot of schools and there was debates about the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] relief school that’s now the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] School you know there’s been some things like that when they move schools it’s been difficult because some of those neighborhoods have actually been part of the neighborhood. Does that happen a lot?

Diana*: It does I mean there are whenever you close a school or move a school or change a school there’s going to be--- it’s an emotional process especially a lot of the west side schools and I am sure it’s true for some of the east neighborhoods too, there’s been generations of families going to these same schools and so if you learn that that school is going to be closes or merged or moved people feel really strongly about it and we have a lot of historical buildings on the west side too that’s kind of a double edge sword. It’s an old building but it’s full of a lot of history, there’s maybe not air conditioning but you know the community sometimes really wants a historical building so. I think that’s probably a really difficult process to navigate. [17:35]

(we talk for a bit about my list of questions as I search for what I haven’t asked her yet. I mention partnerships and questions pertaining to them she responds.)

Diana*: And we do sometimes we do help with partnerships we help schools—a lot of them are looking for a community partner or someone to work with also volunteerism is hosted under our office too so we do help schools navigate how to reach out that you need to have a clear focus for what you want you know looking for someone in your neighborhood who may be interested in—you know all that stuff. [18:24]. Teachers don’t necessarily get
trained on that, principals don’t necessarily get trained on that parents don’t necessarily know how to go about that. And we work pretty closely with I don’t know if you have spoken to or worked with any of the site coordinators that are part of the wraparound schools.

Megan: I’m trying to get in touch with [NAME PROTECTED] but he is the most elusive, he’s like batman.

Diana*: (Laughs) He is hard to get a hold of.

Megan: But you work with site coordinators as well?

Diana*: Yeah they’re great for the schools that have them they’re really good point of contacts. We still work with other people in those schools too but it really goes hand in hand. I mean our office is family and community engagement so we do work with them too.

Megan: And what do you do when you work with them exactly?

Diana*: Sometimes it’s the same as the stuff we do with the principals and teachers, helping with family and community engagement events but it’s also kind of seeing how all the different pieces kind of fit into the puzzle. So they all have their lead agencies and so it’s looking at what the programs are in the school. It’s looking at who the different partners are and if there is any sort of strategic focus or if it’s just like we have all of these other things going on and so working together to address some of the needs of students and the school too.

Megan: Now what if this levy doesn’t get passed, the deadline is like approaching. What is going to happen?

Diana*: So I wasn’t there before the levy passed. I worked with an afterschool program as part of my own (indistinct utterance) when I was in grad school that worked very closely. — I mean it will be very challenging financially if the levy doesn’t pass I mean already we do building permits if the building needs to be open after hours you know they’re not just open all the time. I know that was a challenge before was being able to pay for buildings to be open and I don’t know what exactly it will look like but obviously cuts will have to be made.

Megan: Yeah I wonder how the program would go.

Diana*: Right, and the wraparound program is a three it was a three-year program and we’re in year three so we don’t know what that’s going to look like either it was a partnership of all these different agencies and united way so a lot of things remain to be seen in the next year so. And I’m sure the top people are aware and obviously they’re working on it. But—

Megan: Yeah they’re worried too... So how do we there’s two things that are circling in my brain but I don’t know how to ask this question. The state level really dictates a lot of things with the school district and then we have mayoral control so there’s two things going on that’s completely out of the districts hands that they have to basically be accountable for which is challenging. So how that plays into the facilities plan... (I try to find the words) so when a building is new and put in place because the district decides to go with the master facilities plan and they decide where this building is, does your organization help facilitate in those meetings with the committees that serve with those board meetings with the district and with the community and try to talk about this new school to get it involved with the community and to try to bring it into fruition so to speak?

Diana*: So the district actually contracted with an organization an outside organization to kind of spearhead that process. Just because everyone has a lot on their plate already and so they went the route—and this was before I was here too, so this is just kind of my minimal knowledge of how all of that went. And so they have this contract and they worked with that agency to really do all the planning, do the analysis with all the different levels of control and you know you’re a bureaucratic big school district there’s a lot of prescribed systems so you have to bid things out and look at how you select architectures and contractors and all that so we are involved but not—I would say
kind of more I don’t even want to say indirectly—but we’re not the ones running the process, we’re not the ones scheduling the meetings, but we are aware of them. We try to attend them and support them we try to let families know, teachers know about them you know hey you said at your SPO meeting you have some concerns about this new school building what’s going to happen make sure you come to this meeting to advocate for it to let yourself know, make sure families know they have a right to come to board meetings to further advocate so we’re involved but we’re not the ones really running the process.

(we talk a bit unrelated to interview)

Megan: So you’re really just the information passers basically.

Diana*: Yeah cause we work closely with families we build our relationship with families and teachers and principals, so people will come to us and say hey we’re having these meetings we need the families to be there and we do have those relationships we have the people to call to text or email and you know when you’re a little higher up in the structure you don’t necessarily get to have that contact with schools so yeah we are, we’re kind of in that middle role. We hear the things from all different sides and it’s interesting to me. [25:17]

(we talk a little bit unrelated to the interview as the interview is basically over. But after taking personally about other things like the café’s baked goods and the nice neighborhood we are in, she starts to talk about something important and I ask her if I can begin recording again and she agrees)

Diana*: The majority of our time is spent out in the field visiting schools going to SPO meetings or meeting with staff at school to help them plan those meetings we do have at least one office day a week.

Megan: Meeting with who?

Diana*: Staff, I’m sorry. Meeting with school staff principals’ teachers sometimes paraprofessionals whoever really—we ask that schools have a team that does this. Now again, we’re at different stages and different places with that. So whoever that contact person or those contact people are we’re meeting with them. Or just stopping by different events too to provide support, see family, let them know who we are invite them to some of our initiatives too. And then we do have one office day a week based in our downtown office just for all that documentation paperwork side of things.

Megan: What are your initiatives?

Diana*: The things like Parent University and the college bus tours and the different meetings and things. We also are providing support to the ROFT program which I think stands for reinstating our curfew kids—I’m not—don’t quote me on that one. But that’s a program with the juvenile court so if kids get a ticket for either a daytime curfew violation or just being out in the community during school or a nighttime curfew violation, sometimes they’re given the alternative instead of paying I think it’s a $250 fine they can go through this program and the parents and kids have to come to a parent meeting and do things like check in with their school and go to parent teacher conferences and so we facilitate that parent meeting. SO just kind of different things. Different things always pop up too.

(I talk a bit)

Oh and we also in the summer most of our time is spent going to a lot of community fairs so just getting information out about that to school time summer reading, we always hand out different resources. Like books, we give out summer learning books we spend a lot of time we try to hit as many as possible so there’s days Saturdays and Sundays where our whole staff is at different festivals. But don’t want to be just at one community’s festival we want to hit them all.

Megan. Right.
Diana*: And we’ve been trying this last year not to just have it be our office but other district staff but especially staff from the schools in those neighborhoods so I did one and 2 of the principals and one of the assistant principals came out and one parent did it with me and so it’s nice for kids to see their principals over the summer and see them in their community too.

(we rehash what she has told me during her interview as I go over notes to make sure I have everything down correctly)

Interview is done.
October 28 2015 with Kevin*

0:00— (We are just talking about my study and how this interview process will go) Throughout this interview the interviewee goes off topic and we talk casually at times about the location. We were even interrupted by someone asking for money. Therefore, those pieces were left out of the transcription).

[2:31]

Kevin*: Interesting topic much more than you’ll be able to deal with.

Megan: we can start with your role in working with the district from the beginning to where it is now if you want.

Kevin*: Imma irritant.

Megan: What’s that?

Kevin*: I’m an irritant. (laughs)

Megan: Well I like those. Those are the changers, the pushers and movers.

Kevin*: Yeah Well. Hard topic. We’ll just start in the middle someplace. I was—For about 15-18 years, I was the associate Vice president of ambulatory and pre-paid blue practice at the county hospital— [Dionysia] Metro hospital. One of the best institutions in the country for dealing with the poor. Very good high quality services. And with a real—hanging on to the principle that everybody’s going to be treated equally regardless of how its paid for.

4:27 (he describes his experiences at the hospital and his experiences in college. It was deemed unrelated to the school district therefore not needed to be transcribed)

8:00—12:25

Kevin*: So eventually I got thrown out (laughs). It was a prelude to other politics but they go rid of a bunch of us that had memory and roots in the place now because the person that the top man brought in to be his successor was really out after stabbing that man and wanted everybody out. That man was never loyal to me or anybody else. And so I had to—reorganizing and blah blah blah. Rather than going back into another organization I went to the Gestalt Institute and did some training and Gestalt approaches to organizations—very good training, if you ever have an opportunity to do some of that, that’s worthwhile if you’re kind of interested I can tell you more about that some other time. Gestalt was an approach to ecology and Gestalt institute [Dionysia]—they’re in a number of cities, are people who will come together to have training in those techniques. And then I just started you know going out on the street. And I did some independent consulting and after a couple of years got the job at metro. No—went out on the streets again and it was almost the first time I got the metro I did the same thing, just kind of went on the streets. So as I did that kind of work my consulting firm (laughs) myself, was organization and community consulting. What’s that interface between organizations and the community? And my belief was that as over the years, these were truly two different kinds of collective—human collective. And if you didn’t understand the nature of the differences you don’t really have community and organizations. But we do try to create organizations out of community and pretend that their representing and that doesn’t work either. What you do is just put something—a foreign body there [10:50]. So I believe that that’s not recognizing a big issue in how change occurs.

Megan: Is it a big issue in the district now or?

Kevin*: I would say that they all… it’s not a big issue in that they don’t recognize it. As an issue they’re convinced they’re doing community outreach, community involvement, community engagement, and I can tell you about what that looks like in a second. [11:34]. So I did that and I was dealing with organizations—a lot of them all over the city, how do you get dialogues in some of the wards with the councilmen, bringing people together, how do they just learn to understand each other and what’s going on rather than shouting and being knocked down—the kind of
reality tv version of democracy. When I retired from that...So I know a lot of them, people and things even being an unsociable Slovak.

(we joke about his Slovak heritage and my personal families’ heritage as Czech and relations about what being a Slovak is.)

12:57: SO when I retired and when I stopped getting a paycheck and stuff at one point I was like I’m 73 now. So some place about 4 or 5 years ago I realized that I wasn’t able to do the kinds of things that the clients would expect when their paying somebody. And so I stopped. I retired from doing it. But I did the same thing on my own and that’s how I got involved with the schools. Although I had had, when I was actually still working I was dealing with groups that had been grassroots groups, I knew people and organizers, and I was asked at times to facilitate a meeting, once was asked by, recommended by both the Mayor’s staff and [FOUNDATION HIDDEN] as the person that could do that kind of stuff. I live in the city, West side of [Dionysia] maybe you drove by my street when you were trying to get here? I could have put coffee on and you could have saved yourself from traffic!

(I laugh and address his joke)

14:30

Kevin*: So what I do is pretty much what I want to do. Around the schools I had been doing or had contact with school issues back into the 1990s. Around the time I started my consulting there was such a thing called the education summit that Mayor [NAME PROTECTED] put on. I knew the person in charge of it. I was one of the facilitators of a session. I think it was parent engagement. I was hired afterwards to help the foundations deal with some continuing issues around engagement well parents. And the person I worked for was [NAME PROTECTED] who was the [Dionysia] Foundation program officer for education. She and the program officer Beatrice* at [FOUNDATION NAME PROTECTED] probably—

Megan: Oh I’m going to speak to Beatrice* on the Nov. 4th.

Kevin*: She and I were on a committee together around [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. She was the one person from inside the box that could see a range of things could see some of the gaps in how they pull things together and was very influential in helping us move that. Very good person. Very well grounded in the community too. But you know working for the devils you got to miss something. (laughs). So...she’s a good person. She went the University of Michigan in Voice? So you got a Michigan...social justice too I think her mother was an activist. So she has the social justice.

(he clears his throat I offer to buy him water or mints or something)

[17:48]

Kevin*: So that was...I saw this importance I tracked these things I have good friends that were involved in the back in the time the busing began in terms of the bridge over [Dionysia] sort of thing and bringing the white and black community together and the budget coalition that was working in [Dionysia] grassroots again trying to ...

Megan: Project Coalition?

Kevin*: It’s called the budget coalition. Trying to deal around budget issues around the decision making in the district. So I’ve always—you know I don’t hang out with these people but I do get—I’m knowledgeable about what’s going on in different parts of the community...and to continue that it got to be I was on my neighborhood I’ve been there now a long—87 88, I moved there when my wife and I got married. She lived there with her two sons whom she adopted from Vietnam, she and her ex-husband. And I began getting engaged in the community I was put on the board of the ultimate development corporation [City Neighborhood PROTECTED], this neighborhood where I live is
kind of a working class, not very high level income but working class neighborhood just east of the what’s called [City Neighborhood PROTECTED] neighborhood which is still very much middle class professional considered.

Megan: Higher Income?

Kevin*: Yeah. I think the blue collar culture is what has hold institutions like Metro hospital and the city together in a good way. Usually you’ll find—the nurses at metro that regardless of the administrative staff or medical leadership whose fathers were mechanics and mothers were sewers and belonged to unions and had that work ethic and responsibility and a good sense about their—they’re the ones now the nurses carried that culture into these institutions.

20:45

Kevin*: So I’m at home there even though its irritating at times [20:50]. I got on the board of the development corporation. Became the president. Stepped back after a couple of years because I was having some health problems and then issues of helping my parents get into a nursing home and going through that process of their decline and deaths. But throughout that period I—there was a it’s probably around 90 or something like that or maybe it was later, sometime in the 90s, I can’t remember what point it was between 90 and—it was close to the 2000s hmmm well mid 90s let’s say. There was a community conference at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]

Megan: What high school?

Kevin*: [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]? It’s in [NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTED]. It’s a Jesuit catholic high school.

Megan: Oh I think I know what it is. I looked at all the public schools so I didn’t recognize the name.... There was a community...?

Kevin*: Conference. The different neighborhoods’ community groups were coming together, I don’t know if it was sponsored by some umbrella group that brings them together and there was a session on education. It as a school classroom filled with 40 people. And I was talking with former councilman [NAME PROTECTED]. He just retired, he used to be the councilman for this ward. He was a community activist before that. You know, a lefty radical comes out of that kind of reform mindset. His wife is [NAME PROTECTED] who works for the foundations and worked for the mayor when [NAME PROTECTED] was city council president. He and I was standing outside the door as I was going in. He says we do these things every year and you know we have a conference next year we come back as new people with the same concerns. He said why can’t there be some continuity? I said, Okay [NAME PROTECTED] I’ll see if I can’t go do something about that. SO I invited people to a meeting and we began a process which over time which formed the [Dionysia] education committee. Our goal at that time was to try to get education committees in each neighborhood that would represent parents, teachers, become informed learn how to process things, address things, not a point of having a particular political agenda just trying to really empower people to figure things out themselves and address them. And we had about 4 of these things going. The only one that had any real stability was the one in my neighborhood called [City Neighborhood PROTECTED], well it’s really called the [City Neighborhood PROTECTED]. [City Neighborhood PROTECTED] --

(someone in the coffee shop interrupts us Kevin* talks to him a bit, we talk also about the recording device)

[25:00]

The neighborhood education—we wrote some things on it and if you want I could probably pull some things out on what we hoped to do. Never really got accomplished but one of the things that—one of the things that—one of the things that—some of us had contact with some group in Columbus or Cincinnati that was meeting and they were contacted with some national group they had organizers trying to do something in Ohio so we were going to meetings in Columbus, some of us, NAME PROTECTED, myself. NAME PROTECTED he’s the mediator at [City Neighborhood PROTECTED], and who has been staffing this thing
even though it’s kind of a free-form group. He went to Kent. I think his father is a professor there too. Into social justice he and his wife.

So what could we do around this stuff? We first went around and tried to organize you know getting these organized and contacts. We had contacts I mean I had done a large project with [NAME PROTECTED]. Association which was the central organization for settlement houses in probably 12 or 14 different neighborhoods. Very good sound base. The director of that was a friend of mine and a friend of some other people. WE had—we decided to approach the [Dionysia]—we tried to put on a conference, we knew we needed some money. The conference was going to try to bring people and give us some idea of how other people were getting a good community foundation and we had 150 people show up. You know a very interesting cross section and so [NAME PROTECTED] said, Oh, I’m so impressed you have normal people there. She got a little bit jaded about the kind of about the ordinary people in [Dionysia] she can’t communicate with that well.

27:46

Kevin*: So I went to her, I need to be able to get one of two agencies agree to be the fiscal partner agencies that had a reputation or some stability. And choose the neighborhood leadership [Dionysia] because that’s the umbrella organization for the settlement houses cause I knew [NAME PROTECTED]. He and I had some differences he was much more of a—he grew up, he’s African American with a wonderful sense of the issues but he really—how do I say this—he’s more effective in kind of sustaining the institutional process than changing it. But he brings the right kind of values and stuff.

(he tells me his organization may be one I need to talk to and names other people I might want to talk to)

29:30

Kevin*: So we got about 20,000 dollars. [NAME PROTECTED] and I both at the time were on the adjunct staff of [Dionysia] State social work requirements. I lectured, he lectured—I mean it’s just the standard introductory course. So he was good friends with the director of that department [NAME PROTECTED] She swung the deal where we got to use their facilities room and stuff. We brought in an organizer from Boston it was called from BPON. Boston parent organizing network. A model that we thought- we had heard about at the meetings so to speak and that was one that [Dionysia] should consider for empowering people and making some changes. We brought in someone from Chicago. I think it was called [PLACE NAME HIDDEN] or something like that. It’s a neighborhood on the north side had done some interesting you know involving of parents in classrooms so a combination of career and education. And I thought there was one other but I’m not sure.

Successful conference, very successful. In the process though [NAME PROTECTED] and I began to have some differences of a few on how he was spending the money. He was spending the money to buy furniture for things for the office. Which you know wasn’t quite social. You know how he did the food stuff he knew he was over ordering so that everyone could take something home. Not quite—there’s other ways to do it. And he was also pretty clear in the meetings that he was saw his job or maybe he was told to control it. That the foundations wanted an organization that they thought was reliable to keep a wild man like me in the box. And he was pretty clear about this because that was the relationship we had. So when the conference was--- two things happened he was responsible for he had the people that took the notes. He was going to analyze the notes for the meeting. I designed the conference you know what would be the type of process that the—you know how to get dialogue in the groups and things like that and how to get focused and how to keep the pieces together. [NAME PROTECTED] doesn’t have those skills. He said that he would be willing—you know because of democracy and things he was going to be willing to be the host. And he did a lot of plugging his own organization in the process. So he was responsible to get those things together and have a follow up meeting with people would move from what was written to what would be the actual. That’s where it broke down [33:12]. Got the meeting the documents hadn’t been worked through very well ahead of time the meeting just was more like a general talk you didn’t have anything focused and the follow up meetings became harder and harder to get projects that we could build on although we did try the neighborhood idea. So I
was seeing this and I said well I’m doing the neighborhood [CITY] education committee and we’re independent so let’s do an so let’s see if we can get some funding from foundations again to get some one or two people that could staff—to organize it. I mean we were all just volunteers, myself and the woman named [NAME HIDDEN]. Afro American woman in east side who had successfully challenged the district about [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] high school. They wanted to make it an elementary school and she and the community fought to stay it as a high school. And she and I would go around and knock on doors and saying and getting a lot of people but everybody just had too much going on to be able to pick up something to do so we needed an organizer. So I went to the foundation. I said that. And this is a program of they had decided they had already decided that the program that we took to this fiscal agent was their program. I said no it’s not. And they were oh yes, it is in our mind it is and you have to go through that. So it was no deal. So we couldn’t you know get the kinds of funds that would be reasonable to take the next step.

People in the [CITY] education committee probably 20 of us maybe 30 continued meeting monthly. Every so often somebody would come in and say they wanted us to go picket or enter their action program and we said well you’re not going to get us to even vote on that as a group. We’re not here to support any—you know we individually go out and we do what we wanna do and we get involved. Here is a place to just exchange ideas to find out what’s going on, to begin about these issues and we’re willing to talk to people about their projects, but trying to get us as an organization to enter into that kind of stuff it would split us actually. So it continued but we over the years just kind of dwindled down but that’s been the kind of base. We were at the transformation alliance—you know what the transformation alliance is?

Megan: Hmm mm.

Kevin*: And they brought in an outside group to speak. It’s been a long term project I guess I can’t remember what the name of the group was—it was a group that was working on the academies of [Dionysia] idea which seemed to be a good idea except kind of late in the game so we after this session was done I said to about the 5 or 6 of us of the [Dionysia] education committee where we meet were like 10 people but it has been helpful for us to formulate our ideas to stay abreast of things and its given us something. I don’t know but—so I said to the executive director so when is it going to be the [Dionysia] education committee’s turn to make a presentation at the transformation alliance? She said we can talk about that, I want to talk to you guys first. SO it gives us the opportunity to claim community now…At Some point in the process because of something that was happening immediately in [PLACE HIDDEN] where I live where the development corporation is around this [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] high school and a couple other projects I started going to the school board meetings to find out what was going on and then I continued so part of my committement has been attending school board transformation alliance committee meetings, I’ve been on committees that the school board’s formed around these issues and it’s hard to have any influence on these issues as a non-institutional representative. Even for somebody like me who has worked in this kind of field as a professional the power and the defining assumptions rest someplace else.

Megan: Do you think that’s because it’s under mayoral control? And that this districts kind of got its own unique set of problems with the desegregation policies that started in the beginning and then--?

Kevin*: Desegregation process effect it, mayoral control effects it, but I don’t think those are the determining—In each city you go to you’ll probably find this sort of thing with institutions. And you have to trace through what were the particulars in this one or that one. It’s just the way organizations work okay. I like to define the issue between organizations and community. Organizations are focused at controlling, centralizing. The community is focused at bringing together all sorts of divergent, you know the education, the job, street cleaning, the politics, the church, shopping, so you have a different kind of thought process and organizing process, our society is a society of organizations. And we try to organize our husband’s lives (laughs).

(he jokes about relationships. Off topic to interview)

[41:10]
Kevin*: SO anyway how did you get me off the track?

Megan: Oh we were talking about community and organizations and issues about changing.

Kevin*: And we don’t model of community we know how to live organization. And one of the most terrible things about reform and the direction of society is that we when we run into a problem we don’t look and say how do we deal with the community aspect. We say let’s put the community aspect more in an organization type control. That will solve it. It doesn’t solve it. In fact, it makes it harder. Because it fragments the community. I mean mayoral control is an example. Yes, electoral boards have a problem and in particularly they’ll have more problems as the national government gets involved in things and the way education is evolving but the giving up on democracy is not the answer. How do you make it work? Yes, poor parents have a hard time coming into an organization and being able to see the whole perspective and to make decisions. The answer isn’t taking more decision away from them, it’s how do you address that problem. When we’re in organizations we can’t. We can’t address those problems. It would help though if we at least recognize that and say there’s only so much we can do here. How do we get the other piece rather than being arrogant and say well we can fix that? Make it more like a business. Well it’s not a business. A business depends on their being a healthy community.

Megan: Some of these places don’t have healthy communities.

Kevin*: Yeah and you can’t...the business can’t help create a healthy community, it really feeds off of it. SO all this business model stuff is just a reversion for escaping from how do you deal with the issues of respecting people and looking at how the damage is done in the past. And it recreates the damages now. For example,...now that’s too complicated to get to right now.

Megan: I would like to hear the damages if you like.

Kevin*: Well I was going to give you a particular case but—last night I spoke at the school board meeting. One of three speakers. All of us have spoken before and all of us are retired and older.

Megan: Those are open to the public right? I should start going to those.

(he jokes with me about getting lost in [Dionysia] and renting cars and we talk about how to get to those meetings or find out where they are).

[45:33]

Kevin*: When I got involved in this I was aware from the Bond Accountability Commission. I guess you’ve heard about them. They began publishing and making it more clear in 2005--6 about what was being met or not met about the direction of the facility plan and one of the things they pointed out the facility plan no longer—had delayed I guess the way they put is was putting off both the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] change—new school, and what they called the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] Relief high school. And this is why I said it was complicated because why did [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] need a relief high school. Well in 95 the State took over the district because of dissolcvey or something, the state took over and a judge came in and said you guys can’t pay your bills you got to close some schools I know you’re not going to be real corporative on this so I’ll tell you which schools to close. One of them was the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] high school [STREET NAMES HIDDEN]. So the school district this is deciding that they would make things even worse than the state, maybe that’s their competition. They said well we have the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] district over here and I think there’s some racial reverse racial bias about you know there was a black politicians let’s say that well let’s just---[SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] was still the largest academic attendance zone... so zone of attendance. Larger than any other big school. So well let’s just take the attendance zone from west tech which was the sizable and clomp them together. So overnight [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]S district doubled.

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With kids from neighborhoods that were much different beginning to come to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]’s middle class moves up and pulls out more and school ability collapses. So that happened so when the facility plan began to be formulating in 2000 to 2004 somebody had the wisdom to say we have to bring some relief to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] whatever we do. The [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] relief high school. You would think that if you were going to relief that somehow you would think of these two territories. Well I fought for years about getting [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] built right. Getting [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and the relief school back in the—they were both the relief school was just taken out of the plans in 2006–07 and [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] was pushed to phase 8 and I went to the council people and I went to the council meetings and I said you’re going to have a train wreck you know this you’re not even estimating the populations beginning to estimate the population on the west side. Do you just want these neighborhoods to kind of dissolve too? For some reason both of those got put back in. My Afro American friends on the east side were pissed at me at that meeting about how I controlled the agenda and they got nothing but we fought for it and they forgave me eventually. Immediately because we liked each other. So from that time when that got changed in 08 as Dec 2008 the district clearly I think it was the mayor that said give them their high schools because someone said that’s what they said they didn’t say who said it but it sounds like Mayor [NAME PROTECTED]. And he knows me he and I have talked I think we have a respectful relationship. So the district just dragged its feet did nothing for a whole year. But I think when we began asking questions I had gotten the councilman, who was the president of council at that time, my councilman was the president of the city council at that time, [NAME PROTECTED] to support this idea. He’s a state representative now. And Irish. Irish and Slovaks have a lot in common.

51:25

Kevin*: So I kept pushing finally the group got the district [inaudible] to come together. I think there might have been 3 or 4 different groups that would come together and collapse because it was low level people that they had that had their marching orders—I mean it was like the pawns in a chess game. And I particularly didn’t accept you know where they wanted to begin and how they wanted to define things which they never told us they were just acting on those orders and we just kept pushing back with how do we deal with the problem. Finally, the CEO after the third or fourth group collapsed called a meeting with people to get this thing straight you know with him in charge and appointed another committee with the people. All the time in that the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and the relief school were tied together but that recognizes the problem but it also prevented a solution. Something about the relief high school kept making it impossible, there wasn’t a site for it different sites were looked at there wasn’t movement in them. Finally, those of us in the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] neighborhood said let’s just move on [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] we’re just going to have to pick up the relief high school issue later. We did we spent a couple of years developing an idea and there was a nice form or document we have which you might want to see

Megan: I think Beatrice* already sent it to me.

Kevin*: That document yeah. So a lot of that—I submitted a written document to her and I think she incorporated a fair amount of that in the thinking there. She did it with things there that I wouldn’t have recommended. Like the three high school kind of thing they wanted from the beginning and I don’t know if that’s the best idea. Its fixed in their mind with the Portfolio model I think that’s part of the problem they got a script in their head and they can’t get it out. And the foundations unfortunately think [NAME PROTECTED] Has that script in her head which is wonderful because that’s their mantra too. And so it’s hard. Beatrice* is one of the few people that can see at times that it didn’t deal with certain things but she still wants it resolved by trying to adapt what it doesn’t do in a situation. And that’s the document in there. The argument moved to where over the last two years the reason that the relief high school doesn’t have a site is because some years ago the site that was purchased for the relief high school at [STREETS HIDDEN] Something happened and the state said the relief high school wasn’t needed. Likit-e-split the councilman there got that site from the district for [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. A school that was on another piece
of property right on the lakeshore he wanted for development. His brother in law was also the democratic senate governor or something too and democratic governor at the time and his chief economic adviser.

I think there was some foolery going on, I can’t prove it. So he assumes he got that site the schools are going to give him the site. People like myself kept saying you have an obligation to those kids and if that’s the only site you got then use that site. The kids deserve the site. We won that thing. But we were—this is the first time I will say that [THE CEO] is a little bit distressful around this because he already began thinking of using that site only tangentially for the relief of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. He’s building these, another gentrified school that would support economic development agenda of the developers in [Dionysia]. And I found out, maybe three weeks ago after about 6 weeks of having sent emails and giving me pieces of the answer I went out to [PLACE HIDDEN] where they do their retreat the board is going on a retreat 45 miles out towards [PLACE HIDDEN] which they can talk about the transformation plan in a public meeting where most people in [Dionysia] wouldn’t attend. I attend it. I was the only community representative that sat at the table with the writer from the [LOCAL NEWSPAPER]. But I talked to [THE CEO] before the meeting and I said [THE CEO] what’s the focus I said because the property issue is finally up to that point it was always if the councilman brought a better site in [THE CEO] would take the better site. So the site could have been on Lake Front it could have been down here any place if it was a better site. He was playing a game. He had already decided on that site and that he decided some years ago and he may even be as far back as, he was the academic chief back when the district removed the site removed the relief high school so I think he would have had some say. He took [City Neighborhood PROTECTED] kind of a working class neighborhood now, [City Neighborhoods PROTECTED] the four lakefront millennial gentrified neighborhoods risking a lot of money to bring in the right kind of people white professionals who are moving to transform the city. I said “[THE CEO] that was never brought up.” He blew up at me I mean irritated he says “Mr. Kevin* you’ve been to all those meetings; you know we were clear about this when we did our plan in May 4th, 2014”—well they weren’t clear about it. They never said anything. And he didn’t include that on the emails as part of the information because he knew I would be—you know, but that was not consistent because I had always talked about carry this thing as you’re going to have to be able to take some of those young people in that big catch-men area who had lived there before and make sure that they all then go to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. You got to have this new relief high school. Now Even if they take some percentage of them. If you make the kind of high school he wants, an enclave for the professional class it’s not going to happen. Now they’re saying that will relieve some of it, but it’s just going to make it worse. And here’s what I’m trying to say this is an example—4 hours later (laughs) of my conversation with you of how the reforms make things worse. What they’ve done there is continued the process by which those neighborhoods on the South of I-90 you know going up to 150th are being undermined those are going to become neighborhoods just like any other neighborhoods where the kids living there are going to be in those are going to have moved from those gentrified areas or town because they can’t live in any other and their neighborhoods are going to become undermined and they would not have the neighborhood support. All [THE CEO] sees is those neighborhoods aren’t sending as many kids and are thinning out. Well they’re thinning out because they’re not viable neighborhoods. His plan is going to make that worse. Contribute to the problem. The plans that he has will continue the segregation. There will be successes but they’ll be primarily successes for those that have already and only secondary for the successes for the majority of kids. But we’ll remember this as a success 20 years from now when we’re trying to deal with why all of these poor Afro Americans or Hispanic kids not learning as well? We had that reform are they that dumb? Blaming the victim. He doesn’t see it. Because he’s so convinced. Actually he’s a young man, first time he’s been had a job like this he’s doing a damn good job except that he doesn’t—I think he’s a math teacher, trust the numbers, but he doesn’t realize how you define the box that the numbers come out of is what’s important. I don’t have any skill with the numbers but I know I can argue about that box and I can tell you once you get the box defined, the numbers don’t mean anything anymore.

Megan: So the relief school turned out to be the area where [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] is working on and I have talked to somebody from the [Dionysia’s] partnership who was working on that.

Kevin*: Who’s that?
Megan: Tina*

Kevin*: Well the fact of the matter is that Tina* she’s bright, I was on the my councilman who was the city council president appointed me to the committee that looks at those people applying for the school board and they sorted a group of people and gave a group of names to the Mayor for his selection to interview and Tina*’s on that so. And she plays the same kind of —I mean she’s bright, she’s charming but she plays the same kind of power games on that. One meeting saying X and another meeting saying Y because the argument it’s not a consistent principle. Its whatever argument wins the short term. The short term thinking of success.

Megan: And that’s what you’re saying with the business aspect of thought isn’t really helping these communities, it’s like an ad campaign?

Kevin*: Yup.

Megan: To make it look pretty, this is what we’re doing.

Kevin*: Yeah that’s considered involvement. Interesting when [NAME PROTECTED] left I went to the community meeting in our neighborhood, my neighborhood where the board president was leading it, he’s a bright man but also caught into the established world in his own little way, looking at what does the community want in a new superintendent? Well I had read enough in the paper and talking to people I know people...what the recent? Decided already is [NAME PROTECTED] because she wasn’t good at community and public relations. What public relations? So whenever I or others would give an example of community involvement he would say you mean public relations? No Mr. [NAME PROTECTED] public relations is not community involvement. It was in his mind. If you manipulate and manage the public that’s the role in business it means, we get all these scams and things. But we got to be where and how we spend the money. In terms of schools it’s something else. There’re kids involved and there’s some responsibility broader than just good profit.

Megan: And so just to clarify those kids, those Hispanic kids and the minorities they’re from [City Neighborhood PROTECTED] and again highly gentrified area they’re being pushed to what location again?

Kevin*: Those kids, I mean as those places become gentrified the property value goes up and

Megan: yeah and they’re going to move out.

Kevin*: And this whole there’s a couple good histories of [Dionysia] that you could look at if you want to look at some more stuff.

(I talk about waiting on the neighborhood database and he tells me of some recent books that focus on policy issues and he thinks I should read them and talks about some blogs I should look into)

[1:07:36]

Kevin*: If you just got those blogs coming in through your email every day you would find just glancing through them you would find something about these issues about how the policies that are driving these reforms that the school district is under are based on assumptions that are very narrow, very much in the interest of money and ideas that are—it was like Obama getting sold on the-Obama was a young man got in there and wasn’t in control of his future. And I think the community organizing approaches that he used are unfortunately not that solid they organized kind of on issue models that really depend on the getting power from the powerful and I think those models don’t hold the people together in terms of or for sustained development of how they can assess issues and how they can work together and how they move forward as a people rather than as part of the army that a particular interest group wants them. Tina*’s a good example. One of her tasks is to set up all these little clubs around the city. That have a [Dionysia] partnership agenda. The [Dionysia] Partnership you know is just the Chamber of Commerce. Chamber of commerce politics are very much how do we control the community. If you ever want to get deeper into this—I
went to college all too long, during the Vietnam war I stayed a little bit extra in college because I didn’t want to go to the Vietnam war. A couple of years afterwards after Vietnam disappeared and stuff, one of the insights during the Vietnam war was the bankruptcy and the exploitative nature of corporations on display. And honestly one morning I wake up and say where all this—3 is or 4 years later, where’s all this business stuff coming from? In the airways, in the newspapers about how great how wonderful, everybody’s going to business school—businesses just—Well it was a campaign that was orchestrated.

(he says I should read this article by the New York times and that he could email to me from 3 years ago about how wall street occupied America. He talks about this article for a bit)

1:11:40: All the things that Tina*—so I knew her personally from that, I also knew [NAME PROTECTED] when he first came to town because of some priest I worked with [NAME PROTECTED] an activist aside he just retired I went to talk to him about something and he couldn’t help me but I could help him priests are that way, so he put me on a committee it was called the near west theater one of the members of that theater was a man that I had other meetings with he was [NAME PROTECTED] he was the head of the [NAME PROTECTED] foundation his wife is very powerful lawyer and a liberal leader with democratic politics. [City Neighborhood PROTECTED], toward that stretch. Even though their principles, it’s kind of like the Democratic Party the Liberals democrats’ policies, you can tell between the democrats and republicans in congress anymore and these issues don’t get out which depend on the same corrupted society. But here’s what I want to say, what they do what Tina* does is set up these little interest groups up so when you start talking about community involvement…are you done with me yet you think (he jokes).

(We continue with a side conversation)

1:14:18

Kevin*: I said you know if you start talking about community organizing. Involvement. What’re gonna get here, 99% of what you would here, is events or initiatives that have sponsors and so the sponsors are organizing around their interests or how they might turn this event into their interest. Now the district is one and sometimes their directly involved in the organizing, in the involvement issue the parent university or the parent school councils whatever they’re called. Sometimes they’re doing it with partners like United Way or the CDCs or sometimes they’re contracts, contracting to a consultant or an organization to do a piece of work for them those always come under the genre that have the fallacy of the organizational models, scripts, meeting the community and trying to get community into those scripts and they get the community into the interest of the sponsor, eventually. [1:15:45] The union, another interest group they also have direct organizing involvement called community involvement, they have partners, and they have contracts. So the last two or three times there’s been a community initiative. Both of those dollars went back to the union giving the dollars to people in Washington and New York to be the organizations to organize parents around what it turns out really to see how important the unions agenda is and so that’s organizing. Involvement. [1:16:33]. So you can get into like the [FOUNDATION NAME PROTECTED] Partnership is a sponsor and they sponsor a lot, put the money out there and you know do the same thing. So you have the warehouse district residence association they got money, the influence you got the young [Dionysia] professionals. This group that group, the foundation money got [Dionysia UNIVERSITY] with the district, uh what do you call it, the uh [NAME PROTECTED] hospitals...well they call it the college district now it was called the facing [NAME PROTECTED] district because it represents more than the college but that association. By the way I know some of the professionals in these organizations too you know that I used to run into all the time. So—

Megan: This really breaks up the neighborhoods again, right?

Kevin*: All these come and they come in with their agendas and then end up breaking up neighborhoods and then really they twist always the...they have to produce something and often they’re good things but not always and they’re caught in that. When I was at the transformation alliance, they talk about community all the time, when they talk about community it’s the corporations the subset of corporations. The public private partnership how the corporations control the mayor or the councils. Which they do, you know? The [CITY] plan—I’ve heard this asked
directly to [THE CEO] at this meeting that I—you know—this public meeting that was out in the country a couple counties away—would the district be as committed to the Portfolio model if it wasn’t the model that the corporations were pushing now he didn’t answer me, of course he said no. And then he listed all the reasons for why he personally thinks this is a good model the fact of the matter is, everybody I thought too that were engaged in those conversations or had direct access to people said [NAME PROTECTED] and the corporations told the mayor this is the reform plan we want. Get on board with it or what we’ll do is make sure the district goes broke and the state will take over and we’ll get the governor to do what we want him to do. Something like that. [1:20:06]. Now this was at the time [THE CEO] was being hired. I don’t think that [THE CEO], maybe he convinced himself that this was the model he would have chosen in mid-air or was as good as any other, I don’t know his thought process. But that’s the conversation. So no it was not khum-ba-ya sort of coming together it was we got to make a decision because we’re the leaders and this is what we want because we got the power and the mayor is...I’ve talked to the mayor, I’ve had 3 one hour meetings or two hour meetings with [THE CEO], I’ve talked to the mayor about these things. I’ve talked to the union; they’re listening at the table. I’ve talked to other people okay. I’m pretty a direct guy and so they just talk...I went to the meeting a couple of years ago about [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and I said you guys have no data and 3 or 4 of the members of the board said Mr. [THE CEO] you got to listen to what Mr. Kevin* said. And he got some data and the data began showing some cracks in the portfolio model or some cracks in the thinking about how to do things. And he’s man enough to say oh, acknowledges them but you know it’s not where he himself naturally goes. There was a study done in March, the IFF study, if you’re interested in community, get a copy of that and look at it. It can give you some demographic information and other information, its worth—it’ll put you to sleep at night if driving to [Dionysia] and getting lost doesn’t (laughs). Kevin*: When I read that I wrote something. If you write me and say Kevin* give me your commentary on that I can give it to you, but um my commentary was what I saw the IFF study saying was we got 9,000 quality seats occupied now, people making choices, we have 29,000 left to be, to get to turn from non-quality seats to quality seats, that’s our challenge. Now I look at this and I say I think you got 9,000 kids that represent statistically different population than the 29,000 you have left. I’ve raised that question a number of times and they say oh no no no we don’t. I’ve raised it about [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED, school is really well known in the area as one of the best elementary schools] those are the same kids as our district. Read the statistics, that’s all. Even with the CEO saying give Mr. Kevin* the statistics, it took me 10 weeks to get them. Resistance, resistance. 25% of the kids are not even in the district, they come from families outside the district. 45%. The division between whites and blacks are not consistent with the district. I wrote at the time that you have different populations, I wrote [THE CEO] you’re a numbers guy find out what the difference is, he doesn’t want to find out because it undermines the portfolio plan. It would tell him these kids are different and what I’m doing over here and all the money has gone into the portfolios fronts, the boutique stores none of the money is doing, they say doing the same thing as the investments, God I hope it is. I don’t see any of those schools that are standing out like we got an answer to, we got to help out upper middle class kids to help them get stemmed and you know this than that. But no answer to the question with these kids living in rotten neighborhoods with nothing but despair around them and have to fight for themselves and have to get a gun just to live. How do we get those kids in schools, where they can learn to their mental capability? (Indistinguishable sound) We can’t unless we understand them. I don’t see us have a school that fits that model. We should have started there. We should have started there. 1:25:38

1:25:43

Kevin*: At the parent transformational alliance two times—this is why I myself and people like [NAMES PROTECTED] are a African American couple and they’ve been doing this kind of stuff for 40 years you might want to talk to them. —1:26:00

(he talks about them.)

1:26:30
Kevin*: I was at a meeting where one of the district partners [CITY UNIVERSITY] and [PLACE PROTECTED] come in both are partners helping the district out by bringing in a guy named [NAME PROTECTED]. You may want to talk to [NAME PROTECTED] he’s in the education department at [CITY] State University. I do have his phone number and stuff.

(he talks about the educator’s work and some other things not pertaining to interview like a guy asks us for money for gas)

1:28:25

Kevin*: So I ask him I said here’s the—just the story I told you—and at first I said it’s not just going to be Afro American or non Afro American it’s going to be variables a little bit below that you’re going to see the difference in maybe other activities maybe in the home, times people moved you see, because of some of the work’s he’s done he knows where some of the data is. They got a big data department in that district hidden you can’t get to it. (Indistinguishable sound). So I talked to [THE CEO] after that meeting and I said [THE CEO] would you talk to him and see. He said sure. I said I’ll put this in writing send it to you him hopefully you can get together, it never happened. Never happened. 1:29:25

Kevin*: And also when I went to that retreat one of the long time board members raised the questions [THE CEO] how do we know when we’re doing right or not?

Megan: What did he say?

Kevin*: He brought out a matrix. We’ll call it the portfolio mindset. Get in my box and we’ll tell you when we’re doing right. So does that make life easier for you and your project? (laughs)

(we talk about my project off topic to interview)

1:32:29

Kevin*: I was at a training session; with she was very active at Gestalt when I was going for it. IF I try to do a change with people—She’s talking about something she did in New York with people coming from the same neighborhoods I couldn’t do it. Really what it is is many of the people that want to make these changes have a pushing judgement about working class, Afro Americans, Catholics, Baptists, whatever, and non-professionals and have not have the techniques that can get around them because it makes it much more complicated.

—1:33:18

(we talk and the rest of the conversation is unrelated to interview)

Interview ends.
Now is our time for public participation. We have up to 40 minutes for this process. I see that there's a lot of new attendees, which is great. Just so that you understand how the process works, I will call the first person's name, to the podium. I'm also going to call the second person, so that can kind of ready when you come up to speak. We do have up to three minutes to speak. There is a timer clock that's on there that will help you to remind you. Once it gets down to 10 seconds you should conclude your remarks. If everyone could please keep to their three minutes time, we do have a lot of speakers. If someone does go over, it may mean the last people may not have an opportunity to speak. We do want to hear from all of you.

I'm going to start with [NAME PROTECTED] and then followed by [NAME PROTECTED].

Community Group  Thank you CEO [NAME PROTECTED] and school board members, once again, for this great opportunity. We love you. know that [FOUNDATION NAME PROTECTED] continues to salute you for your commitment to the success of [THE CITY'S]’s public school children. Please know, also that [FOUNDATION NAME PROTECTED] loves you and will continue to support your love and success of [Dionysia]’s children. To CEO [NAME PROTECTED], we want you to know that we have been tracking your success as CEO of the [Dionysia] public schools since 2010. With much joy, we now present you with this beautiful scrapbook of some of your many accomplishments, achieved within the district under your leadership as CEO.

Community Group  Please be advised that the [inaudible 00:24:41] is a motivation that strives to [inaudible 00:24:45] from poverty. They are to lead the folks [inaudible 00:24:48] who strive to do so constructively. Note that we salute you the board and CEO, the administrators, the school board and principals, assistant principals, parents, teachers, [inaudible] other support staff, and other agents of change that remain on task to the sense of proper regard sacrifice, dedication, [inaudible 00:25:15], resilience, moral and shared responsibility to empower our children to be the best that they can be on this day. Thank you.

Community Group  We have much, much, much, much love, joy, and appreciation from the awesome now 20th-year [NAME PROTECTED] Foundation of [Dionysia], Ohio. We love you. Mwah.

Female:  Thank you all. After Miss [NAME PROTECTED], we'll have [NAME PROTECTED]

Parent  Good evening, my name is [NAME PROTECTED]. I'm here on behalf of my daughter [NAME PROTECTED]. [NAME PROTECTED], has been going to SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] since she's a freshman. The freshman year wasn't her best year. I've received calls from a teacher from the principal because of her behavior and she wasn't too good in her academics. But toward the end of the school year, she starts to get on track. The teachers at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] were genuinely worried about my daughter. They knew she had potential in her to be better. They worked with her and helped her out. She went from Bs and Cs to straight As. She went from a sixth-grade reading level to an eleventh-grade reading level.

Those same teachers that helped her see her in the hallways now. And They greet her, they tell her how proud they are to see how much she improved since her freshman year. ---She tells us how much she adores her teachers and her coaches at her school. Each and every day, my daughter makes me proud for the young woman she’s become. She’s been on track since freshman year, and she’s created a strong bond with one of her teammates in being involved in her school, had built her student pride. She even encourages others to
join her team. I'd love to tell my daughter's story, but I didn't believe her story would be possible in a small school setting. Without very strong sports team and experienced teachers, [STUDENT NAME PROTECTED] could have lost motivation and fell through the cracks.

When I look up information about small schools, I found that many of the teachers in small schools are not qualified. They are hired because they are underpaid. They don't have the experience or professional training to deal with difficult students, like my daughter once was. As a taxpayer, I believe the district needs to understand that education is more than data and money. Education is a way for students to get out. Because of the education at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], my daughter will not be a statistic. I wish every kid in [Dionysia] could attend [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. I believe every kid in [Dionysia] deserves an opportunity to attend a traditional high school. [Dionysia] kids deserve better than under-educated offered in small schools. Please consider this issue before converting a great school into an experiment.

Female: Thank you. Miss [NAME PROTECTED] is next, followed by [NAME PROTECTED].

STUDENT

Good evening Mr. [CEO] and the school board. My name is [NAME PROTECTED]. I'm a junior at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. As you already know, a great deal of students are very upset and worried about the future of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] high school. One of the biggest [inaudible 00:29:05] is, "Why? Why waste all this money on turning [SCHOOL NAME] into a small schools instead of just putting it directly into the traditional high school we have now?" This money could actually help us and really give us more opportunities rather than to separate us.

[inaudible 00:29:20] said that the changes in [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] will create [a] new identity [inaudible 00:29:24]. We do not want a new identity. [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] has history, pride and hundreds of graduates that support our cause to protect our school from becoming a big experiment. Once you separate into small schools, [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] [the] system will fall apart. It will be hard to keep sports teams strong and programs in all different schools get out at different times. They won't get enough money to provide all the different elective programs.

The [inaudible 00:29:45] said that only 38% of students at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] go on to go on to college. This district said that small schools will prepare for college, but college is not structured like that. Small schools are so narrow. In college it's all about broadening your horizons. How can we do well by our students prepare for college when kids are in small schools that don't provide all opportunities we need to be ready. This whole push for small schools is ironic, because it is the opposite of what we actually need to for higher learning.

A few students, myself included took it upon ourselves to do our own data and to keep track of students and what programs, electives, and other activities they'd like to see at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. We were so happy to see how many students wanted to see their input in our [inaudible] Over 500 students filled out the [inaudible] feedback or [inaudible 00:30:26] One what they like about [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and 2 what they would like to see [inaudible] at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. Since this administration loves data, I have some populations for you. When asked what they love about [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] 102 students said that they loved their [inaudible] classes, 27 said they loved that it is a traditional high school, 33 said they loved their friends there. 51 said they loved the diversity. 26 said they loved our school spirit. 45 said they loved club and after-school programs. 113 said they love our sports programs. And finally,
127 students said they loved our teachers. When asked what they would like to see at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], 25 said they'd like to see more sports teams and more regular [inaudible 00:31:02]. 68 said they'd like to see more elective choices. 74 said they'd like to see more school activity. 49 said they'd like to see more technology and 20 said more technology courses. 18 said more career prep schools and 40 said more AP and honors classes. 40 of the students said more field trips and pep rally. Finally, 159 students said they just want [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] to take the traditional [inaudible].

Mr. [CEO] we do not need you to ask some company to tell us what our school needs. You don't need to pay 1,000s of dollars for a campaign to get us to school. We know what motivates us to get to school. Just ask a student, because we're your most valuable and priceless resource. Plus, you could save everyone a lot of money. So I'm asking you to come to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and see everything positive and important we have to say. We wouldn't be here today if we didn't care about our school, our teachers and our education. Thank you.

Female: Thank you. Can we get a copy of those remarks?

Male: Thank you very much.

Female: Mr. [NAME PROTECTED], would you come forward? Followed by [NAME PROTECTED]

STUDENT Hi guys, I'm an 11th-grader from [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] High School and also attend [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED, ACADEMY SCHOOL]. I wouldn't have been able to attend [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] if it wasn't for my great teachers. They helped build my skills up in writing, reading. I went from seventh-grade reading level to almost a 12th-grade reading level. I think small schools are not going to be a good idea for us, because we're united as a school. I've talked to students from [SCHOOL NAMES PROTECTED] and they're divided. Often they can't even go down certain stairwells because it's not considered their school. I just would say, "Can we invest the money into [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and fix what we're not strong at?"

Female: Thank you. Next is [NAME PROTECTED] and followed by is [NAME PROTECTED], I'm not going to try the last name.

Male: [NAME PROTECTED]

Female: Thank you.

Hello.

Female: Hello.

STUDENT I'm here today because my voice matters. My belief that my voice matters is not something I just came up with on my own. I believe it was because of what I was taught it at [NAME PROTECTED] in a curriculum that was started by all of you. The thing for 9th grade [inaudible 00:33:41] is all about finding your voice. In government I was taught about democracy and my rights as a citizen. In all of my classes I've been pushing the question, the research, to speak my mind. When I first found that [THE SCHOOL DISTRICT] wanted to change [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], I felt that I was already in power from our school to use my voice.
What I've learned is that the district does not care about our voices. They do not value what we have to say or what we need to be successful. If they would have asked me about our school before they even got the grant. In the [CITY] Plan you promised to involve parents, students, and community and create a new school model, but that was a lie. There was nothing democratic about a bunch of overpaid people from downtown hand-selected people who were just going to say what’s told to them. That’s public opinion ... That’s not public opinion, that’s just your opinion. It seems like [THE CITY’S] plan is just long fancy document to cover up the real plan with more money and good [inaudible 00:34:37] and to pay outside people that think our school is crummy.

I want to know how [THE SCHOOL DISTRICT] can be considered a public school district when none of the board members are even elected. You teach and preach importance to the students that are ready to participate in society, but the minute [inaudible 00:34:54] it’s just dictatorship. We are the ones being democratic. We are the ones that went out and got voter feedback. We are the ones that got petitions signed door-to-door and on social media. We are the ones who peacefully carried out our constitutional right to protest. Now you’re telling us that all we did, doesn’t matter?

Think about the message you’re sending to hundreds of students. If you do choose to ignore us in our input for this new school, if you choose to ignore all the kids who are trying to be heard, then you’re going to fail us. You’re teaching us not to trust leadership. You’re teaching us that we are better sided [inaudible 00:35:27]. What’s the point of us voting in future elections when our own teachers taught us that our vote and voices it doesn’t matter?

How do you think hundreds of students at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] feel knowing the people who were supposed to empower them are just trying to silence them? I asked everyone in charge, "Do you even remember why you first got into education?” Remember that this is about the kids and their real success. This is not about money, and it is not about data. Data is just numbers. Data is not living, breathing, teenagers fighting for what they believe in. Thank you.

TEACHER

Good evening everybody. My name is [NAME IS PROTECTED] [inaudible 00:36:06]. I teach college over here at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] High School. In the middle of October, we were informed by the representative [inaudible 00:36:16] Foundation of New York and [inaudible 00:36:18] that a new school will be added to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] high school and by the year of 2021, [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] will be two nine through 12 schools. We also have been informed that [inaudible 00:36:30] means that [inaudible 00:36:31], the design team will be so on and et cetera. They both told us that, "[SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] will be the replaced by quality schools," insinuating that we are not quality.

When the district find out our students will protest that decision, people were sent to talk to our students, during instructional time, about the benefits of a small schools, how good it would be for the students and community. This action was a violation of CVA article 10, section nine, page 44, classroom integrity. I made them aware of the violation, but they proceeded anyway. Our students asked many questions and made us proud of how intelligent those questions were. Unfortunately, they hear no answers, just general phrases about some unnamed research, and statements like, "We hope and we think, it would be very good for you students." Lack of sufficient information made students very upset.
We were told that, "Community chairs are well aware about the changes for [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]." [inaudible 00:37:34] about the board on October 20th during the community board meeting. He did not answer to us. He said call me. Our parents respond when they see students protesting. They did not know what is happening. The student representatives asked the parents emphasis on the day of the protest. [inaudible 00:37:58] did not even protect our parents. On October 15, [inaudible 00:38:02] promised the data regarding the decision and the data that proves the benefits of small schools and the grand narrative. She said, "The process is completely transparent and all information pertaining to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] change will be sent to us." To this day, nothing was provided as promised.

We are aware of those benefits of newly changed SCHOOL NAMES PROTECTED We are receiving students from [ONE OF THOSE SCHOOLS] high school who decided to come to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] to experience the comprehensive high school and escape the chaos of two small schools.

We have a problem with the members of the design advisory team. They are only two teachers on advisory team and no administrators. The other people are from the hospitals, clergy, from [Dionysia] Metro Parks et cetera. When we were including open eight branches, I do not remember any teachers who were invited. In fact, you would not ask a teacher or a member of the board for their advice on surgery. That would be dangerous.

Why are our schools asking for potential advice from businesses and from clergy and from hospital? It's foolish. It's dangerous, not to mention dis-respectful. A car mechanic doesn't ask a baker for advice on how to fix a car, because it makes no sense. It also makes no sense for teacher to ask anybody outside the teaching profession for professional advice. If non-education professionals are making decision on our education system, then it will build these [inaudible 00:39:42]. Teachers should be included in vast majority in making input. We are not afraid of change; We just do not want to change without any proof it will work, and we need to see the reason for the change. Right now we see no reason and we see no proof.

The big question for us is, "Why [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] cannot continue to be less-sized comprehensive high school?" We are not a failing school, as you try to portray us. We show improvement in attendance up 2% from the beginning of the year. We increased NWEA scores in math and reading by 8% and 7% respectively. We have the best ACT scores in the district. We have ACE, robotic, and math teams bringing first places. We have the best ROTC in the district. We offer AP classes in English and math. We added college algebra class this year. We have over world renowned designer, [NAME PROTECTED] [inaudible 00:40:39], teaching our art class.

[inaudible 00:40:45] in the district are growing at 38% out-goers. We change every year in different ways, modifying our schedule, adding MORE AP courses, giving students more choices than they have for your course [inaudible 00:40:57]. Researching the highly-qualified status of our teachers to properly assigned subjects, et cetera. We do those changes with no fear of change, just to accommodate our students.

What does the district do to accommodate the other 62%? It looks to us as if you want to narrow our student choices by closing comprehensive high school and open small narrow-oriented schools. With so many questions we have, you absolutely can see, that nothing is transparent, and you do not have a sufficient data to prove that we are not going to school. As well as you do not have sufficient data that the program you decided to implement on [Dionysia’s] students is working and proven success.
Well, some have been to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] to tell our students about the change, he asked me, "What proof do I have that small schools will not work?" I respond to him that, "The question asked the wrong way. It should be, 'What proof do you have that it is working?' since you came to us with the change, not the way around. We still have the question we need an answer.

Female:

Next we have [inaudible 00:42:21], followed by the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] Parents.

COMMUNITY MEMBER

I need the mic, so I'm hoping if you can understand and hear. I also am part of the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] coalition. I'd like to start with a quote by Peter Senge, "People don't resist change, people resist being changed." This is why I've come before you. The Rhode's community asked to make changes years ago. When we petitioned you, Mr. [CEO], regarding conditions and achievement in our building. We were ignored then, but yet this year we were told from the administration that we will be forced into small schools on a model from the [NAME PROTECTED] Foundation. Change must come from within to be successful.

Male:

And from the bottom up.

The changes and the insincere process of this change will never be successful within the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] community, just as the Bill Gates model of small schools was not successful years ago.

[SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] is a sought-after school because it is a comprehensive high school, just like all of the highest-rated suburban schools. [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] gives students a chance to explore many pathways without being stopped [inaudible 00:43:42]. Students can make multiple choices in multiple areas, leading to a well-rounded student who will be successful, productive member of our community. Lying to students and the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] community builds a sense of mistrust. These changes will never be successful unless all groups of stakeholders are part of the change process. When [NAME PROTECTED] came to speak to students, students spoke of the unwillingness to address their concerns. When the community has not been told of the change or even asked if this change would be appropriate, there will be guaranteed failure. When students are told they will be part of the design team, but yet the design team was chosen by people other than the stakeholders, there cannot be success. The [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] community is all for appropriate change but not forced changed from someone that says that data, which by the way, can often be manipulated, says that a certain style will work.

The [Dionysia] transformation plan did not say that all schools must follow a small school mode and this is a disservice to the entire district to force this change. Please, please listen to our students, listen to our families, listen to the teachers before subjecting the stakeholders to yet another program that hinders our success and the success of our students. Remember, people don't resist change, we resist being changed. Thank you.

Female:

Thank you. The next speech is [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] Parents followed by [NAMES PROTECTED]

That's how they signed up. I don't have a name on the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] Parents.

PARENTS

I'm here on behalf of the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. Since the school of arts has generally re-opened, the school of arts has become a shamble. The school is going down,
the arts department used to be one of the top art departments. We used to have an excellent dance department. We have not have a dance selection in the last two and a half months. We don't know what's going to be done about the school of art's department, but we did have questions on ... We used to have like an hour and a half of art department where they took art. They took us down to like 50 minutes or 45 to 50 minutes. Our students are being penalized.

Our students are not here today because we need our parents of our dance department and our students are at outside training for the dance department, because we still have students going down and feeling the way we feel about the dance department because the dance department always had us so excited, and giving shows, and we haven't had any shows. The whole department is going down right now. Our main concern is, "What's going to be done about the art department?" And giving us the teacher. Thank you.

Female: Thank you.

Parents Rep: We the parents of the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] are afraid that we're going to lose students in the school because of the fact that a lot of our students are there because of the dance department. And We don't want to see them leave. We want them to be compensated because that's why a lot of them came, and they came from very far away, just to be in the dance department. We have not had a director as [NAME PROTECTED] said. The kids are becoming very fidgety, bored, and causing problems between themselves. And This concerns us as parents, because we want our children to have the best that they can have. And A lot of these children are there because they want a career in dance, and they're not getting teachers. They're teaching themselves, and that's not what [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] is supposed to be about.

STUDENT I'm [NAME PROTECTED]

Female: Sorry, wait one minute.

STUDENT Okay, I'm [inaudible 00:48:30] [NAME PROTECTED]. I'm a graduating senior of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. Unlike them, I am a vocal major. As a graduating senior, I'm in the nice new building, but to me that's all that is. To me, I've gone to the school since the fifth grade. We aren't discouraged when it comes to change. We easily adapt to change, but with this new administration, all of it is like they said, we get penalized a lot. We have gotten a lot of changes without any explanation.

There are so many people in charge at our school that I don't even know who to go to with my concerns. I have a head of school, I have a dean of arts, I have the dean of academics, I have the director of [crosstalk 00:49:19] who says that we are students. Student engagement. I don't know who to go to with my concern, and as a student I have [inaudible] at the academy. It's not as if I don't care about my education, but it seems as if the student part of education is lacking, not only at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] but apparently at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]

It seems as if all we care about are donors because we've had so many shows honoring certain people, we don't honor our students or our teachers any more. It seems as if no one cares about us or how we feel as students. Like they said, I have a lot of friends and even family members that are in the dance department, and even students in other majors, who are considering even leaving the school because the school doesn't have the soul that we once had any more.
The students, we don’t care about a new building, we mainly care about our art and getting our education. It seems as if the soul is gone from our school. We would much rather be back at the building where we had rats and roaches. Immediately when I walk in there’s no life to my school and it hurts so, considering I’ve been going there for a long time, almost a decade of my life, I've put into this school and it seems as if all we get are answers that are from a book and nothing from the heart. It seems as if all they want are robots to be in this school. We cannot express ourselves artistically. If for an artist, myself, that is very restricting and it's very insulting. It’s like a slap in the face to me.

I would just like to know what you guys are going to do about our administration. It seems as if nobody, as far as our administration, they haven't even introduced themselves to us. We don't really know what they do, what they are here, or hear what their responsibilities, which is why I my concern. Which is why I stand before you today, to see if you guys are going to actually do something about the administration at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] so the students can be happier there.

Of course, I don't need to introduce myself, I am the SPO President of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. We stood before you and asked you not to do this last year. I congratulate [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] High School for what they are doing. I'm not sure that they're going to pay attention to what you've asked them, but it is a complete and utter shambles over at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]

We have at least three-quarters of a million dollars in leadership over there and nobody knows what they are doing. We have no sense of family. We have a new building. We have hurting parents, afraid, angry teachers and students. Everything that you thought it was, it's not.

There is an appointment needed for everything. I am the student-parent organization president and I have to make an appointment to see the head of school. What is the problem with this? Our students are not happy. The major classes were decreased by 20 minutes. The school-day was extended.

There's no sense of family. If you remember at the ribbon cutting ceremony, that even the parents spoke of how important the sense of family was to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], but the board and everybody else keeps ignoring this. There have been 14 fights this, not even 90 days into it. 14 fights. We had to force the administration to do a meet and greet with the parents. Are you going to keep ignoring us? Are we going to have to go to the media, just like [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] did? We are prepared to do it. We are tired. We are tired of you not listening. We are tired.

You brought before us a Mitchell quorum report. The Mitchell quorum report said a lot of things. A lot of people are following a lot of things of the Mitchell quorum report. One thing that the Mitchell quorum report said on page 38 was that, "The sense of family was not to be lost from [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]." That is what puts the life into the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. It is a school with arts. Now it is barely that.

The kids are petitioning for the old principal to come back. You’ve replaced two people. You now have five people and Nobody can get anything done. There is no respect. Nobody is listening to us. What do we have to do to get the attention of this board? We are sick and tired of being sick and tired. I'm sick and tired of this format. I'm tired of coming before you. I mean, honest, this has gotten old. You're changing school and it's affecting everything except the education and the productivity of our children. We are not seeing the heartfelt changes that we need to.
How can you be the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED, it is an art school]and be 90 days in and not have a major performance? They no longer even have arts Friday at the school. If I ask one more administrator what you are doing, and they tell me, "I don't know. It has not been defined yet." Three-quarters of a million dollars in administration and the most that they do are watch the kids, during lunchtime, tell them what they can't do. Notice what I said, can't do. Dean of arts insulting, condescending, dismissive to parents and students. Is that what we're supposed to put up with? Is that the excellence that this board and this administration went out and hired for our children?

We had two phenomenal people who ran that school and helped those kids, encouraged them to be what they are. Just because the people who are not here, those who are alumni, are not saying ... Like [NAME PROTECTED], an alumni, 14 years with the Lion King. [NAME PROTECTED], he is an R&B music artist. We have so many Julliard graduates and different entities all over this world. We were not a failing school. Keep going [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] [crosstalk 00:56:10]. We were not a failing school, but we're about to be now. It's simply because the children are discouraged. The parents are discouraged.

Mr. [CEO], I want to say thank you. I do want to say thank you, for not allowing our seventh graders to go up there, because it is a mess. That is what it is known as on social media. A hot blankety, blank mess. It is now known as the school not to go to. Kudos to Miss [NAME PROTECTED] down there at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] since you disassociated the lower campus from the upper campus. Shout out to.

RECORDING CUT OUT DUE TO MALFUNCTION.
Moderator: I skipped our CEO’s report, but we’ll go with public participation and then we’ll go back to ... We’re going to start with [NAME PROTECTED], and then what I would ask is I’m going to call the first person and then I’m going to call the second person, and if the second person could just come and sit in one of the reserved seats up front. So followed by [NAME PROTECTED] will be [NAME PROTECTED]

TEACHER’S UNION REP. Good evening.

Female: Good evening.

TEACHER’S UNION REP. I am [NAME PROTECTED], and I am the first vice president of the [Dionysia’s] Teachers Union and a proud fourth grade teacher at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. The message that I bring to you on behalf of the members of the [Dionysia’s] Teachers Union is simple. We want the district to acknowledge the real issues and concerns that members face every day and know that these issues can be resolved. We want the district to walk back to the table and have real discussions on how to improve learning and working conditions for everyone.

Also, let me be clear about this. I am the [Dionysia’s] Teachers Union. [NAME PROTECTED, president of the union] is the [Dionysia’s] Teachers union. These brothers and sisters are the [Dionysia’s] Teachers Union. All of our teachers, paraprofessionals, nurses, speech language pathologists, therapists, psychologists, and sign language interpreters are the [Dionysia’s] Teachers Union.

We are all here, we are all listening to you, and we are bringing our collective voice to you. Do not build a wall between yourselves and these educators. Do not let the [CITY] Plan be the wall between you and these teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers.

They are in the schools working with our students each and every day. The [Dionysia] schools are good schools. The graduation rate in [Dionysia] is higher than it has ever been before, and it continues to go up. The number of third-graders that are meeting the requirements under the third grade guarantee in order to pass to fourth grade was over 86% last year, and if you look at the data from the beginning of the year to the end. It’s very impressive.

Of course, none of this is possible without the work of the paraprofessionals who work one on one with students [inaudible 00:12:30]. It is the nurse, the OT, the PT, the speech
language pathologist, the sign language interpreters who keep kids healthy and give children the help they need to make their achievements possible.

It is the teacher who inspired the learning and the psychologist along with the teacher who make changes to the educational plans and work with parents. None of these achievements are possible without these people. Our preschool classrooms continue to achieve five-star ratings, no mistake, and our career and technical schools are changing to prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow. Enrollment is growing in the district, and more and more families are recognizing that our schools are the best choice for their children. These people make it happen.

If you know what has happened to the schools, they know what they need to make things better. Hear them, hear us, meet us, listen to us, talk to us. These ladies and gentlemen are the protectors of their profession. They are the protectors of the classroom where their students learn. They are the protectors of the school buildings where they keep the children healthy, safe, and engaged. Do not build a wall between yourselves and these professionals. Too much is at stake. I am [NAME PROTECTED]. I am the [TEACHER’S UNION]. We are all the [TEACHER’S UNION].

Moderator: After [inaudible 00:14:20] will be [NAME PROTECTED], and I apologize, I can’t read your last name. [NAME PROTECTED] from [inaudible 00:14:25].

TEACHER [NAME PROTECTED]

TEACHER’S UNION REP Good evening, ladies and gentlemen of the board, fellow union members, students, parents, community members, and [THE SCHOOL DISTRICT] administration and staff. My name is [NAME PROTECTED]. I am a proud veteran American studies teacher at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], and I am also the proud director of negotiations for the [Dionysia ’S] Teachers Union.

I am here tonight, board members, to urge you to tell CEO [NAME PROTECTED] to return with his team back to the negotiations table in order to face the serious issues confronting our schools and to leave this district. I am also here to tell you and our community what CEO [NAME PROTECTED] and his team walked away from. You see, the members of the [TEACHER’S UNION] know that while we have worked diligently with our students and shown remarkable improvement over the last three years, our work is far from over. Our schools still need considerable work to improve learning and working conditions, improvements that will make our schools places where our teachers, paraprofessionals, related service providers, and other educators want to be every day, where our students are excited to come and learn every day, and where our parents are confident every day that they have made the very best choice in a school to send their children.
We are not content to stick with the status quo. We know that our kids, our parents, and our community deserve better. A week ago CEO [NAME PROTECTED] and his team walked away from a number of proposed solutions to the pervasive issues we as the professionals who are in the classroom know we need to tackle. So What did he walk away from? He walked away from proposals that would have ensured a safe and clean learning environment for all students that included the equipment and supplies necessary to make sure all students, even our most fragile, have a safe and sanitary school.

He walked away from proposals that ensure communication with families prior to the start of the school year so that our students and their parents would know where they're going on the first day of school and what they could expect when they get there. He walked away from proposals that would provide teachers and other educators the necessary time they need to fully prepare to meet the needs and challenges for their students and to allow classroom professionals to determine the most effective use of their time to accomplish this work.

He walked away from proposals that would provide our students with additional time and opportunities for art, music, physical education, the library, and access to technology training and updated equipment and opportunities to explore career options, options that kids in suburban schools get every single day.

He walked away from proposals that would provide our students in grades K to 8 with time for recess and time for afterschool activities and sports. He walked away from proposals that would repair the broken promises of our evaluation and compensation system and that have left our members feeling demoralized, de-professionalized, to slight their excellent ratings on observations and their student growth list.

He walked away from proposals that would ensure our classrooms, educators, and students would be respected by visitors rather than continuously disrupted and disrespected. Most disappointing of all, he walked away from our students, our parents, our members, and all of the promises that he made to our community.

Ladies and gentlemen of the board, it isn't too late to get back on the right track. The path forward is clear. Tell CEO [NAME PROTECTED] and his team to return to the table now [inaudible] about real issues that we have in our schools. Tell him that our children are too important and our time is too short. Tell him to do what you hired him to do. Tell him to leave. I'm [NAME PROTECTED] I am the [TEACHER'S UNION]. We are all the [TEACHER'S UNION]
Good evening. My name is [NAME PROTECTED] [inaudible 00:19:27] [NAME PROTECTED. I am an educator, a [TEACHER'S UNION] member, an advocate for children. Rather than leave the profession two years ago, I voluntarily switched to a different position in our district that included a 20% pay cut, because I felt that the current data assessment system is harmful to our students.

Of course, all those working in schools deserve to be paid fairly for education, work experience, but being a teacher has never been about money. As others have already alluded to this evening, members from multiple units work in this district because we care about students. We want the children of [Dionysia] to have a sustainable, quality public education system.

Those of us who service students in a variety of capacities in our district experience first-hand every day the challenges that our students face. I would like to use my time to bring awareness to some of these issues, and I hope you consider the multiple factors that influence a child's educational experience as we move forward this school year and for school years to come.

For example, we know that the [LOCAL NEWSPAPER] reported this past October, that 2,000 children are poisoned with elevated lead levels every year in our city, and this exposure causes learning disabilities and behavior issues in children that could have been prevented but now require special interventions, interventions that more rigor in school classrooms do not address.

[inaudible 00:20:45] inform topic [inaudible 00:20:47] and for profit firms are salivating over the exploding $788.7-billion market in K-12 education, and some of them are already enjoying making money off of our cities children. No matter what the governor thinks, breaking up our unions is not going to stop them.

[inaudible 00:21:06] test scores are repeatedly used to shame our students, teachers, and schools so that those with their eyes on dollar signs can run in with the next latest and greatest scandalous solution to save us all when really it is politicians and society who have
repeatedly failed to address or profited from the social injustices that perpetuate around us.

We know that students may show up to school traumatized in varying degrees. If schools do not have an adequate amount of access to mental health professionals or social workers, end up piling more paperwork on top [inaudible 00:21:37] to qualify.

We know that the structural inequalities and an unequal distribution of resources and institutional racism still exist in our city and schools, and hiring [inaudible] outside consultants will not eliminate that reality.

We know that highly trained, experienced, and committed teachers are what research shows us will benefit our most vulnerable and needy students, and that punishing educators for wanting to work with those students for this objective invalid evaluation system is not a solid retainment strategy.

We know that [inaudible] shows us that time for free play and urban access to art, music, physical education, and quality staffed libraries to maximize their learning development and that the excessive amount of tests that our young people endure is making those important opportunities less accessible or nonexistent.

We know that students who end up in our justice system, foster care system, residential programs, or homeless, are often neglected or poorly tracked because of systemic neglect and failures. We know that success to healthcare can be a challenge for some. We need full-time medical professionals and nurses. Mandates that are unfunded in Columbus, Washington or City Hall are not going to make access to that healthcare a reality.

We know that if our parents and community stakeholders are qualified enough to pass a school levy through the democratic process of voting that they are qualified enough to participate in the process of voting for a democratically elected school board.

We know that [inaudible 00:23:07] for all our students. We want money to spend on our classrooms and kids, we want our students to be ready for our diverse 21st century world and not forced into the role of testing robots or guns. None of us had a problem with being accountable, with things that we can and should control, but the system better be fair and hold every stakeholder accountable. Everyone here this evening as well. Now is not the time to do what is convenient. Now is always the time to do what is right. Thank you for your time this evening.
Moderator: Thank you, and following Mr. [NAME PROTECTED] will be [NAME PROTECTED].

STUDENT Good evening, Mr. [NAME PROTECTED THE CEO], I am [NAME PROTECTED], and I am here to represent the million students here at [SCHOOL DISTRICT]. Mr. [NAME PROTECTED, the CEO], I attend a lot of our student advisory meetings. You have said multiple times that here in our school district students make the decisions. Students have a say. The students get a choice.

Mr. [CEO], you gave us no choice when you decided to walk away from the [Dionysia 'S] Teachers Union. [inaudible] Mr. [CEO], I have a younger brother who is desperately challenged. He needs one-on-one education constantly five days out of the week at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] Middle School, elementary school, and Mr. [CEO], I want to ask you this. When the teachers decide to go on strike, when you decided to walk away, are you going to teach my little brother what he needs to know?

Mr. [CEO], when the teachers decide to go on strike, are you going to come down to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and teach me pre-Calculus? Mr. [CEO], I don't know if you know this, but this is not Vegas. This is [SCHOOL DISTRICT]. You do not have the right to gamble with the education of so many students [crosstalk 00:25:13].

Mr. [CEO], [inaudible] this is the life of so many young children. This is the life of children who want to make it out of [Dionysia], out of the flats on the East Side, out of the projects on the West Side. Mr. [CEO], we want to make it out, and you are not letting us, because you are not giving us the good educators that we need. You are not giving us the teacher that we need. You are walking away. You are a coward.

Mr. [CEO], on behalf of [inaudible 00:25:55] School, on behalf of every student, every parent, and every teacher, we ask you to return to negotiations with the [Dionysia 'S] Teachers Union.

PRESIDENT OF TEACHER'S UNION That is a tough act to follow. Give him another round of applause.

PRESIDENT OF TEACHER'S UNION My name is [NAME PROTECTED], and I am the proud president of the 4,200-member-strong [Dionysia 'S] Teachers Union. I spoke to this board of education last March about how you and CEO [NAME PROTECTED] have not lived up to the promises made in 2013. I cautioned you about how the clock on the district’s website kept counting down to the November levy. I also cautioned you about another clock that was ticking. That is a clock leading to the expiration of our collective bargaining agreement on June 30th of this year.
We are all here tonight because last week CEO [NAME PROTECTED] and his negotiating team decided that they were going to walk away from contract negotiations with the [Dionysia S] Teachers Union. The CEO and his team walked away from talks even before the district responded to all of our proposals. No discussion, just shut down the talks. [CEO], when you lead your team away from the negotiations table, you walked away from teachers, paraprofessionals, related service providers, our students, their parents, and the entire [Dionysia] community.

Board members, our message today is simple. We want the district to acknowledge the real issues and concerns that these members face every day and that these issues can be resolved. We want the district to walk back to the table and have those real discussions on how to improve learning and working conditions for everyone.

Don't be fooled. Negotiations between the [SCHOOL DISTRICT] and the [TEACHER'S UNION] did not break down. Your CEO and his team walked away. CEO [NAME PROTECTED] and his team will not accept that these educators have real concerns and hear from the people that are in the schools working with and educating our students every day.

While we are all here tonight to bring their voice to you, our teachers, our paraprofessionals, our related service providers are the voice for their profession and the voice for their students. Don't be fooled. These negotiations are not about money. While the district wants to maintain the status quo for our students, the [TEACHER'S UNION] realizes the status quo is not acceptable, and we must improve upon the work we have done in our schools. Don't be fooled. Chairperson [inaudible 00:29:50], board members [NAME PROTECTED] and [NAME PROTECTED], you were on the board in 2007 and 2010 when the district certified multi-year contracts in much worse financial times.

In fact, CEO [NAME PROTECTED], you were at the table in 2010. It was almost one year ago that we warned you of the mounting issues in our schools due to so many of your broken promises. From our tedious system, which has turned into a punitive [inaudible 00:30:26] system to outsiders parading through our classrooms, interrupting valuable instructional time, from the lies you have told our corrective action schools, and to our differentiated compensation system which you have refused to build out. Use these negotiations to fix your broken promises. Use these negotiations to improve the working and learning conditions in our schools so that we can continue to move the educational outcomes forward for all our students. The leadership of the [Dionysia S] Teachers Union has never backed away from tackling tough issues, and is committed to doing what they were elected to do, but by walking away, the district is telling our members and this community that they are unwilling to do what they were hired to do.

Don't ignore the real issues our members face every day. The teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers wants the district to walk back to the table for serious
discussions about real issues in our schools. Nobody, nobody thinks that this work is easy work. We all know this work is hard, but the reality is sometimes doing the right thing is hard work. I am [NAME PROTECTED], I am the [TEACHER'S UNION], we are the [TEACHER'S UNION]. Thank you.

Moderator: Next is [NAME PROTECTED], followed by [NAME PROTECTED], and the [NAME PROTECTED]

PARENT

Good evening. I'm a parent of kindergarten student in the district, and I have said this before and I will say it again, my child is not a test score. The children of [SCHOOL DISTRICT] are not test scores. I have spoken several times before, and I feel that my words have gone unnoticed. The excessive testing continues across grade levels to the point that our scholars have become numb to the words "Today you will be taking," and this is where you can insert one of the names of the numerous state tests that only [Dionysia] enforces upon their students.

All this testing is taking time away from what really counts, which is educating our children. How can our children learn when they keep getting slammed with high-stake test after high-stake test? Time on task seems to be at a premium these days. I am outraged as a parent that not only does this testing continue, but now our children's name have become synonymous with data walls in the school. The children are represented by either different colors, numbers, shapes for anyone to see who goes into the office or has conferences with the administration and/or teacher. My child is not a test score. The children of [SCHOOL DISTRICT] are not test scores.

Decades ago, [THE SCHOOL DISTRICT] was a thriving school district where experts across the nation wanted to see all the wonderful, innovative ideas our children were doing. How many high-stake tests were given in the '70s when [THE SCHOOL DISTRICT] really was a premier district in the United States? We are no longer that fighting district. We have become a district where our children are not receiving much-needed services they deserve or are entitled to. Our children are not receiving PE, media, art, music, or other encores they were promised when the last levy passed.

Research has shown that we must educate the whole child, right brain and left brain, to help them become productive members of our society. Where has the money gone that was earmarked for our children to help bring back the encores? Who is paying for the unnecessary testing that our children must endure? Is this where the money levy really went, to pay consulting firms to find more tests for [SCHOOL DISTRICT] children to take, to pay more adults making decisions for our children who are never educators themselves?

When does enough going to be enough? If this board of education truly cared for the children of [SCHOOL DISTRICT], they would be interested in their real stories, what makes
them the students they are today, what their struggles are at home or school, their
dreams, their aspirations for their futures, not their story that involves test data. My child
is not a test score. The children of [SCHOOL DISTRICT] are not test scores.

Moderator: [NAME PROTECTED] followed by [NAME PROTECTED] followed by [NAME PROTECTED]

TEACHER AND COMMUNITY MEMBER

Good evening.

Moderator: Go ahead.

TEACHER AND COMMUNITY MEMBER

My name is [NAME PROTECTED]. I am a 1970 graduate of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], a
[SCHOOL DISTRICT] teacher for 31.79 years, and I am on the Alumni Association as a
trustee. I have attended many neighborhood meetings before, during, and after the
destruction of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], and have worked with the teachers, students,
neighbors, and business partners in the design team planning for this building.

[SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] has had a rich history beginning in 1899 and has well over
33,000 graduates. In 2011 and 12 the Open House had over 6000 students return to walk
the halls one last time. There is great pride in this school we know as [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]

The community must thank the board of education for preserving many of the
architectural features created during a time when workmanship was important and
everlasting. Now they're visible for all to see. It's a great way of merging the past and the
present.

Because of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] history, those on the design team hoped for a
community-based school, preferably comprehensive, to address our students' needs. We
wanted our future students to feel welcome and at home with a community to support
and continue the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] pride, but that feeling doesn't seem to exist
here at all.

Having averaged a day a week in the building since before opening, I have observed and
heard discussions from staff, parents, and students regarding many of the following issues.
I don't know of all the positive, the negatives that are in the building, and comments that
I'm making are not directed toward any one person or any one school. They're just general
observations.
The communication. There needs to be one person in charge of the campus to communicate with, disseminate info to the schools. Those offering support to the whole school find it difficult when trying to meet with four different principles. There needs to be an exterior sign board announcing upcoming events that are going on in the building.

Within the schools, this seems like a house divided. No one person can get a definitive answer. It takes multiple contacts in order to secure an answer. Yet on this week, on Thursday, last week on Thursday, I had been asked by a student to invite alumni to the basketball game that's supposed to be held here tomorrow night. I was surprised, and I wanted to verify the information before I disseminated that to the alumni group on Facebook.

I couldn't get an answer as to, was it definitely here or was it at Valley Forge? What time was it? I had to go through three or four people to finally get an answer. Among the teachers, there seems to be little collaboration between schools or subjects. The shared resources aren't there for them to work with.

Having a teacher on another floor in social studies working with a teacher on another floor in social studies, it only makes the education process much better, and it's not apparent. Among the students, there's few mixed classes between schools. There's no growth. I feel it's almost a form of segregation that affects all of our students, not just racially.

We're supposed to be preparing our students for their future with life skills and workplace skills, and I don't feel that here. Morale is low among the staff, parents, and students. Few parents attend monthly meetings. Students chose to come to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] because of what siblings have described, are now disappointed because they don't seem to be getting what their siblings talked about. Teachers don't know each other. They only know them by face or by ID tag that they belong in this building. There's no camaraderie.

With physical features in the building, the trophy cases are great. However, trophies can't fit in them. The trophies are on top of the cases. They're three feet tall. Why must the district continue to spend money on things and having trophies that are the same size for every place of participation? There needs to be that designation for first place only.

I'm trying to conclude quickly. Band and choir needs to be offered to all students over four years, not just to satisfy a music requirement. A year of training doesn't give them the successful, memorable, or cooperative experiences. Studies have shown that music enhances math ability. Definitely important for IT and engineering. Personally, I'm disappointed and frustrated with the divide that exists. I know of a lot of good things that are going on in all the schools, plans for the Lawyers Café, the concession stand, support
for OGT testing, to name a few. I expect and hope that many of the issues mentioned are and will be addressed. Communication and logistics surely will improve in the second year of the programs. Our students deserve the best. Thank you for allowing me to address my concerns.

Moderator: [NAME PROTECTED] followed by [NAME PROTECTED], and then [NAME PROTECTED]

Teacher and Community Member: I want to try to teach a student to think. Math was my vehicle. I've often wondered how I would survive your data-driven regressive evaluation system. Now, tonight I'm going to give a lesson, and I want ... Please be quiet. I have time. Now, I will pause when the students would give the answers and we've had discussions. This might have taken a whole period. So here we go. Tonight I'm going to prove to you beyond a shadow of a doubt that I can put my hand through this desk. I'm not fooling, and I will prove it to you. Because, what is this desk made of?

Female: Wood.

Teacher and Community Member: And is that solid? No, no, no. What's it made up of? Cells. Now, since this is made up of cells, those aren't solid. So what are the cells made up of?

Male: Atoms.

Teacher and Community Member: Oh, not quote yet, molecules. Are the molecules solid?

Attendees: No.

Teacher and Community Member: No, they're made up of?

Attendees: Atoms.

Teacher and Community Member: Atoms, and are those atoms solid?

Attendees: No.
TEACHER AND COMMUNITY MEMBER

No. As a matter of fact, there's so much space between these things it's amazing. So if the atoms aren't solid, what are the atoms made up of? Protons, neutrons, and electrons, and the distance between those little particles is proportional to the distance between the stars. But wait, as we learned more and more and more, we found out things got smaller and smaller and smaller, and we found out that no, the electron isn't small. It's made up of quarks. And that's as far as we know at this time. The distance between these quarks that make up these electrons and protons is like the distance between the stars. Can you imagine that, all that space? And I'll tell you, in the future, we're going to find out the more we learn, the smaller things'll get. And Ladies and gentlemen, that's what I said to them, and sure enough, we came up with string theory, which makes more space.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, because I always call them ladies and gentlemen, not scholars, I want you to think of this. This building that we're in, see the terminal tower, see all the buildings, the entire earth. If I were to squash out all that space, every little space that's between all those little particles, we get a sphere this big. Everything you know, everything you think is solid. You is contained in this little sphere, so what does that make you? Nothing. That's how special you are, because in this vast universe which extends to infinity, of all the things contained with you are the only things that can understand this, how precious you are. Never stop learning. Never stop growing.

You are more than nothing. You are the most valuable, precious commodity in this universe. Now, you've got to understand what you're doing to these children. You are turning them into test-taking, data-driven robots. You are depriving them of creativity by using SVB to reduce arts, music, libraries, and more, but worse, you are putting shackles on their teachers, because there is no way I could pass an evaluation with this, and trust me, by the time I was through, those kids thought. It seems like you're trying to change this district with brood strokes.

Moderator: [NAME PROTECTED] followed by [NAME PROTECTED] and then [NAME PROTECTED]

TEACHER AND COMMUNITY MEMBER

Good evening, board members. It is my pleasure to be here this evening, because I feel like I kind of represent almost everybody. Having sat on the library board at the beginning of the library units' unions that never went on strike because we said, as the negotiator, as the secretary of the library board, we said, "How are we going to form a union? What are we going to determine?" This is just with [inaudible 00:49:17] [NAMES PROTECTED]. Good thinkers in this, our world that we live in. They said, "We don't have a library without librarians," and so they said, "The most important thing here is to keep our people, because as we develop our culture and think as we wish them to represent us in the community, we need to make sure that they're not going to walk out the door." So the first thing we said was, "One way not to get them to walk out the door is to pay them more than anybody else."
So instead of this penny-wise, pound-foolish mess that we're dealing with that pays people poverty wages, we are the Walmart of education. We are not only forcing our families, our teachers not to survive, those that have invested in us with their children cannot survive. How do you take someone that has an HMO and can now support their children and take them to the doctor, and then tell them, "Tough nookies, you don't have that anymore." You've raised their cost of medical, and now you're taking it away.

[NAME PROTECTED], you of all people should understand what happens when someone starts to take it away and threatens your very existence, because you've been there and you understand what happens when you're going through that crisis period. How do you expect these teachers to get up, not knowing if their sick child can go to the doctor and come and teach my child? You're not going to do it, so you're going to be promoting lack of attendance amongst your teachers. You're going to be promoting sick children coming to school. Your job is to take the dollars that the community gives you and use them as the community would wish them to be used, because those are my tax dollars. The key point of this is the reason I said I kind of represent everybody. I had my stint in the classroom, I had my stint in the library, I had my stint as the, we call it the pilot of the in-house suspension rule. Been there, done that, and in the last I would say 60 years plus, I have not been not in contact with the [CITY]public schools in one way or another.

As a student of the major work program, my heart breaks that we have the largest gifted and talented program in the nation, and you, Mr. [NAME PROTECTED], have managed to get rid of it.

Female: That's right.

TEACHER AND COMMUNITY MEMBER

You have said to us that our children are gutter ghetto idiots. You have said to us that your pride in the [Dionysia] public schools is that we are the best of the worst of the urban school districts.

Female: Break it down.

TEACHER AND COMMUNITY MEMBER

You have said to us that we should be content with teachers who haven't even been to teacher's school, because somehow me going back to teacher's school, taking double what I needed to know, having a degree in preschool, kindergarten, K-8, speech and hearing, is not as good as the person that somehow managed to take a course in philosophy and get a 3.0. Something's wrong with that thinking, Dr. [NAME PROTECTED], because you are in the pew of education and you are fully aware that there is no such thing as a second-class
teacher. You cannot enter the teacher education program without being one of the top in that college. [Dionysia] State, no 3.0, no enter the program.

Now for you guys to sit there and relegate these teachers to say that the master’s degrees that they have, the PhDs that they have is less than somebody’s degree in philosophy. I want to go to my other role. That is that of student and grandparent of a student. Why is it that I came up in poverty, I came up in a poor city, I came up in the same [CITY] public schools, but if I wanted to, I could have marched in a 100-piece marching band. We will have the Republicans show up and probably [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] High will parade them in, but we are a premier school district.

Why, is it that we have [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] stand here and tell us that they are so proud of their kid who placed tenth in an essay contest. When my daughter left [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and graduated from [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] had people that had $200,000 individual National Merit Scholarships, something of which to be proud. [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] would stand up. You are from [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. You tell me, Miss [NAME PROTECTED] if the most prideful thing you had when you came out of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] was an essay contest. All that we ask of you is to forget that you are on a board and remember that you are a former student, you are a mother, you are a teacher, and put yourself in our place and ask yourself if you [inaudible 00:56:55] what you are.

Finally, I do not threaten, because I love the [CITY] public schools, and you notice I do not call them the [CITY] Municipal, or what is it, metropolitan school district, because we are in this bind. You are sitting on that board because we are not the [CITY] public metropolitan school district. When the courts, when the laws, when the people in the state of Ohio passed judgment, that judgment said if you are a municipal school district, if you have been under a desegregation case, we now have the right to take you over, so your name is not even legal, because in order for you to be there, we must be the [CITY] Municipal School District.

As a parent, as a grandparent, as a former teacher, as a former library board member, my promise to you is this community will not forgive you for what you are decimating and we cannot retrieve because you are sitting in silence. I have never in my life voted against a levy, never in my life, and I have a 100% voting record. But if you mess with these teachers, you will [inaudible 00:58:44] because the only chance my grandson stands to pass that test that you have forced upon him. You mess with these teachers, I will stand outside of Mr. [THE CEO]'s house with a sign that says Do Not Be a Fool and Give Them Your Money to Waste.

Moderator: [inaudible 00:59:29] and then [NAME PROTECTED]
Male: It's a panic, it's deep.

Female: Yeah. It's kind of like last meeting.

Male: Did your driver come up again?

Female: Yeah.

TEACHER [crosstalk 00:59:46], President [NAME PROTECTED], CEO [NAME PROTECTED], I just wanted to say that that's my mother. [inaudible] And I'll say this, that throughout my whole life she has always stood up for me, and that's what I think is very important. I think that's sort of the theme of what I want to talk about, is that when you have a positive relationship with somebody and you work with them and you love them, they always stand up for you. Just by looking at this room, if you guys can stop text messaging, because I was watching you when I was sitting over there, [crosstalk 01:00:28].

Just by looking at the energy in this room and seeing how many people came out here despite of the fact that they were tired. They worked since 7 in the morning. They drove across town. They live in [PLACE NAME PROTECTED], they live [PLACE NAME PROTECTED]. They live all over the area, and they came here to talk to you, and they came here to talk to you because our relationship is damaged.

How is our relationship damaged? I'll tell you a story of something that I tell my students in class. It's about a place in China right after World War II. We had the Chinese Cultural Revolution. If you don't know what the Chinese Cultural Revolution was, it was a time period when a dictator had taken over China. It had become a Communist country, and they made the decision that they were going to attack teachers.

Why I'm disturbed and why I'm talking to you about our relationship is because the things that go on in my daily view and the things that I see that happen to the teachers around me model what dictators did in Communist China. I'm not saying that because I'm trying to call everybody up there a dictator. I'm saying it because I want you to be aware that the damage you're doing, and if you don't stop it, is going to be irreparable.

What do I mean by that? One of the things that the dictators in China would do was they would allow students to openly physically attack their teachers. One of the things that I'm noticing and I was talking to a teacher about today, I'm not going to mention their name,
but they attend a school, and they've been assaulted three times this year. They were told by their principal that getting punched in the back isn't really a real assault, so that they weren't going to sign the Article 15 to remove the person who was terrorizing them in the class every day.

What else do I say models what goes on in Communist China or went on in Communist China during the Cultural Revolution? I have teachers that I know who teach an environmental science class who've been teaching this class every day all day with no materials. Now, you stand here and you say that we're in the 21st century, but you have classrooms that have no books. You have classrooms in which the principal will ask literally and says, "I'm not buying books for this class. I'm not buying books for the school. If you think that's happening, it's not happening." But the kids get a T-shirt.

What else am I saying to you? Part of what happens in a despotic or a totalitarian regime is that people with qualifications and people with credentials are often over-lorded by people who have none. What bothers me is that you have superintendents, you have principals, you have people in the building for evaluating teachers who don't have any credentials. That bothers me. It bothers me that I worked to go to five colleges and that somebody can walk in the room in one second and tell me, "Oh I'm sorry, you didn't realize that you are an ineffective person," or "You didn't realize that you are developing?" But this person knows nothing about education. They see a lesson plan, and they say, "That's not how you write a lesson plan," and then you ask them, "Well, how do you want it?" "I don't know, but not like that."

What I'm saying to you is another thing that models the Cultural Revolution in China. How is it that teachers, and you know this is happening, are in a class they get their evaluative walkthrough fifth period, and sixth period another person comes in and says, "Oh, I'm just taking photographs, and I'm asking you questions. I want copies of your lesson plans, and how did you do that, because I'm doing a non-evaluative walkthrough." And then ten minutes later a team of people come from downtown to visit your class to say, "This is not a walkthrough, it's not punitive. It's a non-evaluative walkthrough."

What does that mean? What's the difference between what the Gestapo did in Germany and what you're doing right now? There's no difference. How do I explain that to my students? How do I explain that to them why people are marching through my classroom first period, second period, third period, fourth period, fifth period taking photographs, writing little things about the teacher? How do I explain that to them?

The last thing is, how do I explain to the children about this is how you speak to people, this is how you sit with people, this is how you treat your friends, this is how adults work with one another, but we don't work with one another. When, we don't work together. When, we don't listen to one another.
What I mean by that is we talk and you tell us what you're going to do. You don't listen to what we have to say. You play on your cell phone; you play on your computer. The principal hides in the office. We talk. We tell you what we need. The children, [NAME PROTECTED] is from my school. He told you what he feels, but you don't listen.

How many people are here tonight? What I'm saying to you is I'm asking you to stop, because it's like my mother always said, "I always go this way. I always tell people what I'm going to do and how I'm going to do it and what my goal is, because the thing is as a person who loves children, as a person who loves education, and I've been going to school since I was two nonstop, I tell people that there comes a time when you can't just sit down and you can't just agree to disagree, and you've noticed I haven't been here. I came to you almost every week every time you had a meeting. I wrote emails, I said nothing, because I got to the problem like well, maybe they'll just do the right thing. Maybe they will just do what they're supposed to do.

But then then it comes a time when I'm looking at all these people, and the message is everybody's telling you that either you negotiate or we're going to walk away. I mean that's what's going to happen. Either you negotiate or there's going to be a strike, and if there's a strike, what's going to happen to the children? What's going to happen to your memory, because you sat up here months ago and said that you wanted to be the longest running CEO and that you want people to have a historical memory of you that is great, but right now the memory I have of you, the memory my students have of you, is of the class in environmental science that has no books, the person who marches in my room and tells me, "Why don't you have an anchor chart on the wall?"

That's the memory we have, the memory of people telling you that your evaluation is crap, that a person who had 30 years ... I've talked to the teacher. Thirty years of distinguish and accomplish all of a sudden is being written up as being insane and written up as being told that she has no nothing, that she's ineffective, that she abandons her class on her last year of teaching. That's embarrassing, and it's to the point where I'm trying to speak to you plainly and I'm trying to ask you to go home, even if it takes a little pride out of you, and you go home and you lose a little face. So what? Sometimes you lose face when you do the right thing. Sometimes you lose face when you stand up and you say, "My bad. I'm sorry. Maybe this isn't the right way."

I'm asking you to do that so that we don't end up having something more born in [Dionysia]. Like she said earlier, this is not an elected board, but you know there's a democratic process, and the democratic process allows us to put things on a ballot that can make it an elected board again. The democratic process allows us to change our government if we don't like it.
I'm not trying to stand up here and rant, because this is not what I wrote, but what I'm saying to you is from my heart. It's not anything I wrote, but what I'm saying to you is from my heart. What I'm saying to you is please listen. Please get together when you go in private session and actually discuss what's going on here. And if you did something that you might regret, Mr. [CEO], then say, "I'm sorry," and change it. Change it so that all these hundreds of people that are here today and all the thousands that are not here, that we can work together and we can form a real relationship, not one where we're just dictating to one another. Have a great night.

Moderator: Mr. [NAME PROTECTED] followed by Mr. [inaudible 01:09:34].

COMMUNITY MEMBER Good evening, board members, ladies and gentlemen, the students that are still there. My name is [NAME PROTECTED], and I'd like to just reference this by saying I'm the last elected school board president. [NAME PROTECTED], whatever she has, that's the position I used to have 18 years ago, and the reason I'm going through this, for those of you that don't know, this school district was supposed to be improved with mayoral control.

Having said that now, and I voted for that last levy, and come to find out that there might be some stealing going on. There could very well be some stealing going on, and you have to understand that you all have no credibility at all, none whatsoever. First of all, I'd like to say, second, I'd like to say ditto to what has been said from ... especially that young man.

Female: Yes. Awesome.

COMMUNITY MEMBER [NAME PROTECTED] and Mr. [NAME PROTECTED], they gave you a lesson in astronomy, and she gave you one in government. I'm going to give you a lesson in Politics 101, and it was meant to be [NAME PROTECTED] last statement. The way we get back to right this ship is to get rid of all you, and that's a process. I haven't heard [NAME PROTECTED] name called tonight. NAME PROTECTED he refers to the Mayor] is the number one culprit in this part, and next year he's gearing up to run again, and he's your boss, Mr. [CEO]. He made a poor choice, number one, and I think that in making that poor choice it was a poor choice for people to elect him, and he's been in office for about 25 years with his hands in his pocket.

I'm saying to you all, that may sound a little harsh, but you all have heard harsher things than what I'm saying to you now, but I'm saying to you this, we are going to remove you all. Now, you know though that the Republican legislature, they have to right their wrong. The Republican legislatures are the ones that put you all where you are without being elected, and they made this claim that well, the mayor, you still have a bit of a choice, because the mayor, you vote for him, and he goes around and he fools people and get all the money from all these other people. That's what brought this cafetorium, and I venture
to say that the cafetorium that’s at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and the cafetorium that’s at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and the cafetorium here at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], that was a cost-cutting measure, and someone’s got that money in their pocket.

Not to have an auditorium and separate cafeteria. It is a disgrace that these teachers and these parents and these children have to come before you and ... They’re not begging, they’re demanding now. It was wrong when it happened, and some of you all took those positions gracefully, but now you are disgraced. You are a disgraced group of people, and that Republican legislature, because I want to tell you another thing too. We have a group called the Black Republican Cause that’s going to go to the Republican legislature. We talked about putting it on the ballot, but there’s an easier way. The same people, Republicans, that made this disaster, we’re going to get them to clean it up, and in cleaning it up, all of you all, you new ones, are going to have to go, and it’s not funny now. What I want to say to you is nothing’s been said here tonight is funny and for you to show your teeth is really disrespecting everybody here.

Of all the people, you should be the most [inaudible 01:14:43], because you went to school in this spot. Now, the rest of you all is just sad. Miss [NAME PROTECTED], you’ve been here since the beginning, and you know that the money, you know where the money is. You know where the money is, and in going to that legislature and asking them to rescind House Bill 269 and the [CITY] Plan, you’re going to be named in a lawsuit. You’re going to be named in a lawsuit, and you could get that highfalutin law group that you’re akin to.

You can get them ready to face this lawsuit, and I want to ask. In closing, I want to this to you. You need to resign. You know the person that resigned in [inaudible 01:15:50] Campaign? You need to resign from this school district. Tonight, you need to get up, and I’m just making [inaudible 01:15:59], but I know you’re not going to do it. You need to get up out of that seat, go out there and find your a car or whoever drives you, and get them to take you home, wherever you came from, because I’m going to make that ugly now. The rock that you all crawled out from under, you need to crawl back under that rock and hide your head, because you are a group of disgraceful, dishonest individuals to have these teachers on a string, and they give the money out of their pockets to these children.

I’m talking about [inaudible 01:16:41], and let me say this to you again, [NAME PROTECTED]. For these people, for Miss [NAME PROTECTED] to get up here and say that these children don’t have books in 2016, I voted for that levy just to say that if you didn’t come through, I would be back. I haven’t been here in 11 years, but I’m back, and I’m saying this to you, just like it was promised to you. You all will not be able to continue to downgrade and continue to just decimate this school district. These children that come up here and make their statements to you all, and what the young man said, you don’t listen. Well, now the listening time is over. Your time is over, and I’m hoping that this group, the teachers, put their political muscle together, get rid of [THE MAYOR]. Get rid of [THE MAYOR] and get rid of all of you all. Every single one, good, bad, or indifferent.
You say paint with a broad-stroke brush, but I wonder, which one of you all, after this meeting, are going to go to [THE CEO] and say to him, "You know, you've made a serious mistake, and you need to get back to the table and you need to begin to listen to [inaudible 01:18:17]."

I'm going to have a little test. Raise your hand if you're going to say one single word to [THE CEO] about his indiscretions. I'm looking. That tells me this. You're not listening, you don't follow instructions well. So obviously, as has been said, you obviously do not care, and now we have to be the ones that you know that we don't care, and to get rid of you all in a stroke when we go to the legislature. I want you to be smiling, Mr. [CEO]. When you find out you don't have a job to go and completely dismantle a school district, then you won't be smiling so much, and [CEO], I want to say to you you sit there with a stone face.

This young man, the young man said to you that you had sat before them and just flat out lied, just flat out lied. All these people, the teachers that have come before you tonight, this is just an exercise in futility for you all you all, so you can't wait to get home. Can't wait to get ... Well, I'm taking my legs and then I'm going. I'm not going to do anything about what you say. I'm going to take my legs take my lumps, take my marbles, and go home.

I hope ... Let me close. I hope this, and I didn't come to say this, but I want to say this to you. God help you, and I will add a little flavor to it by Donald Trump. I will tell you something else, tell you what you can do or where you can go, but I'm not Donald Trump, and I'm going to say to you, but you all are going to have to pay for what you're doing to these teachers and ultimately to these children. They're innocent.

And for you, [CEO], sit there with that stone face that you have that's become a part of you. You have no smile. You don't have anything to smile for, because you know you are ruining the school district. Well, we're going to help you out. I'll ask you again, I hope that tonight before the meeting ends that you would ... It's my suggestion that you just give up the ship and resign, but since I know you're not going to do it, we're going to help you out. Thank you.

Moderator: NAME PROTECTED

PARENT Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I am [NAME PROTECTED], and I am former SPO president of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. January 26 I came before this board with a six-page talker point, and I resigned my position as SPO because of the way that I was treated from such a predatory administration.
They told me to disconnect from my honor student daughter with 42 college credits. I left my phone number. Nobody has called me. I sent Mr. [CEO] an email. Mr. [CEO] and I have talked on several occasion, but he hasn’t called me, he hasn’t reached out, hasn’t had his people reach out to me. They blamed me because the students of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] were dissatisfied that their art classes were cut by 30 minutes a day. They walked out because they had not been engaged by the new head of school who says he wasn’t a principal.

We have a whole new structure over there and we have a whole new mess, but nobody is coming forth. The FACE office told me that I need to reverse roles with my daughter. What on earth does that mean? She’s going to always be my daughter. Apparently nobody read those six pages that I gave to each of you as a gift, the chance to make it right.

We have problems all over this school district. Some of the problems that were here, they are emulated in other schools, even [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] is not even the jewel it used to be. It is a crumpled piece of aluminum foil by the dumpster that didn’t even make it in, and that is because this board, this administration, and nobody cares about who they put in charge, when they put them in charge, or what goes on, but the children have to say they don’t care about the sense of family, they don’t care about parents, they don’t care about students. What do you care about? It’s really convenient that you get to sit there and not answer our questions. It’s really really convenient, and yeah, if it sounds like I’m pissed off, yeah, I’m pissed off. I don’t have to be cute about it anymore. I don’t have to be I told you. If you didn’t do the right thing that I will be back, that I am resilient.

Let me tell you this, we have now the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] in an area where we asked you to switch them to a safer zone. Five shootings while kids are getting on and off the school bus while they’re out at play. Nobody cares. Who cares? All of this has really really frightened me, where it doesn’t feel good.

I told you our kids would not sing, dance, and show their teeth for you. I’m holding every single one of you accountable. I told when I was resigned as the SPO president I was not going away because that was a title. That was only a title. I am becoming the student advocate to make sure that somehow, some way these teachers get what they need, these children get what they need, because apparently all that is important is that we layer and layer administration and spend money. Spend money on administration for people who don’t know what their job is, can’t do what their job is. A sense of family in a school doesn’t mean anything with the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], where kids cry because they don’t want to go to school.

At [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], who ever heard of such a thing? [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] has incompetent leadership there. Not every single one of them, but the one
that says, "I'm not a principal. I'm a head of school." Read the [NAME PROTECTED] magazine article, people. He said, "I am not a principal." They're looking for a principal.

My daughter has been there since fifth grade, and let me tell you the struggle that I have to watch her, determine whether or not she wants to go to school that day. Hurts my heart, and the fact that she sobbed in front of me doesn't mean a damn thing to any of you, because I told you in my six-page talking point seems like there's lot of money spent on a lot of things around here that have accomplished nothing.

What are we going to do? What are you going to do? I'm doing my part. How about we support these teachers? How about we support these teachers where they're not jumped on, where these students aren't running rampant in these buildings? How about you really know what's really going on inside these buildings? How about this administration quit lying on me? Because that's what they did. They lied on me and said I organized the student walkout. Since you didn't read it since you didn't read it and get back to me, I'm going to tell you what I put in it. Yeah, they lied and said that I organized the student walkout, I was complicit in the article, the [NAME PROTECTED] magazine. I was complicit in the article in the [NAME PROTECTED] Post.

Then the [NAME PROTECTED] Post put another article out there after the January board meeting where I resigned. Read it, people, in the Education section. They said how the [SCHOOL DISTRICT] administration pretty much badgered her to say that she knew me. You’re not going to deal with the problem. You’re going to blame me, a parent, an African-American parent who's engaged with his children, who has two honor students in this district, married to the mother of his children for 24 years, a United States veteran. You've ignored me, you pulling me off.

I tried to be politically correct. Apparently that doesn't work. I tried to be nice. Apparently that doesn't work. And believe you me, if I could get on TV and blast it, I will buy myself some air time. Believe me, I have the emails, I have the text messages. I have it all.

Now, keep playing. Mr. [CEO], [CITY] school board, [CITY] schools have problems. They need to be fixed. It's time to stop the game plan. It is time to stop the game plan. People are tired. I'm not voting for a levy. I told you that. I'm not voting for a levy. I think that we need a new head of school over a [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], because he does not care about the kids. He won't even engage the upper classman. They just found what their graduation date was because they did a walkout. What senior finds out that they're graduating because they forced their principal to help them get a date in December? Graduation is in May. All they got was a pretty building, and to be honest, it's not that pretty.
Why is it that they want to erase the historical legacy of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]? Oh yeah. [NAME PROTECTED] told me they don't even want memorabilia from the old [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] at the new [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. You can't erase what made that school. That school was built, and I'm going to say it, and just because I'm pro-black does not mean that I am anti-white. That school was built on the talent and academics of primarily African-American students. Don't try to erase that. And we're not going to give it to you either.

This is a problem. There's a divide between the East and West also. Seriously, do you really want us to keep coming back meeting after meeting? When are you going to do something? This is getting old. My wife and I have been engaging you over this [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] Mitchell Corrum report [CITY] Plan to which you conveniently follow when you want to.

It's just like you want to put that clock up there and shut somebody down, just like the E rate thing. Oh, who thinks I didn't read that? $477,000, and then you conveniently get to have the law firm say what you want revealed, attorney-client privilege.

Oh yeah. We are on all of that, where you and I thought were creating and fostering a relationship that could be based on mutual respect. I see by ignoring my email January 28th, because you would have gotten back to me, that you no longer care and that somehow somebody is feeding you some kind of lie. Let me tell you, when you start to see at the end of the school year if these teachers don't strike the number of teachers who are planning on leaving [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] because of the administration that is in place, you think you're going to fill it with the kind of students that you are, that you want to. Ain't nobody going to come there, because it needs family to do that, and they don't have it. They don't have what [NAMES PROTECTED] gave them. They don't have that anymore, but you discount that as nothing, and apparently you discount parents, teachers, and the students as nothing.

I'm asking every board member to do the right thing. Seriously, somebody called us. Somebody call me, because a lot of this stuff out here can be fixed if you want to fix it, but if you want mud on your face, we are prepared to do it. I am behind these teachers. If they want to do a vote of no confidence, let's do it. I can't do it, but go for it, whatever it is to make change. Sometimes you have to do radical stuff to make change.

I'm hoping you do the right thing, Mr. [CEO], and all of the board members. I know a couple of you are new, but I'm hoping somebody has a heart here, a heart. Oh my God. I mean honestly, I'm fortunate enough, we are fortunate enough, my wife and I are fortunate enough that should the teachers strike, my daughter's graduating, and we can take our son and go somewhere else. Everybody can't do that, and that's not fair.
But you are elected officials, and we're trusting you with our children. We're trusting you to listen to us, we're trusting you to make the right decisions. Can I say it again? We're trusting you to listen to us. Just because somebody has a degree does not mean all the time that they know what they're talking about. As my daughter told me, C's get degrees, and sometimes people with D's get degrees.

Now, you want to make it right? Clean up [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. Get somebody back in there that cares. Listen to these teachers, listen to these parents. Help these students get some books.

Transparency. Where is it? I can't see it. Where is the transparency? You flip-flop in and out of the [CITY] Plan, the Mitchell Corrum report at your will. That's supposed to be your right, but that school that's going down there on 18th and Paine, oh you're going to make sure that's taken care of, because you got some people that's your friends that's going to be a part of that. [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] that's going to be taken care of, right? Mr. [NAME PROTECTED], where is the new [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]? Is it still on Slate for 2018 for them to walk into that building? Because I'm tired of my son and them having to be on lockdown, getting shot at, or shooting going around because they have the projects, because we asked you before the change to do something about it.

Male: It's dishonesty. You're right.

PARENT Do the right thing.
Public meeting 01.26.2016

Chair:

Next we will have our period of public participation for a period no longer than 40 minutes. During this segment of the business meeting we will hear all public comments, either agenda or non-agenda items. This public participation period will be for persons to address the board for up to three minutes each and it does look like we have a lot of participants, so if you could pay attention to the clock as it starts to hit about ten seconds before it ends and get back up. Just know that if you run over, some of your colleagues may not have their chance to speak. Again, we would ask that you address with respect for the audience as we have students in the room as well.

What I'm going to do is I'll call two people, I'll call the first name and then I'll call the second name. If the second name person could please come forward, it looks like at either end we do have seats. That way you can be ready to come up. You don't have to go ... [inaudible 01:03:22] there will be one person on and one person off.

First I would like to call [NAME PROTECTED, followed by [NAME PROTECTED]

PARENT

Mr. [CEO], the board, the faculty, members here, the board of the record, members of the [inaudible 01:03:52] and all the parents and students. Welcome to my school. I say my school because of Title One has given me the right to be engaged in this school and I want to let you know that a few weeks ago, the students walked out of this school. I'm not here to argue their point. I'm here to engage and I came to ask the students what could you do to make this a better situation? We're not all here as hostile parents, we're here as parents who want to get an understanding of what's going on.

As far as Title One, and being an SPO because of Title One, that's why I'm standing here. And I'm here to let the principal know at this school to note that this is a fact. It's not a promise or wish or anything else. There will be an SPO in this school. There is not going to be a change in the SPO. We're going to follow Title One and we're going to do just like the law says. So you are not going to change the SPO because [inaudible 01:05:15]. That's why we came today here, because we have that right. Like I said, I didn't come to argue. I didn't come to fuss. I just came to state a fact. Thank you.

Chair:

[NAME PROTECTED], followed by [inaudible 01:05:35] [NAME PROTECTED]

PARENT

Good evening. Thanks for [inaudible 01:05:40]. This is the school of my children, and therefore, it's also mine. Mine and my [inaudible 01:05:50] high school, but since my children have been here since 8 years ago, it has a special place in my heart.

I would like to read the following points of your guiding principles of your [Dionysia] Education Contract that I felt were pertinent to some of the things that have been going on with our school and the students with satisfaction with some of the changes that have been made since they have been rebuilding. Those bullet points are decisions are always made in the best interest of [Dionysia] students. Communication should be clear, purposeful, respectful and honest. Mutual respect, inclusiveness and transparency builds positive relationships and creates a culture that is conducive to collaboration. I thought these bullet points were important because we feel that some of those were remiss in the beginning of our school year.
The parents of our students, our organization has the best interest at heart, it's our children. We feel that we need that mutual respect, inclusiveness and transparency from our board when you make changes to things that have been already in place in this school. The culture here and family, the sense of family that we have from nights after night of rehearsals, seeing other parents coming to those rehearsals waiting for our kids. There is no other place like it. This school is a gem and it is very special.

We understand when changes are made that some things we won't be able to change, but we would really very much like for you to have that open door policy, that mutual respect, and inclusiveness, and [inaudible 01:07:51] and having that same openness with our children as their reason appears. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, [NAME PROTECTED] followed by [NAME PROTECTED].

SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF Good evening. Mr. [CEO], Board, I am [NAME PROTECTED]. I am the operations manager for the newly formed or newly changed [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] board of trustees’ office of philanthropy. I have returned only because coming here this evening I heard some comments being made that the Friends of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] had gone away. We haven't gone anywhere. We are here. We are here to continue and to be supporting arm with [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] for students here at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. We have our continued board president who is here with us this evening as well as another of our board members who is on [SCHOOL DISTRICT], and also, Mr. [NAME PROTECTED], our counsel.

One of the things that we continue to do is use the fund raising and our executive director, [NAME PROTECTED] [Paine 01:09:04], who has been with us for ten years, and we have a couple years ago, and [NAME PROTECTED] has moved on to Florida. In November, with the board and with [THE SCHOOL DISTRICT] we have hired a new development director, by the name of Miss [NAME PROTECTED]. [NAME PROTECTED] started with us in December. I just wanted everybody to be aware that [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] office of philanthropy is here. We are located on the first floor. [NAME PROTECTED] can be reached at 838.9106, and myself, [NAME PROTECTED]. I can be reached at [PHONE NUMBER GIVEN]. We have not moved downtown as I have heard that we are at the headquarters of [SCHOOL DISTRICT], and we are here for you, and why? Because we are [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]

Chair: Thank you. [NAME PROTECTED], followed by [NAME PROTECTED].

PARENT Good evening. It's been a long time since I've been here. I started this a year ago, concerning the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. It used to be lower campus upper and lower campus, but since the changes, I'm just really sad right now and a little bit disillusioned and a little bit frustrated with the changes. We have attempted to engage administration, several times, meaning we the parents. This is going back to September. We gave a list of questions that we had regarding the change in administration, the roles that they play, who they are and what they do and what their responsibilities are. We don't know and to this day we still do not know what the dean of student engagement of arts success or whatever. We don't know what roles they play in our school. Therefore, our children don't know. They don't know who to go to for what crisis they may have. And that's not good, especially when [inaudible 01:11:16] role in what their responsibilities are. That's disturbing.
Also disturbing is the school culture that has changed. Even in the [inaudible] report that other administrations keep throwing, the core report, I guess which is the Bible, to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], it says, that welcoming and loving students in the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] culture is something that is to be preserved and protected. During the transition from the old [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] to the new [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], that is not happening. Students do not feel welcome, parents do not feel welcome and it's just disorganized and just not clear.

I don't know if it's a rush to hire and get in place in the school, but it should have been really considered of the entire school culture the entire school as a whole. They set up parents [inaudible 01:12:09] talked about our accomplishments, well, those are things that already happened. Those are things that were there remember I said a while back. It wasn't broken. Why fix it?

The most disturbing part was the [NAME PROTECTED] Magazine and the interview with Mr. [inaudible 01:12:30]. There were just some things that just really disturbed me like for instance, he says that the students are looking for a principal. He's the head of school, not a principal. And those are two different things in that school. There are two different things. We have a board of trustees and fund raising and we spend much more of our time with them probably. Part of the it is just we don't have a person called a principal anymore and the students want to talk to a principal.

Problem. If he's not a principal, if he's a head of school, I don't know what he does and who runs the school? Who runs the day to day operations if he says that he spends more time with the fund raisers than with the students.

Another thing that I'm really feeling kind of disturbed about is that it should be a unifying force. Some of the problems this is concerning the walkout by the way the [NAME PROTECTED] magazine article that they did December 14. It should be a unifying force, and the blame seemed to be put on the seniors, and the senior officers. Quote again and because senior officers are part of the day, they participate in high tech where they go to high school and college. The seniors are challenged because they don't feel like their voices are being represented which is not true. This is a lesson learned when you select junior officers that aren't in high tech and another problem. They just elected junior officers for the seniors. You have a young lady right here, [NAME PROTECTED] Senior office, and said she was going to work. College. I'm sorry. She mentioned that. That's the kind of disconnect that he has with the students.

To me, it appears that he was painting the seniors as a problem and saying we're correcting it with the juniors. That's not unifying, that's dividing. I have a problem with him [inaudible] to observe classes. I have a problem with him saying we want to replace the SPO with the advisory board. That is what Mr. [NAME PROTECTED] was talking about. It is something that is not voluntary, it is mandated. State law, right? ORC code. We must have a student parent organization. Your policy says that the designated student parent organization is the SPO. How can someone come and say we're going to replace that? Wipe it out. Problem. These are some of the issues. They are important. They are real and this is what happens behind the wall of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. It's not a clear communication between the students and the administration on what the new rules are. They don't know. They just end with the teachers. The teachers is a part of the problems here. I think it should be looked into and there's also some other things to discuss, some other expectations.
He mentioned some of the things that happened from your administration, Mr. [CEO] I really hope that you address it, because it disturbed me deeply as a parent. Deeply as a parent. We have been told to take off our parent hats too many times I don’t know what kind of foolishness that is. We are parents first, first and foremost. Parents first. And when your administration is telling us to take off our parent’s hats, what kind of foolishness is that? You want parent engagement, not disengagement. We are here for the children. As you said, your [CITY] plan says children first, that’s what we’re here for, putting our children first. If we can’t dialogue and communicate with what the issues are for a resolution and you’re saying take off the parent, there is a problem. And I just hope it’s resolved. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Mr. [NAME PROTECTED]

PARENT

Good evening. I accepted the position of SPO president in the hopes that I could be a resource with students, parents, and administration for the historical [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. The relationship began with no preconceived notions. My daughter and I worked with the administration through the summer on a couple of projects preparing for the new school year. Then the new school year began and things quickly changed and students, teachers and others staff began to express their concerns at least to me for what was privately happening within the historical walls of [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]

The sense that family was being destroyed and the trust with the students, teachers and parents along with it. With the new administration so quickly put in place, unfortunately, with no idea what to do, the foundation became immediately unstable. Failure to do what was one of the simplest things, introduce yourself. Especially when you are an adult and in a position that is related to children that is so important. Failure to do that diminishes the possibility of establishing any type of bond that will eventually lead to a productive outcome.

In my short experience so far as the SPO president, it has brought about a number of challenges that have widely asked to how far people will go to conceal what is really happening, rather than deal with the problem in order to move forward in a way that is possible. To create a winning environment for everyone involved. With all that’s going on, at the school, I attended a board meeting with a group of parents in November. A group of dance parents. And everything that I was going to say is in the paper. That unfortunately, is my gift for you tonight, board members.

Let’s cut to the chase. I took a tongue lashing from the former executive director of the board of trustees, then I went to a meeting at the FACE office, to which I thought was going to be a great meeting about moving forward, but then I found out from [NAME PROTECTED] and members of the FACE office, that I was mentioned as contributing information to [NAME PROTECTED] magazine and the [inaudible 01:19:22] post with articles that covered the students walk out. Not only is that not true, I was also blamed for the walkout.

As a result, I didn’t even come back to the school. I didn’t even come back to the school. So I’m sitting there talking to members of the FACE office because I talked to my daughter who is an honor student here who is a class officer here, and I asked her why did they do it and she talked about the disrespect and the disconnect and the hurt that they feel and the sadness that they feel because majors had been cut by 20 minutes. An art school, and you cut the majors. Okay. So, here we go.
I was told because I felt conflicted by the situation that there is a decision that I need to make. What decision was that? To decide whether to be SPO president and to choose between the SPO and my daughter? Then I was told that there should be a role reversal between me and my daughter. Yeah, these are by your FACE officers. They said to me that either my daughter was running me or that she was emotional, erratic and not capable of making any sound decision on her own at this point in time in her life.

To have that said to an African American father who is married to the mother of his children 24 years and in addition I volunteer, after hours. I leave here and I go to work at night to serve veterans for which I am a veteran. To have that said to me, I was insulted. I was hurt. To then to have all of these things said and done to me, I decided that maybe I would best serve these students by becoming a parent advocate rather than the SPO president, because they don’t want parent involvement.

So tonight, I did. I took it upon myself. I invited the [NAME PROTECTED] magazine and I invited the [inaudible 01:22:05]. Because I knew [REPORTER] would already be here. So here’s a copy of the [NAME PROTECTED] magazine, my questions that I had. Here’s a copy of all the talking points that I would have had for you guys. And congratulations. And unless somebody can convince me to do something different, I humbly submit in regret, because my daughter and the other seniors at the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] are having a sad senior year.

I don’t have to choose, but I can still be involved in my child’s education here at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. That’s not a question. But I do not have to be the SPO president. I’m not into titles. I have one of those at work that creates enough trouble. So I’ll always have a voice.

Speaker 24: I didn’t step down for four years, and I was head of the whole district.

Chair: Next, is [NAME PROTECTED] followed by [inaudible 01:23:22].

STUDENT Thank you. My name is [NAME PROTECTED]. You don’t need to start the clock because I’m going to over. I’m a senior and I’m a dancer and I feel as though ... Okay [inaudible 01:23:41]. Coming from the old [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], and [inaudible 01:23:47] – [NAME PROTECTED] was culture it was a family. This is a building. It’s a prop. It’s a prop with a lot of new [inaudible 01:23:58], shall we say. I don’t think that one will ... After we walked out, which we did, walk out. It wasn’t to be rebellious. It wasn’t to be disobedient or try to cause a problem. It was to show you that we’re not going to be taken lightly and that we are serious as to getting our school back to where it was. Obviously, which it started to get better, if we don’t get it back to where it was, we will continue to do the same things.

I also feel as though that at the old [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], which I know this is a new school and as a new school it’s going to bring change. Change is good, but change can also be bad. I don’t have a problem with change. But what I do have a problem with is fronts. I don’t make fronts. I don’t put on fronts. I don’t feel as though as a student or as students, we should have to put on a front that we’re in this great school or have to run around and pick stuff up because you guys are not going to do it. I don’t feel as though that we should have to be ... No. I feel as though this school is like, it’s fun on certain days but on certain days it’s like a prison. On the outside it’s beautiful. On the inside, it’s beautiful, too, but the look and the feel is not the same.
As a senior, I should not want to wake up and look at my alarm clock hit the snooze and want to go back to sleep because I don't want to go to school. Old [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], I set my alarm early just to get here early. It was fun. It's not fun. I know that education does not mean fun but I can't get my education and have a good time doing it? Then that's ya'll failing us and that's going to be us failing ya'll because ya'll look at test scores and the look you got going.

Once again, as a senior, I feel as though we should be able to showcase ourselves. There should not be a time where if I want to dance or if I want to rehearse, I can't use my studio, and I'm saying, "mine," because I'm a senior, advanced year. I can't use my studio to work on my art, and I go to an art school. That doesn't make sense. It doesn't at all. You are saying where one we can have a meeting with a form of authority, I guess and then that form of authority turns back around, and I'm not going to say bashed us, but downed us, if you would.

Another thing is that if we're going to if you want us to do what you guys want and give you guys this little showcase of a perfect school and a perfect environment then give us what we want. All we're asking for is for us to be able to showcase our art and have that family to do it. I can't come to school where I don't know who my administration is. I know who they are, but when do I see them. I barely see them. I see [NAMES PROTECTED] almost every day. That's it. I mean, that's not the only people on our administration. And there should have been an orientation as to where we met every single one of our administrative team and they explain to us, who they are, where they came from, what they did and how they're supposed to help us further our education and get past to what we need to be to get to college. I ask you, Mr. [CEO], why it didn't.

CEO I can't answer that today, because I wasn't here for it but I will get that answer for you.

STUDENT When will that be?

CEO Next week or so.

STUDENT Next week. Thank you.

Chair: [inaudible 01:28:00]. [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] dance parents are you available? Okay. [NAME PROTECTED] [inaudible 01:28:22] will be after.

PARENT My name is [NAME PROTECTED] [inaudible 01:28:30].

Chair: Can you speak louder?

PARENT Yes. I have an 8th grader that goes here and I always introduce her as a student that’s been there for 10 years, probably longer than a lot of our teachers and administrators. She loves [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. When I ask her about it, she'll say she never ever wanted not to be here. She could have went to be in the high school where she is now, but it broke my heart earlier this year and last year. She was sad a lot and didn't want to be here and that never happened, and it really really surprised me. I also would like to thank you DR. [NAME PROTECTED] for his job and the great job that he is doing.

Unfortunately, the pride that we have for him, was the pride that we used to have for our dance department. I just wish that we had some type of guidance and a leader in our dance department and that it felt the way it used to feel and the pride that used to be there, was a very high mark, star of the school and it's gone. And I feel bad for some students, came
here from [inaudible 01:29:56] drive literally two hours almost to come to this school for dance. There are kids that are here that specifically came for dance and they don't have that. That's disappointing financially and time wise for the parents that we spent a lot of time ushering our kids around for dance and unfortunately and sadly, we don't have a dance department.

There is one [inaudible 01:30:28]. I think this is about the third or fourth person we have had people that have come with also big dream talk and the right credentials that were zero, nothing, even lied to the kids why they were leaving. My daughter was quite upset and feeling mad and sad for this person and it hurt me to let her know that someone in your life like that lied to you, literally. They were planning a party and all the stuff that just wasn't the true reason that the administrator left. Where can children trust and who can they trust? I mean these are the people that they count on to be honest and to guide them. These kids are very very experienced about their art and for it to be cut. I don't understand how they can tell the kids that there isn’t enough time for their art and then they'll say well I’m going to stay this, this has always been an issue for me, that if the student is in remedial math but they could do trigonometry, they would not keep them in remedial math. We have students here who dance with world class adults, and they are in remedial dance, and they are frustrated and they are not able to advance because of that.

Chair: Thank you. [inaudible 01:32:17].

COMMUNITY MEMBER

Good evening. I really feel for the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] parents. I feel for the children. But I’m hoping that they’ll know that you’re not the only school that they don't want to an SPO in, it’s throughout the district. Guess what you all? This board knows it. Let me tell you something, I feel for these children because my nephew graduated from [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] in 2010, and when you walked in the school, you felt all the happiness that they felt. It wasn't no sadness. Dr. [NAME PROTECTED] had his choirs together. That school, the old school of arts, was just a little bitty old shabby place that you had to sit, you sit on the bleachers, that's where you sat. They didn’t even have no performance [center] just like now. With building this school this school should have everything that they need. Why you don’t have it? I am upset how you treat our east side schools [inaudible]. You treat our east side schools like they don't matter.

This is my second thing, I heard that, on the website, the school website, when we had the snow last week, parents clean out your sidewalk. My understanding is you have scouts that drives around and see is the streets passable. I want to tell you for everybody’s kids, scouts whoever you are, get out of the car at [STREET NAMES HIDDEN], and walk down to our garage. There’s are no businesses open 7:15 in the morning. Business can't shovel no sidewalk. If the kids can't walk on the sidewalks, they’s in the streets. People, start treating our kids like it was your kid. Start treating them like they were your kids.

5 to 10 below zero. Do you know some kids get theyself ready for school, they out there with no hats and no gloves? I was at the school the other day, there was a little boy with no socks on. But they want to come to school. They eager to come to school. No child in this district should be let down by this district. They should be happy. They should be wailing I want to come to school. But guess what parents, [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] parents, I want to talk to somebody. We gonna band together. And we going to get our old school’s back. We must get it back because that’s for our say, parent’s say. You know, it’s for our kids. If we can't say nothing for our kids, who gonna stand up for them? Surely what I see from down to the year this board is not the one to stand up for our kids.

Chair: [inaudible 01:36:03].
Hi Mr. [CEO] and board members, my name is [NAME PROTECTED] and I am the new librarian at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. So Mr. [CEO], at the last meeting, we mentioned some what we perceived as unforeseen circumstances, tool based budgeting. We listed some of the problems that we have with our libraries, but today I want to actually offer some solutions.

On December 10, President Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, and he reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. He did this on December 10, which provided within the line, a great deal of funding that will be coming to the states to be used in libraries that have a full time school librarian. This funding often is not available for buildings that either have no librarian or only half time librarians. I look at this as a gift from President Obama, not just because I'm a school librarian but also because December 10 is my birthday.

I'm glad I got you laughing a little bit Mr. [CEO]. Let's see if I can make it [inaudible 01:37:10] but I have some more good news for you. I gathered some information for grants that are available so that full time librarians can be brought back to the district and there are grants to pay for that. So Mr. [CEO], I will forward the information I have to you with the hopes that someone from your office, I know you're busy with dealing with some other things, can meet with some of us, the librarians and we can talk about how we need to go forward with this.

Mr. [CEO], I do want to remind you that only 11 of 20 high schools in [Dionysia] have either a library or a librarian. And although I do want to be positive for this next minute, I do encourage all of your board members to visit some of those libraries that no longer have a librarian. I would like you to see what happens to those facilities, I'd like you to see what happens to the books and what happens to the technology. Then I'd like you to take some time to visit the nice schools that still have a full time librarian. You mentioned earlier, Mr. [CEO], that our reading schools went up in [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] high school. Our [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] high school librarian is here tonight. I know that she is a big part of why those scores went up. Every piece of research that we have says that librarians do make a difference with reading scores. There is no research that I have found and I challenge you to find some, that says librarians hurt reading scores.

I would also like Mr. [CEO] to look at our elementary schools some of which you have also mentioned that have a full time librarian to see what happens with AR scores within those buildings. The district has put in a great investment in AR and I would like you also to look at what happens in those buildings that don't have a full time librarian.

Mr. [CEO], there's a lot of information that I'd like to share with you. I can't do it in three minutes, though, so I would like to forward this to you. It's a hard copy, and hope that maybe you can get it back with us at some point. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, and Mr. [NAME PROTECTED], I will just say that my children went to [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], and I can't remember the name of the librarian that was before you but she was a wonderful woman. And my children actually credit their high reading scores on through high school and college to partially to the great staff there and [inaudible 01:39:24] AR program so thank you for continuing to support.

Chair: Mrs. [NAME PROTECTED]. Yes, I'm so sorry I can't remember her name.
Well, Mrs. [NAME PROTECTED] is happily retired. She does visit [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. I'm not a full time librarian because I'm only there half time, but she does a great deal of work the days that I'm not there. I'd love to send your courtesies to Mrs. [NAME PROTECTED].

Chair: Please do. She's a wonderful librarian.

Thank you.

[NAME PROTECTED]. And then Mr. [NAME PROTECTED]

I didn't feel welcome here today. We were blocked from coming in first time ever, by some guy named [NAME PROTECTED], something like that. And now that's weird. Thank you Mrs. [inaudible 01:40:10] for getting us in. We are the republic.

Now, tell me it isn't true. All these awards you got came from when there was a lower campus, when there was family in the building, [inaudible 01:40:27] and I hear now you got rid of it?

Hear me out, because this is strange. Because if you don't have [CITY] kids prepared, that means there's more space for suburban kids. Nice job, members of the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] that give grants. Anyhow, moreover, I'm thinking about I asked way back when for some updates on what was going on at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and this was a way long time ago and what was happening and how you were addressing the situation at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]. And I still haven't received those from the [inaudible 01:41:14].

This makes me believe where you hide things. You know, you talked about redesigning the attendance signs and you're bringing it back after this now, to way back when you came out with these signs and the kids caught it right away. Get 2 school.

There's all on one line, very little space, and they said, "Ghetto schools." It looks like you moved them that way.

Now, one of the major concerns of House Bill 269, Mayoral Control, was that if the mayor got access to the children's money, he would use it for other purposes and the anointed school board would let him do it. Well, funny thing, after ordinance 925 A 95 parking and admission tax which brings in well over 30 million dollars a year, it is said that the children should get 2 million dollars to compensate for the money that was lost to the tax evading gimmick, the football stadium. Now, in 2009, the mayor stole a million dollars of that money, you hid it, and he used it for football. He has done so every year since, with full approval of the board. And with every new board member, I inform them of it.

Each and every one of you has said, "This is appalling. This shouldn't be. That money should go for the kids." Well, needless to say you stole a million again. Mr. [Monday 01:42:57] I thought you were going to be different, but obviously football is more important than our children's education.

Now, that money was used for arts and music programs that would enhance a student's school day, make them want to come to school. So here you are, making arts and music getting cut, using SBB, student based budgeting, with high cuts in art, music across the
district and libraries and the public doesn’t find out about it. Now, it’s obvious that you
don’t believe that poor kids should have arts and music.

Every school should have that. And that is why you are making little robots that can pass
tests. That are stressing out like little peeps on south park [inaudible 01:44:04]. And what's
happening is when you cut arts and music, you cut the soul. You cut the spirit, moreover,
you’d better keep those ghetto schools signs. [01:44:20].

COMMUNITY
MEMBER

Good evening everyone. Mr. [CEO] and members of the board, the district. At the last
board meeting, Mr. [inaudible 01:44:47] had emphasized an outrageous and intolerable
reality in terms of what essentially has become a systemic gutting of the libraries in [CITY]
Municipal Schools.

Mr. [CEO] I would appreciate receiving from you, the names of all schools that either have
no library or librarian or schools that have librarians and librarians just part time. I would
appreciate that information between now and the time the board meets, at [SCHOOL
NAME PROTECTED] high school on the 23rd of February. And I want to stress, Mr. [CEO],
and to the board, that unless you affirmatively respond to what Mr. [NAME PROTECTED]
has indicated tonight in terms of addressing this outrageous reality, and unless this
outrageous reality is systemically rectified by the time that schools resume in August of
2016 for the 2016, 2017 school year, you can count on [NAME PROTECTED] to relentlessly
aggravate to the public that the public not vote affirmative, meaning that the public come
to the polls in November 2016 and vote no, on renewal of the operating levy that the
voters of the [CITY] plan have approved in 2012.

Mr. [inaudible 01:47:27].

RETIRED TEACHER
AND COMMUNITY
MEMBER

Good evening, board members, Mr. [CEO]. I come along on all the issues we have talked
about on a very personal level, because I have very talented and gifted young
grandchildren who are playing concertos and we have been told things like, every school
should have a music program. Reality, my straight A granddaughter got a B in music even
though she plays concertos, and can play more than one instrument and has already
competed the high school theater group because her music teacher doesn’t like her.
Because that’s the kind of things, he couldn’t even tune her violin and you’re telling me
that I should take this gifted music student and trust her to that when there’s was a school
of the arts. They were getting rid of all of them. I had convinced the top parents of all that
would arise, because the hardest part that we have is we are seventh in the district.

It's very difficult to even have in our fine arts buildings and things, integrated programs.
So I’m convinced with all of these parents who have paid for all of these private lessons,
year after year after year, that let us all go to the school of the arts, so we are all packing
up, getting ready for our trials, and find there’s nowhere to go.

That says that you don’t believe in talent, because a school of the arts is supposed to be
for the gifted. So these young ladies and gentlemen that have been playing instruments
since they were three years old have nowhere to go if we can’t find the money to pay for
their lesson. SO That's number one.

Number two, [inaudible 01:49:42]. I don’t want to have you go into a building and sit
around where there is a small auditorium, a big auditorium, a theater in the round for my
grandchildren to have a place to exercise their talent. They not only sing; they dance they
play. My one granddaughter is an exceptional artist. I call her my Jackson Pollock, because
she has been painting since she was 2 years old. And We waited for her there, because
said, we want to get her in here when she is headed for that sixth grade, seventh grade year, and give us a break, because we've given you our children when we didn't have to. We're middle class, college educated families that have given you our children and all we ask back is what we tax pay for. That's number one.

I [inaudible 01:50:51]. I don't want administrators walking around in my house when my granddaughter should have a stage to perform on. That's number one. Number two, I want my SPOs back. As the last really active chairperson under desegregation, I know the difference that it makes in buildings when there's highly involved parent participation. We have got to not be considered second class citizens. Because the city of [Dionysia] is poor, our children are considered poor, and not only are they considered poor, they are relegated to those things that go with poverty. They are said to have uncaring parents, people that do not discipline them, people that do not care about education. I think my daughter cares about her child when her daughter scored 50 points above the national score on a Parks test. She outdid suburbia. But the reward that she is receiving is having her grades denigrated from music teachers because they don't like her.

And then grandson, who is playing concertos, who started to play at age 3, his class is a bunch of rambunctious boys, and so he's not permitted music because music teacher don't want to be bothered with all the boys.

So He's got this so called encore program. And on the encore, you get to choose and the teacher gets to choose. The teacher wouldn't choose him, so he doesn't get to play in his school and he can't go to the school of the arts, because you don't have one for him to go to.

Now, did you get rid of the performing arts program at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED]? Ask yourself that question. We went into the desegregation process because they have gifted and talented ambitious bright people, but we don't even have [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED—a school that was closed] anymore. They have intact classes. We don't have anything. They have musical programs at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] but we're losing [inaudible]. Something's wrong with that picture where we are dedicating ourselves to our children and we are finding a board, this board is an integrated, diverse board. And you are forcing us to place our children into segregated separates. Something’s wrong with that picture.

My grandson says he may want to be a lawyer, and one of the first things he said was, "I think I ought to sue the board. This is not something that I made up or said, he just said, "I think I ought to sue the board." I think that they should not have the right for me ... And I'll bring it back one last time because I have no communication from this board, no communication from the facilities and no further communication from Mr. [CEO] who came to us and met with us. As I told you, I almost fell down the steps. The person that does the in house almost fell down the steps and you are not addressing the fact that we have little bitty babies. We have one more preschool added to our school. We have five star preschools and we must have 5, 6, we have 15 paraprofessionals with that many preschoolers, and we have babies that are carrying their food up a flight of steps, and every day we're dealing with the bugs and we're dealing with the danger of food on the steps while we rebuild schools that are in ten times better shape than our own.

We need to address the lack of parent participation in these manners, and we need to address [City Neighborhood PROTECTED] this board's lack of concern for the parents of [City Neighborhood PROTECTED], that you put us and our children. I'm saying this, because heaven forbid, somebody fall. When they fall, I'm going to go right to them and their lawyer
and say, "I've been telling this board for months that they need to deal with the situation of the unsafe environment of people carrying food up and down the steps."

Public Meeting 12.15.2015

CHAIR

Next we will have our peer to public participation which lasts no longer than 40 minutes. Everyone who wishes to speak should have given us a form and I believe the form is over here. As everyone know you have no limits of time it's a small crowd so I'll just read 1 person at a time.

We'll start with [NAME PROTECTED] and then the next person would be [NAME PROTECTED] [inaudible 00:27:18].

SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF

Good evening board members my name is [NAME PROTECTED] and I'm the school librarian at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] At a recent librarians meeting, I became a alarmed with some information that I found, and I think you would be alarmed with this as well. Librarians at [SCHOOL DISTRICT] are alarmed at the erosion and disappearance of libraries and library funding at [THE SCHOOL DISTRICT]. We want to be proactive in helping the board re-establish the media center and services to students, staff, families, and the community.

In a recent letter to all [SCHOOL DISTRICT] educators, Mr. [CEO] wrote, "Baseline data [inaudible 00:27:58] shows we are at or about at the same academic position as the year before and it's what we now do with this information in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarters that will make the difference." Mr. [CEO] further went on to wrote, "That I am confident at the difference we will make. Our [SCHOOL DISTRICT] leadership has repeatedly and publicly stated their support for academic supports reading the names and flight spaces that promote programs such as project base learning, writing, maker's spaces, and more.

But in spite of good intentions, the reality is that libraries, library spaces, library services, and librarians are being eliminated, underfunded, or not funded at all. We want you to be aware, the community to be aware, that only 11 of 20 [SCHOOL DISTRICT] high schools currently have either a library or a librarian. The 9 remaining high schools either no longer have a media center or they have no librarian. We want you to be aware that most elementary and 18 library media specialist are split between 2 buildings, leaving the libraries empty the other half of the week.

We wonder how we can justify to the community that cutting the library services, spaces, and budgets, with low reading scores call for more attention to literacy supports, not less. We know that the highest performing suburban districts in the state of Ohio are not cutting, but rather, they are adding to library services, and we wonder why this is not happening at [SCHOOL DISTRICT]. We wonder what parent wants their child denied access to books, technology, information, and digital instruction.

[SCHOOL DISTRICT] librarians have become an endangered species and we need the support and attention of our parents and community and especially this board of education. We want you to know that some school library places have been given away for other uses. The library budgets have been cut and in some instances eliminated
completely, with zero funds available for librarians. This is our call for help, and we're appealing with our district to partner with us to restore our [SCHOOL DISTRICT] library media centers in every school to a level of excellence that will benefit all, particularly our students. Thank you.

CHAIR

Thank you.

PARENT

Good evening. I'm a parent of a wonderful girl at [NAME OF SCHOOL PROTECTED]. It's the season of holiday cheer. It's also the continuation of the testing season for [SCHOOL DISTRICT]. Would anyone on the board like to take a guess how many high stake tests many kids with [SCHOOL DISTRICT] have taken since Thanksgiving? I'll remind you, I spoke of this topic a little while back and at that point, at the end of 1st quarter, it was 11 high stake tests. Any guesses when this things going to break? Is it 1? Ba-humbug, that'd be too simple. 2? Is that silver bells I hear ringing? 3? Feliz Navidad anyone?

I can count 4. That is more than 1 a week for our students. At least one high stake test a week since Thanksgiving. Does that sound insane to anyone else besides me? [inaudible 00:31:32] it's making my head hurt. I can't imagine what it's doing for our kids. Imagine being told time and time again you are being assessed and you have to show growth. Blah, blah, blah, blah That's why all these kids are hearing. To make it worse after our kids take the test, all they become is a number.

As a parent, whenever I go to board meetings, all I hear is test and data. Look at the scholar world in this category, scholars really improved on this test since the last time that took it. So on and so forth. A number that means nothing once they graduate high school. I don't ever recall being asked on a job interview; can you please tell me your pretest NWA score? What about your posttest NWA score?

We are not helping to create productive citizens who succeed with success. [inaudible 00:32:22] we understand some testing is help identify the needs of kids but [THE SCHOOL DISTRICT] has taken this to the extreme. I challenge more members to look at high stake tests other districts have and try to come up with a reason why we're the poorest district in Ohio, continues to abuse our kids with test overkill. One of my jobs as a parents is to protect my children. I made sure I did that when I informed the principal and teacher at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] that my daughter would not be subjected to testing abuse and she will not take the kindergarten [inaudible 00:32:49].

To have kindergartners suffer through 57 reading questions and 57 math questions blows my mind and I wonder why the board thinks this is acceptable behavior. Other parents have confided in me with their concerns as well. Old decrepit technology that continues to fail our kindergartners and other kids. They have to suffer to complete the test. A test that has a combined total of 114 questions. The test that asks my daughter to target 3 points on a screen, isolate their finger to click a mouse, hold it and move it across the screen, in most cases diagonally, release the button and drop and choose the right answer all at the same time?

These babies simply cannot do that and there are not enough computers for the kindergartners to take the test at the same time. How is a teacher supposed to monitor tests all day and continue instruction for the rest of the time? Everyone is set up for failure. Parents are starting to talk about opting out and doing what is in the best interest of their child. Please [inaudible] and stop the testing abuse.
I have a letter from [inaudible 00:33:49] board of education in which their superintendent writes Senator [inaudible 00:33:56] and Representative [inaudible 00:33:53] current high stake testing environment was created under the manner of holding districts accountable, removes our local control, and proclamates a testing system rather than a learning environment. It removes the innovative wing from our sails of creativity. Testing cannot be a one size fits all approach. The time is not to stand up for our students, assemble a wider array of stake holders to assist in determining the future of our system. We owe it to our children, we owe it to all of [inaudible 00:34:25]. Again, I beg of you, of a school system that [inaudible 00:34:30] do what is best for our kids, thank you.

Mr. [CEO], this is the 2nd time but it won’t be the last time that I’m interested in the need to make certain that the 30 seniors at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] who are now matriculating in the in pre [inaudible 00:35:22] program. Based on their satisfaction and completion of the apprenticeship program when they graduate in June of 2016. Upon graduation and the satisfactory passing of [inaudible 00:35:51]. They are able to be in Florida either as apprentices or capital improvement projects of [CITY] Municipal School districts. It is not feasible for all 30 to be employed as an apprentice [inaudible] of the [CITY] Municipal School District that they’re able to be employed as a apprentices for companies that have signed the community benefits of [inaudible 00:36:42] in previous years. I know since we improvised as the [inaudible 00:36:48] 2016. Now, [inaudible 00:36:57] because [inaudible 00:37:00] who’s also found that in terms of 25 invested schools, especially the 13 original investing schools, there have been overall improvement in attendance and in behavior in these types of schools. But very few of the investment schools have manifested appreciable improvement academically.

This is especially, I say a seriously dire concern with the original 13 who are completing their 3rd year, approximately their 3rd year as investment schools. So 2016, I will return to this matter as the current school academic year leads towards its completion in June of 2016.

Thank you. [inaudible 00:38:16].

First order of business [inaudible 00:38:29] I had it, I had it [inaudible 00:38:33] but I here to remind you that there was going to be something about the computers at that [inaudible 00:38:45] that’s a [inaudible 00:38:48]. My biggest concern is [City Neighborhood PROTECTED], and the magnet school program, as well as the library. AS the elementary library chair. I watched us do the reader’s digest [inaudible] I watched us have the highest circulation of school libraries in the state of Ohio and then now I’m watching them decline. We have employed for us, in the library, that wasn’t what I wanted to talk about, but I have to, we have employed less in the library [inaudible 00:39:20]. People who really understand information and technology and they’re not being used.

My children don’t go to the library because they don’t have privilege of going to [City Neighborhood PROTECTED]’s library. That’s not acceptable as a program. Plus, you’re losing things like John Hay How do you become an architect without knowing how to [inaudible 00:39:52] and how do you allow a principal on school grace budgeting to cancel the library? That’s their job as board to monitor these things because they may have [inaudible 00:40:07] but they’re not using it very well. The other part of the library piece is, the state of Ohio allocates that budget. I would hate to see what would happen if somebody comes in and audits the district because it strictly says 50% of that budget must purchase library books. It says no library books may be purchased in multiple copies. That would be indicated for classroom use.
Textbooks, are textbooks, are textbooks. Library is a general purpose. Then, it says another portion of that is for equipment and it's not of building equipment it is for equipment to be used in the library. Someone is stealing the money because if there are libraries that are saying they don't have a budget, someone is stealing the money and principals are usurping their authority. Because the other part of the library piece is that that room belongs to the librarian. It does not belong to the school. It sits on full classroom integrity and it cannot be decentralized so you need to really check up on that. I'm not sure if some of our new librarians, because they don't have a [NAME PROTECTED] to teach them what the law is, or they don't have someone like me that's set on the public library board. That's your job.

Your job as a board is to monitor that as things are decentralized people don't abuse and then, they're taking the money, that's why I ask you, when are you going to look at individual school budgets. You decentralized them but you still need to see what are they doing with the money? I have requested that at the budget hearings that we have the right to look at the individual school budgets because there's few part of public knowledge. Because I'm finding that I can go to a meeting where don't have 10 people, 12 people, then have 30 [inaudible 00:42:34] leaders wasting the children's money as they don't have their parent participation, as they don't have libraries.

One more thing, and I have to say because that's what I really came to say but I had to defend you because I spent 13 years in the library and it was so thriving when I left. It was thriving. For you to stand here and tell me that 11 places don't even have one? That's shameful, it's not just shameful.

But what I came to say was, I want Ms. [inaudible 00:43:13] what you had. I want any to have a building with a library and a gymnasium and I don't want to wait until [inaudible 00:43:27] is out or [City Neighborhood PROTECTED]. Somebody told me on number 9 and every time I come to one of these board meetings I get madder and madder and madder because I live in [inaudible 00:43:41] and our average tax bill is over 3,000 dollars a year. We literally pay tuition and for me to have you prioritize the internationals and give them all the money from the sale of the board of education and then have my 2 of them. No one saw them and I come before this board, how many times the in-house suspension lady nearly fell down the steps last week and I told you we cannot keep having these babies carry their lunches from the basement upwards while other people have this with our tax dollars.

We cannot be on list number 99. Somebody needs to come in, come to ... Have your next board meeting at [City Neighborhood PROTECTED], I invite you to come to [City Neighborhood PROTECTED] because I invite you to see what your child has vs. what my child has.

[inaudible 00:44:53]

[inaudible 00:44:53]

Gee! It's amazing! 1,000,000 dollars in parking taxes the mayor steals per year imagine how many [inaudible 00:45:05] that cold fund. And by the way, this is what I came to you a long time ago, you cut libraries, it's amazing what SBB, student base buddy has. What else have you taken away that's being given? I'd like updates on the situation and [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and at the---- school of the arts that were presented by the students that last previous board meeting. You passed a massive building supplies resolutions a while back. Do all schools have adequate supplies and toilet paper and hand sanitizer in [NAME PROTECTED]? I don't think so. Don't let me be specific in the future.
Why do I fear we are in the land of Oz? Your propaganda machine paints the district as this wonderful shiny emerald city, but every now and then you get glimpse behind those curtains like [SCHOOL NAMES PROTECTED] I'd like [inaudible 00:46:09]. So I would like a copy of the first [inaudible 00:46:13] violent incident reports for all schools as well as suspensions at those schools. You know, you shop, home ed, art, music, and more. All of these hands on laboratories for math, now you have to hire consultants to figure out why are the children, haven’t fossilized the basics. With all the testing and your [inaudible] learning standards. Not much time can be made to reinforce those basic skills.

No surprise, math and science scores, off. [inaudible 00:46:51] not another proper foundation the children will continue to struggle, not just now but for their entire life. This is what you’ve done. You jammed [inaudible 00:47:03] Republican [NAME PROTECTED] saying the poor should shut their mouth and start saving for their child’s health care and their college education, and their retirement. The fact of the matter is if you knew math, they can’t. Not at .01% interest. Now that is what kids need to know about as well as parents.

This sort of correlates when you, as well as the nation, got rid of consumer math. When I taught consumer math, it was totally different than the other classes that I taught. The notebook was 60% of the grade. The students could use it on their quizzes and tests. All problems were real life consumer problems. Like, computing their overtime pay, how to do interest on a loan. The notebook was their life book. You kept it for your entire life and you used it with your children. To think you eliminated consumer math and you say you care about the future of the children?

Put it back in. Surely you’re going to have to hire more math teachers, but aren't our kids worth it? Isn't their future worth it? Thank you.

CHAIR

Thank you. Next [inaudible 00:48:40] all of these [inaudible 00:48:45]. 8.01 Authorizing acceptance of 4,500 dollars from the National School board association for assuming the count of [inaudible 00:48:59] board of Education board and authorized [inaudible 00:49:03] support the school districts, high schools, speech and debate teams.
Megan: So how did your school become an investment school and how has the process been going as we try to improve and go forward into the future?

1: How did we become an investment school?

Megan: Yeah the start like how did we get on the list? [53]

1: I honestly don’t know that question—

2: Well I basically know it. CEO [NAME PROTECTED] created the [CITY] Plan as you know and went down to Columbus and passed the house bill 525 he designated 13 schools for phase 1 investment that were struggling in the ABCs Attendance, Behavior, Curriculum and felt that the schools he chose were ones that he felt could pass the hurdle to get over the edge of being below the levels that were necessary. There were schools that were definitely lower than our schools or the other 12 schools but again he felt that [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] had a chance of moving forward. If we were one of the schools that were development as an investment school. [1:40] I’m sure there’s a better way of explaining it.

Megan: Oh well that’s what the website says oh we picked these schools but it doesn’t really explain...well...

2: And each school, each investment school was chosen as Ready to Learn, ready to teach, and ready to what was the third— it’s kind of like a tiered process and we were at the point. I think we were at the point of ready to learn because our teachers were already at the point where they accepted our investment program they signed the letter of commitment to move forward so we were ready to learn or ready to teach or something like that #3 can explain it better but yeah so they each had a designation.

Megan: And so what are the struggles that the students go through on a day to day basis? Out of all 3 of those ABCS which ones the hardest? Is it the attendance or the behavior or?

2: Well, attendance is probably number one because the issue is getting them to school and if they’re here every day on time then they’re in the school and in their classroom learning. [2:45] So their score should go up already if they are here because if they’re not here everything else—

Megan: Falls down yeah.

2: Except behavior because they’re not here. 2:53

1: Right so there is a huge push right now to get them to school.

Megan: Yeah the Go 2 school get 2 school.

1: I mean that’s across the whole district. [2:59] But in our building its huge and we’ve programs that help us to make that happen not only do we have teachers who will do home visits and who will phone and who will do anything they can to get their kids in the classroom we also have a program called a leader in me in which we give our kids leadership roles and if you have a leadership role you better be in school so it’s something we’re just starting we don’t have enough data at this point to know how well its working but we do have anecdotal data about kids who have chronic tardiness or chronic absenteeism saying to their parents or their caregivers that they need to be to school because they have a leadership role.

Megan: And I have to deeper at the census about the [City Neighborhood PROTECTED] location but do you have a lot of people coming in from this neighborhood or outside of it? Because I’m wondering if lower income or family background has any play in how hard it is for kids to get to school here. [4:10]
1: most of the kids here are from the neighborhood I couldn’t tell you a percentage who are not I mean there are some, but mostly they are from this neighborhood. [4:20].

Megan: And do you think that is part of the struggle to get to them school or is it because we don’t have a lot of blight or crimes, this is a nice neighborhood, but I know there are other schools that don’t necessarily have that luxury. [4:32]

2. We’re a 100% poverty school too so we have free breakfast and lunch but we are at 94.7% attendance now or closer to 95 so we are eking forward, I’m not sure what our attendance was at the beginning of the year and I need to get that number oh so we are 94.7 so we have grown in our attendance. Some of the things that, yeah for the little ones who are not here or not getting here on time it’s the parent you can’t sit there and blame a child a small kindergartener, first grade, third grader because they’re responsible for getting themselves up and fed and to school and its just—middle school kids they have more of a say-so 5th, 6th, even 4th graders have more of a say so in how they get to school so it’s either the child, or the parent, or both in some cases as well

Megan: That’s the struggle.

2: Yeah [5:24] And I think the things that are keeping them from school runs the gambit. It’s family violence, it’s the drugs, it’s hunger, it’s clothing, we do have a clothing program here. There’s so many things.

(the principal now enters the room she is labeled speaker #3 as she gets settled she talks about one of the students having a tantrum in the room we were in and that’s why some of the papers were ripped off the walls)

2: [6:18] You know some of our parents have 2 jobs 3 jobs sometimes the kids are on their own, but the biggest goal is to have the kids we want the teacher to focus on teaching and we want them to come here with less baggage as possible so my goal (as the family site coordinator) is to help them or offer to help them with resources so they can focus on learning [6:40]

1: There are a lot of incentives for our kids to come to school. They’re incentives at the classroom level and the individual level at the classroom level at the grade level and at the whole building level so we keep a lot of things going so that they will come and the kids here are also right down to kindergarten they have little data notebooks and they are encouraged daily to mark in their book if they are. Here this is a newer thing but they are monitoring themselves.

Megan: Okay that’s cool that shows more empowering initiative on the student you know. So my other question then would be so you said you have resources you have you have counselors or people that can probably sit down with the parent or child if need be so the teachers don’t have to deal with that so what kind of learning initiatives do you give the teachers exactly to help them understand how to maneuver these types of situations with these students? [7:55]

2: Well what they do is they come to me or I see myself with issues that children are having if the teacher notices the student is wearing the same shirt all week and it’s getting dirty they come to me because I have uniforms that I can offer them and I have a little clothes closet in my office as well so its communication between the staff the teacher and myself. The teams have meetings of their own to talk more curriculum but then I get involved if it has to do with resources and for not just the child but the family and kids that don’t go to our school if they are in the family, the community. So one of my biggest objectives is to get the community involved to literally wrap themselves around our school with resources whether its supplies, financial support, people support with volunteerism, yeah just so they know we’re here and what our program is and to see how they can work with us to literally as a village raise the child. [8:58}

Megan: Right that’s good because I go to these district meetings and of course I get everybody who would complain about the district at these meetings of course a lot of the comments I hear is that the portfolio plan is too business
we’re not numbers versus we want our community school back and you know I can’t make any opinions because I’m doing an objective analysis but I find it very interesting that a lot of these initiatives of building a community school are put right into the [CITY] plan at least that’s what I’m seeing and what you’re telling me is that’s basically what you’re doing here?

2: Exactly. We’re engaging the community and [City Neighborhood PROTECTED], is my lead agency so I work heavily with them for resources as well and you’ll see in the newsletter the resources that I work on. Legal, healthcare, food pantries, clothing, taxes. And then I’ll get a parent who will come up to me and say, my kindergartener is still in a crib can you help me get a big boy bed for him so.  [10:09] SO my twin bed happens to be in my sister’s attic they have that now. Just any way any how whether it’s me or as a team.

Megan: So do you get a lot of new teachers or do get a lot of old teachers that just move from one building to the next. Do you have a lot of teacher matriculation?

3: No we’ve been pretty steady I mean I’ve only been here 3 years but in 3 years the people that started 3 years ago are pretty much the same ones. The only people to leave we’ve had two retire and the couple others that we gained were because we had more kids not replacing folks so.

[I apologize for going off script and the other principal I try to catch her up on what we’ve been discussing]

Megan: [11:56] So some would argue that it’s better to do the investment plan strategy going back to that that’s the policy initiatives then to just shut down a school how has being put into the investment plan been beneficial for your school? [12:12]

3: Well in so many ways we have smaller classes which is huge a lot more resources we plain and simple get a lot more money so we can fund a lot of different things I would say those are the biggest ones that we have the smaller classes which is huge and then additional money

2: In this position. MY position as well. Per person.

(as I was about to go into another question I realized we already answered it and we discuss this for a second)

Megan: And so just to clarify with the investment school process or with the investment school grouping I know it switches up every year too am correct on that assumption?

3: The what does?

Megan: Like you every year you can move into another group kind of thing you get reevaluated?

3: No, it’s a three-year commitment. [13:20]

2: I was talking to her about the ready to learn ready to teach we are to teach or ready to learn?

3: We’re ready to learn.

2: And what was the third? Ready to achieve or---

3: Act.

Megan: Well you just kind of answered this question already because you said you get more funding more the district helped you ensure your classroom sizes were smaller?

3: We get more staff and we get more money.

Megan: Okay because that’s basically what my question was going to ask how does that mean in relationship to other schools in the district—
3: So like right now we’re finishing our third year of investment so we’re losing 3½ because we don’t get the extra anymore so

Megan: I mean obviously I believe the investment plan strategy is the best plan to move forward with but once it goes away what’s the future look like?

3: Well it’s gonna suck that we have fewer people that’s a professional term

[we talk about the recording for a second]

3: Well the plan was for three years you get extra so you build a climate and culture that should be self-sustaining so the plans that we put into place like new leaders and the positive behavior intervention supports PBIS all those kind of things those we can keep doing without the extra money. We paid the money to be trained now people are trained they can continue it the part that is the one thing that is not self-sustaining is the additional staff the money is just not there [15:23]

1: But we do have a lot of extra materials and that we were able to order according to teachers needs and those are here. Most of that stuff is permanent. Not all of it but an awful lot of it is permanent.

2: And I also hope that after this is no longer the school and I’m most likely not at the school anymore we hope that the community is still involved that they don’t leave. Cause they never have to leave we’re hoping that they remember the school and still stay in touch and are involved and engaged.

Megan: So you said you were doing community engagement like in that sense is there anything sustainable in what you’re implementing right now? [16:09]

Megan: Or is it kind of depends on the population every year it’s different?

2: Well, no, like one of the things we implement is an after school program that really didn’t exist prior. Right now I’ve gotten it to a point where its sustainable like there’s no money that’s backing this program right now I’ve got it done with volunteers and teachers so

3: The first year we spent we spent a big chunk of the investment extra money on it but now she’s created a program that its self-sustaining its volunteers and free people that come in and all that, that will be sustained.

1: but also I think some of the things that we’ve [16:52] done now that we have a different kind of staff meeting than used to be here and we have a different kind of teacher based team that used to be here. We have an instructional leadership team that is very large there are many many people anyone who wants to be on it can and its huge what like 20 people?

3: Yeah.

1: Or something are on it which no one gets paid extra for it but you get extra work.

Megan: SO it’s like a committee.

1: It is well it is and it’s really shared and distributed leadership it’s really people taking ownership of different areas so that if someone leaves these kinds of things that have already been established over the 3 years those things are going to continue

Megan: Like a good foundation.

1: Right the foundations are going to continue because teachers now understand how a productive meeting works how to look at data how to implement best practices so they know now what it takes so if some of us leave they can do it.
Megan: What were those committees again? What were the 3---[18:12]

1: It’s called the instructional leadership team but anyone in our school at this point can run a staff meeting it doesn’t always have to be a regular

Megan: So how do the staff meetings change then compared to how they used to be because you were saying they had been changed and everything’s been different?

1: Well I think and it wasn’t easy to change I think initially there were a lot of gripes there were just a lot of gripes and we also meet weekly whereas most schools monthly. An agenda is established by our steering committee who is led by Mrs.---and Ms. (3) is on it, myself and our CIS is on it

2: Assistant principal

1: So we talk about what needs to happen in the staff meeting and we have a protocol that we follow

3: The data wise Protocol that’s a huge thing and like [#1] said that’s going to be here long after we go but they’re so used to it like [#1] was saying they’re not happy at the beginning but it’s very lined out and it makes the meeting purposeful and focused instead of just griping about a kid---you know what this kid did? You know that kind of thing it keeps everybody very much on track its timed and I truly believe long after we’re all gone they’re going to keep doing it.

1: Right

3: Because as reluctant as they were they’re loving it twice as much now they just think it’s fantastic. [20:03]

1: And if they do have something to say if a staff member feels that something needs to be said to the group that something may be about attendance something about an activity something that applies to everyone certainly that time is provided to them to people absolutely and again that’s going to go on and in the teacher based teams it is different from the way grade level teams were run and again we use the data wise agenda but the kinds of things we talk about are attendance, behavior, academics, whose in need and what can we do. And what does the data say about the kids who need different levels and kinds of help and then we problem solve. And then we problem solve.

Megan: Right. So what if a parent tells you guys well my kid is not just a number what is your response to how effective these strategies are working versus we do not want to dehumanize kids they’re not just numbers but how for somebody who’s on the outside who doesn’t really understand how things really work in the inside what would you say to that person?

1: I can [21:29] give you an example, yesterday I was at a parent meeting with a teacher and a parent who had some real concerns but the good news is that the teacher came to the meeting and has also reached out to this parent and been very clear about expectations but the parent had a notebook-- a data binder really on this student and said I want you to look here this is the behavior program and the parent had a concern about the mother did not care for the way that the teacher was I guess the parent didn’t really feel that the behavior program that this particular teacher was using was working her son so together they made up a different one and it was working very effectively and the teacher had the records right there also the teacher had NWEA scores for when this student arrived at our school which was November until now and those NWEA scores have gone up considerably in both math and reading and it was explained to the parent this isn’t just a [CITY] Test this is a test that students take across the country and look how much your student has grown. I think in fact I’m confident that the parent saw that the data was there that showed improved behavior, improved math, improved reading [23:10]

Megan: SO I’m noticing that a lot of it I feel like is just a miscommunication and I don’t think everybody, or they don’t sit down like this parent did it can be gripy at these meetings sometimes

1: Sure
Megan: So now [23:28] you’ve brought up a nice interesting other point because some people really don’t like all the [CITY] tests I mean that’s what I’ve been hearing what are the benefits of those tests being done in our schools especially in our investment schools?

(everyone laughs)

1: Let me take that one.

2: Let’s put that one in the parking lot.

3: As soon as I figure out a benefit I’ll let you know.

1: Well the thing is there are a lot of tests and it does take time and it does take up our technology and it does take massive scheduling and scheduling problems and it does can take away from teaching time but some of them are really quite useful. [24:14]

3: NWEA and the learning continuum.

1: It’s huge.

3: It tells the teacher exactly it’s not oh she struggles in reading okay what about reading it just takes the teacher down to such fine details and indicators that the teacher oh I need to help so and so learn the [inaudible] vowel? You get that specific you know how to help a child if you just keep these blanket statements oh they struggle in reading or math is just not their subject you don’t know where to begin. Some of the tests really focus the teacher on this is exactly where you begin. Not all of them but a lot of them. [24:54].

1: Well certainly there are some that don’t help the teacher as much I mean it isn’t that—all the tests are actually helpful I mean it’s the sheer quantity probably

3: Exactly.

1: --and the amount of time that it takes and the amount of technology that is up and running all the time and the technology does fail sometimes and that’s an issue but I think probably focusing on a few tests which is what we do here to drive our instruction [25:35]

Megan: Yeah and your policy strategies in the future.

1: Yeah it’s helpful. It is helpful.

Megan: SO do you have a lot of parents that complain about these tests here or no?

2: No not to me. I talk to the parents about after school programing and transportation and resources. But they don’t talk too much about curriculum academics and things [26:03]

[I talk about my experience at SPO and District meetings and reaffirm the point of my research]

3: [26:50] We have taken the time to for to talk to the parents specifically about why do we keep giving tests so for example the 3rd grade guarantee that’s a huge one we’ve met with them at the very beginning of the year 3rd grade parents you know we’re telling you today your child will not pass third grade if they don’t pass this test and here’s why. We explained in depth because they were you know pretty hot and heavy that there was such high stakes so we explained where it came from that it does begin with ODE it’s a state law it’s not [THE CEO] made this up this is a state law. So we explained that and then we tried to shift their way of thinking of saying it’s a gift it’s a benefit because we’re making sure no child walks out of 3rd grade without knowing how to read you’re not going to end up in 8th grade saying this kid can’t read because we’re stopping it now we’re going to make sure and more importantly all these tests we take throughout the year is to figure out exactly okay they mastered informational texts but they
still struggle comprehension so now we can intervene and work on that and then take another test. Okay so they got that so when they take the big one which is right now the AIRS test after Spring Break then they’ll be ready to pass so it helps. And the parents I think they really got into it. [28:21]

1: Right. Plus, I mean there is research that supports that testing reinforces learning.

2: Learning.

1: So there’s that component too and I think a lot of people just kind of forget that. [28:36] Myself included because again scheduling and all those kinds of things that we see.

[I go off topic a bit and discuss new ways of addressing student achievement that are coming out now]


3: Well no I’m just here for a second because I will have a cranky parent coming in any minute so I will have to step but I wanted to show you we were just evaluated by School Works and they’re a national company but we were scored the highest they’ve ever done practically they were just here last week but some of your questions the one section is about student’s opportunities to learn which you’ve talked to #1 about and stuff but the other one the educators opportunities to learn and the final one was the leadership but what I wanted to show you —

Megan: Is there a way to get this online or look at them or no.

1: Probably not I would say no because it has a lot of names.

Megan: Okay

3: No we just put this together for the auditors who came in so this is an example of the agenda so we’re very specific any we make sure that our I can statements are working toward all that and all this data when you were talking about the value of testing and stuff and when parents would say something about being a number we truly believe in educating the whole child so not only do we do the numbers on reading or math but you’ll see—a student—tore it down this morning that’s why they’re there.

1: Behavior and attendance.

3: And CFL (conditions for learning) so we monitor whether they feel challenged or safe or bullied or feel comfortable talking to their teacher. We really do monitor all of that. [32:05]

[the ladies give me other handouts and discuss their importance we begin to wrap up the meeting.]

1: [33:15] You know I do want to add and I don’t know if it’s something, a question you need but I know when MS [NAME PROTECTED] was asked to be a principal I mean she really is a team builder and I’m not afraid to say that in front of her because she knows how I feel but she has built a team because when we became an investment school it was bringing together a lot of people for a lot of good reasons but we weren’t a team but I can tell you for a fact we’re all in now and everybody’s a huge team and we do have people who want to come here and want to teach and want to be a part of our team and we’ve had people even in the last year who have said wow I can’t believe I am so lucky to be at this school but it’s because we do a lot of collaboration all the time and that is not BS that’s the real. I mean that’s real.

2: We took 2 teachers that took a pay cut to come here. Yeah so.

1: I mean you can tell we’re pretty proud of our school I mean we know we have room to improve I mean that’s just the way it is but we are pretty proud of our school.

2: Absolutely. [34:24]
I speak a little about wishing there was more data I could use.

1: Well I think the big problem we’ve had in Ohio is the first year we were an investment school we had the Ohio achievement assessment for 3-8th at the end last year it was PARCC. Which was completely-

Megan: Different.

1: Well and now it’s abandoned. It was very different.

2: It was all online.

1: It was very different and now this year we have AIRS so

Megan: It changes every year.

1: Right

2: It’s hard to see real growth when you’re not comparing apples to apples.

1: Right which is why our school has started using the NWEA which we do give three times a year as the go to test for us to design our to design our lessons because you got to compare apples to apples. [35:30]

Megan: And so I’m sorry I just want to make sure I have this straight. So the NWA so its reading writing and

1: Reading and math are the big test subjects

Megan: And is it NWEA not NWA.

2: Yeah its NWEA.

1: NWEA yes.

Megan: So that’s a [CITY] test right? [35:51]

1: No NWEA is national, nationally normed test.

Megan: So that’s the one that helps you compare.

1: That’s what we use. I mean the state ones-we have other assessments that we use formatively I mean we have some other benchmarks too that help us. The big one I think we look at most often is NWEA but certainly have AIMS WEBB and then there’s just other tests that teachers decide to use or they decide to use it by the grade level I mean yeah those are important tests to us [36:41]. I mean the big summit of tests at the end of the year that show how we’ve moved as a building I mean I don’t see how we can compare them really. I just don’t. [36:52]

[ I talk about my struggle with the Ohio Report Card grades seeing how the measurements constantly change every so many years and how it makes it hard to compare or perform temporal analysis]

[37:09]

1: I mean I think that’s how many people feel.

Megan: So some state tests are good depending on the grade level and then some state tests not so much and you have to use the national level is what you’re saying.

1: Yeah I mean we’re trying to go we’re trying to match ourselves to national norms which we should. I mean we want to see how our kids stack up nationally [37:37]

[ I talk a bit about state policy findings and I talk a bit about myself and wrap up the meeting]
Q: What it is you do in your facilitation umm in this project and then how the [CITY] partnership provides newer and better schools?

Tina*:

So let me just start by just saying that the [CITY] Plan and the school district’s master facilities plan are two different plans. They [indistinct talking] but they are two separate plans. The [CITY] plan itself was a collaboration between several business organizations in the beginning so the [Dionysia] partnership um the school district obviously, the city of [Dionysia] The [Dionysia] Foundation, The [NAME PROTECTED] Foundation, [NAME PROTECTED another foundation for charter schools] and also the [Dionysia ‘S] Teacher’s Union joined up towards the tail end of the process. [1:37] The [CITY] plan itself is about ensuring that every student that goes to a public school in [Dionysia] whether it is a district school or a charter school is receiving a quality education. So there are four basic pillars of the plan---I won’t go into a lot of detail about the plan [indistinct talking but sounds like she is implying I can find the information online etc.] ....

There four different pillars to the plan, and um the first pillar is around growing [indistinct talking] high performing public schools in [Dionysia] and also closing and replacing failing schools. So the district at the time of the [CITY] Plan, which we started putting it together in 2011 and we passed it in 2012. At that time [CITY] had a very small pocket of high performing schools and most of their schools were low performing or failing. So the [CITY] plan itself was to replicate what’s working and get rid of what’s not. That’s putting it very very bluntly. So that pillar does overlap with the building plan a little bit because some of the schools that we’re replicating will be in a new building some will not however so some overlap but not total.

Second pillar of the [CITY] plan is more of an internal about [indistinct talking] plumbing [indistinct talking] that is focusing the district’s central office on important governance and transferring authority the actual authority to the school. So second [indistinct talking] state budgeting um not having the money at district headquarters um making decisions about how many teachers need to be hired [indistinct talking] and at what discipline. Obviously the principals is closest to that situation so its passing authority and dollars directly down to the schools. [3:50]

Third piece is investing in safety and high leverage systems and basically, preschool, academic technology, college and workforce readiness so initiatives around those types of things that can have a very high impact on the overall enrollment in the school district.

Fourth piece is the creation of something called the [Dionysia] transformation alliance. That I’m going to talk about a little bit later. And the alliance is well is really to ensure accountability for all the public schools in the city. So they spend a lot of time accessing the quality of [Dionysia] schools public and charter they have a website (she gives website). Where the community can go look up individual schools see the ratings, see the comments and activities about the schools, all within an effort to get the word out to people about which schools are high quality and which schools are not.

So those are the four pillars of the [CITY] plan. So the district master’s facilities plan is something that they are required by law to update every--don’t quote me on this – but I think every so many odd to 10 years, I am not exactly sure at this time, well basically they updated the plan last year. the [NAME PROTECTED] partnership [5:27] was involved in fundraising for the bob sledding campaign [indistinct sounds] I went along with that we went out to the voters in November of last year wrote a levy for additional funds to build new schools in the district. And so the funds that we are raising locally are matched by 2/3rds by the state um [indistinct sounds] because its leveraged by
the state level. So those are the dollars that are being used to build new schools like the new [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], the new [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], and they’re also being used to we have some older schools that are still [6:12] in the the state where they can be rehabbed so you see [indistinct sounds] the state. So I don’t really know what else to say.

Me: Okay perfect so that already answered question 2 with what other community partners are working on the plan. So you guys were directly involved in the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] rebuild and aiding in that process correct?

Tina*: So with [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] specifically—I’ll actually start with [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] because I was involved a little bit longer over there. So even before the district updated their master facilities plan, this uh most recent time back in probably like 2009 [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] itself started looking at transformation for that school so it is it has been in the traditional [indistinct sounds] vocational [indistinct sounds] look or sort of mold and the school was really looking to become a 21st century career [indistinct sounds] academic and educational center. SO back in 2009-2010, there were a group who worked on a plan specifically for [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] called Leave it to the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], and it was all about transforming, and again, this is specifically for one school, transforming [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED], transforming it so that it again is structured more like a modern career technical center and also so academic outcomes would improve because it has been and it still is to some extent a struggling school. So the Experts to that plan together again back in 2010 or so and you know some work was done with it a lot of it was really was in the district so maybe not as much work at that time as those of us involved would have liked. But when the [CITY] plan came online it was very similar to, a lot of the implements of [SCHOOL NAME] plan were explicitly in the [CITY] Plan so most of us just assume it is the [CITY] Plan now. And with [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] some of the transformation that we imagined was the new building and they have just moved into a beautiful new building on a different site, the facilities are modern, they’re spacious, they allow for more collaboration between the DCE? Teachers and the board businessmen teachers and more collaboration between the students so it’s really a great environment so a lot of that actually starting going into the [indistinct sounds] [CITY] plan even before the um before um the update of the master facilities plan.

So [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] I haven’t been as involved with that but again I can give you the name of someone who has been very involved in the [NAME PROTECTED] Foundation. [9:42]. But [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] has been transformed, they have a new building and the curriculum has been transformed into career pathways so instead of a comprehensive high school which is your traditional high school which we all [indistinct sounds] are familiar with, it actually has become three separate schools instead of one school so there’s an IT pathway or IT school, there’s a—I may not be getting the [indistinct sounds] pathway, but there’s a business and leadership pathway I believe and there’s an engineering pathway so again [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] was a school that was struggling with low performing and this transformation of the school is partially the new building but also realizing in that academic outcomes need to improve this transformation involved creating 3 new career or pathways.

Um [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] had a divide school and again I wasn’t as involved with that but Beatrice* who is the program director for education at the [NAME PROTECTED] Foundation [10:59] would be a good person to talk to because um if she wasn’t the co-chair she should have been because she’s spent a lot of time with that crew and she can give you much much more detail. [11:15]

Megan: (I talk about my research) Do you know who also could be facilitating in the improvement of [SCHOOL NAMES PROTECTED] in [City Neighborhood Protected] neighborhood by chance?

Tina*: um as far as [SCHOOL NAMES PROTECTED] are investment schools. And what that means is that they’re not four year so couple years ago after the [CITY] plan again passed and put into law we had talked about in the plan what are the groups or a group of low performing schools and interventions that could happen to turn those schools
around so they’re about 23 or so you can go to district website but like 23 or so um schools [indistinct talking] that
are now investment schools and what that means is they are getting more focus on [indistinct talking] and in some
cases they are getting dollars but again that’s not always the case because the district has moved to the student
based budgeting model where the dollars follow the students so the money that they are getting are very dependent
on what their actual enrollment is. [indistinct talking] they actually have fewer kids at [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] this
year than they did last or they’d probably be getting more dollars. So I don’t know [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] and
[SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] are still in their same building so I’m not quite sure about any physical upgrades
They maybe turned to some of those schools that are getting was is the rehab or the modification side that’s passed
out by the levy? So another person I can connect you to is Nancy* And she works at the district and was actively
involved with the [SCHOOL NAME PROTECTED] Levy campaign and also the um the master facilities plan process so
she so she is probably the best person to answer those questions.

M: Thank you that helps a lot. I will be doing a safe neighborhood analysis as well.

Tina*: Let me just add one important thing about the master facilities plan. It was actually based on a study that
[SCHOOL DISTRICT] was um and the connections with a group called IFF. So what they did is they came in [CITY] and
attempted to assess the need in each neighborhood, each neighborhood I think they split the city to around 13 or
14 neighborhoods and they ranked them on a chart of the highest need or high performing schools so the district
facilities plan and where they’re targeting their big schools [14:43] and their rehab schools is really closely linked
with the IFF report. So when you talk to Nancy* at the district she can also give you more information about that but
the plan was not just you know a willy nilly they really did have some strategy behind these student schools would
be rebuilt and where the rehabs need to happen.

Megan (I talk for a bit). Thank you! Did you want me to send her her email or sent up an introduction? (Her and I talk
for a bit unrelated to questions)

Tina*: Let me just say a couple things about the [NAME PROTECTED] partnership and a little bit more about you
know who we are and what our role is. So [NAME PROTECTED] is the original chamber of commerce we’re an
business membership organization we’ve 10,000+ members from your small two person business to large companies
like Dr. [NAME PROTECTED] and [NAME PROTECTED] and [NAME PROTECTED] those guys company so in addition to
being kind of your traditional chamber of commerce we also focus on economic development in the region and in
the city of [Dionysia] so for us education is critical and um very kind [indistinct sounds] with the economic
development phase because you realize that without the strong public education system the vitality of the region
and the economy is not going to grow so [indistinct talking] we have education as talent as one of the strategic
priorities that we work on in the organization we...with the [Dionysia] plan that was really our I won’t say our first,
but definitely our most successful attempt at being more um what was I going to say, of being more systematic a lot
of chambers a lot of business organizations do things like get a company to pay events at a school [17:52] or get um
a group of employees to go in and do a read to students in kindergarten and all of that is great but our members of
our members is they wanted to do something that was more systematic and impactful and have a larger impact at
the whole district the compatibility instead of those one off kinds of things. So that’s that’s what we have we
approach the work we do with education now we still do work on some individual initiatives like we’re involved in
our mentoring program with the district and involved in a career academy kind of another parent information
process provide the high schools of the school district so we do still focus on assisting initiatives at our schools but
we really do seem impactful for the school district as a whole as much as we can be. And [18:51] in addition to that we
are also involved? In the transformation alliance which I mentioned earlier. So the transformation alliance which
we actually has the office in our building worked to works with community partners they work with us they work
with the school district they work with the foundation they also have parents on their board they have the district
charter school administrators so all of those folks are working together again to ensure that some of these schools
in [Dionysia] are a reality. Now what’s unique about the alliance it’s a public private partnership so its chaired by um
the mayor [NAME PROTECTED] but it got folks from the private sectors public sector and parents and um teachers
on the board and um [19:47] they all really work together to get the word out about quality schools. The [indistinct sounds] itself and the staff called ambassadors these folks are out in the individual neighborhood talking to parents and about quality schools um so I would also like to connect you to [NAME PROTECTED] who is the executive director at the alliance because they did spend a lot of time talking with families about what makes a quality school and it’s not always just academic, I mean facilities [indistinct sounds] so I think um either she or Piet who is the second in command of the [Dionysia] would be good for you to talk to.

Megan Oh great thank you! What resources does [NAME PROTECTED] use to facilitate more public participation? (I talk more too…but is unnecessary to transcribe)

Tina*: Well I think because we are a membership organization our primary focus group or contingency is our membership. So we do have folks coming in too [that] are very involved and committed in their own right to education. a lot of them have foundations and their invested very heavily in certain aspects of education for example [NAME PROTECTED] who is a member is investing very heavily in something called [preschool plan NAME PROTECTED] which is also some part of the [CITY] plan is [Dionysia]’s um pre or 4-year-old preschool initiatives and then we have other members who are you know focused on other aspects. So we really look at our members as kind of our focus group and our guide [22:43] in terms of where [NAME PROTECTED] needs to be concentrating these resources because [NAME PROTECTED] resources are really our members' resources so we ask them for direction we also wanted to make sure that we’re getting a return on past investments so we invested a lot in the [Dionysia] plan so we continue to work on activities and ensure [indistinct talking] of that plan. [indistinct talking] Or guides you know we work with every single group that I just mentioned the transformation alliance we work actually a lot with the city all through the city of [Dionysia] [indistinct sounds] like the [Dionysia] metropolitan school district and any municipal school district usually isn’t controlled by the mayor [indistinct sounds] it’s the only school district like that in Ohio although there are others like that around the country so all of our education involvement will involve the city probably [indistinct talking] in the state of Ohio. So their partners our foundation partners with the [Dionysia] Foundation and the [NAME PROTECTED] Foundation are very committed to public education in [Dionysia] as we work very closely with them so um I think we have a lot of outreach in our primary constituency being the business community although we work with other organizations [indistinct talking].

Megan: Last Question in any of your activities what are the evaluation process that [NAME PROTECTED] does?

Tina*: ... [indistinct talking]. What we typically do. We’re looking for projects that have a larger impact a district wide impact primarily with some exceptions um [25:32] We’re also looking at whether the projects advance other initiatives that we’ve already invested a lot in like the[CITY] Plan. [indistinct talking] Our board our executive committee we work with those folks to sort of refine what we’re doing so we talk with them quite often in charge of the direction that we’re taking in education. For example, we have acted as a as the primary business community fundraiser for the last two levies for this public school district. So before we act in that role we um we work with or talk with the school board executive committee about the direction that’s going on in the district. The need of the balance for the district and you know we sort of assess that opportunity ...is there return on our investment to assist in these individual investments for the school district. It kind of comes back to the answer I gave you before about our key constituency the business community so we look to them as sort of the leadership and they help us with our direction. [26:58]

Megan: Thanks.

I talk the rest of it. Interview is done.
## APPENDIX C
### FULL PEARSON’S COEFFICIENT RESULTS

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<th>Node B</th>
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Hello,

I am pleased to inform you that the Kent State University Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved your Application for Approval to Use Human Research Participants as a Level II/Expedited, category 6 project. **Approval is effective for a twelve-month period:**

**June 3, 2015 through June 2, 2016**

*A copy of the IRB approved consent form is attached to this email. This "stamped" copy is the consent form that you must use for your research participants. It is important for you to also keep an unstamped text copy (i.e., Microsoft Word version) of your consent form for subsequent submissions.*

Federal regulations and Kent State University IRB policy require that research be reviewed at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk, but not less than once per year. The IRB has determined that this protocol requires an annual review and progress report. The IRB tries to send you annual review reminder notice by email as a courtesy. **However, please note that it is the responsibility of the principal investigator to be aware of the study expiration date and submit the required materials.** Please submit review materials (annual review form and copy of current consent form) one month prior to the expiration date.

HHS regulations and Kent State University Institutional Review Board guidelines require that any changes in research methodology, protocol design, or principal investigator have the prior approval of the IRB before implementation and continuation of the protocol. The IRB must also be informed of any adverse events associated with the study. The IRB further requests a final report at the conclusion of the study.

Kent State University has a Federal Wide Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP); **FWA Number 00001853.**
If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at Researchcompliance@kent.edu or 330-672-2704 or 330-672-8058.

Kent State University Office of Research Compliance
224 Cartwright Hall | Fax 330.672.2658

Victoria Holbrook | Graduate Assistant | 330.672.2384 | vholbroo@kent.edu
Tricia Sloan | Administrator | 330.672.2181 | psloan1@kent.edu
Kevin McCreary | Assistant Director | 330.672.8058 | kmccrea1@kent.edu
Paulette Washko | Director | 330.672.2704 | pwashko@kent.edu

For links to obtain general information, access forms, and complete required training, visit our website at www.kent.edu/research.
Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Study Title: Education Quality and Community Development
Principal Investigator: David Kaplan. Co-Investigator: Megan Hornyak

You are being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form will provide you with information on the research project, what you will need to do, and the associated risks and benefits of the research. Your participation is voluntary. Please read this form carefully. It is important that you ask questions and fully understand the research in order to make an informed decision. You will receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Purpose:

This study is intended to understand the influence of the surrounding community, policies, and society of neighborhoods in the city to determine whether education inequality exists and why it exists through the perspective of students and faculty. Furthermore, it addresses what pragmatic solutions for the community and school district that can better a student’s education experience. It also looks into challenges that affect individual students and faculty with regards to race, identity, and the location of their communities.

Procedures

You must be 18 or older to participate without a parental consent. Participants will take part in a brief interview that will range from 15-60 minutes. I will record responses (unless the student or volunteer chooses not to be recorded in which case I will take hand-written notes) and have an adult present during student interviews. These recordings will only be used for the note-taking process and will later be destroyed once responses are hand-written. During the recording you MUST NOT state your name or any personal information. This is to protect your identity. Personal names, the school name, and the names of any individuals mentioned WILL NOT be recorded or copied by hand to protect your privacy and the privacy of your school and school staff members. There may be follow-up questions at a later time. If you would like to offer future assistance with this research, please provide your contact information at the bottom of this form.

Benefits

Participants have the personal benefit of having their individual voices heard as a result of this study. This study may provide findings that the school district may use towards the improvement of their schools and the schools that serve them. Faculty and staff will benefit from being able to show the positive actions they are taking in their schools and how these actions have made a positive difference. This will be useful in other areas, cities, and school districts that encounter similar problems. More importantly, this study seeks to grasp a better
understanding of how educational inequalities are developed and eliminated in urban neighborhoods. This research seeks to discover how African Americans or those of a lower class may face discrimination in the job market and seeks to educate our society in how to make every individual student equally valuable to our society. Lastly, this research seeks to understand the influence of the empowerment of youth and their impact on the communities they dwell in. This knowledge is important for city planners, community developers and partnerships, and our society as a whole to ensure that we continuously seek fair and quality education that will improve the nature of our neighborhoods.

**Risks and Discomforts**

Due to the youth of the participants, participants may feel discomfort when expressing their opinions openly to myself or may feel relieved. When answering a specific question, students may feel pressured to respond due to their youth or may feel guilty when they choose to decline to participate further or answer the question. However, no psychologically straining questions or questions that deal with topics unrelated to school will be asked. Students will also have the option to skip any questions I ask if they are not comfortable answering. Physically, socially, legally, and economically, there is no threat to the students whatsoever. Students will be interviewed on school grounds, have a parental consent form if they are under the age of 18, and another volunteer adult will be present at each student interview. Participants may also ask to see the questions before agreeing to consent and can revoke their consent at any time. In this case, all information gathered during the interview will be destroyed, even if the interview has already been complete.

Teachers and faculty may feel intimidated by my questions, but all information is strictly confidential and recordings and transcripts will NOT contain any personal or identifiable information. The staff is therefore not exposed to any physical, social, legal, or economic risk. You may choose to not sign the consent form, but still participate if you are over the age of 18 to further protect your identity. If you are under the age of 18 you must have BOTH individual and parental consent. All informed consent forms are signed and kept in a secret file cabinet, locked and stored.

You may ask to see the questions before deciding whether or not to participate in the study. If you do not wish to answer a question, you may skip it and go on to the next question.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

Storage of data will be kept locked in a cabinet at Kent State University in the office of Dr. Kaplan. Results from the study, quotations, or paraphrases will be used for the study, future research that deals with class, race, and identity, and for possible publication, but subject names, name of the school, or any names mentioned will not be shared outside of the interview. During the recording process, your name or any other identifiers will also not be mentioned. Data cannot be linked to the individual subjects. Instead each person will be given a number to represent their data. No identifying information except your position in the school will be
associated with your interview (for example, teacher, principal, or student). No personally identifying information will be collected. Your signed consent form will be kept separate from your study data, and responses will not be linked to you.

**Voluntary Participation**
Taking part in this research study is entirely up to you. You may choose not to participate or you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**Contact Information**
If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you may contact Dr. David Kaplan at 330.672.3221 or Megan Hornyak at 616.719.8119. This project has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research, you may call the IRB at 330.672.2704.

**Consent Statement and Signature**
I have read this consent form and have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that a copy of this consent will be provided to me for future reference.

_________________________________  ___________________
Participant Signature               Date
END NOTES

Some cities that have struggling economies happen to be old Rust Belt cities or cities whose economies focused on one central form of gaining income, but that form of industry has since been changed, lessened, or eliminated. It is no coincidence that the city that was chosen for this case study is an old Rust Belt city. The city must remain hidden as per a contractual agreement with interviewees and members of the school district. For the purpose of this analysis this city will be referred to as Dionysia.

Limitations: This case study is by no means a sample of the population and cannot implement all positives and negatives of the school district, its initiatives, and its policies. Furthermore, all interviews are subjective to the persons being interviewed and their opinions which can limit the research greatly. However, these opinions although noted as opinions, may have merit and represent facts that exist, but further analysis and data collection is required to prove some of the statements given by the interviewees as truth. There are also political elements that influence what people have told me during the interview process and had a major effect at public school board meetings. Lastly, at school board meetings, many of the members that attended them did not have positive things to say to the district and were repeating participants that either re-stated earlier problems and negative insights about the district and its policies, or stated new ones that came up during the time of the case of study. Some of those that attended were retired teachers as well as community members that may not have agreed with the district’s policies for very personal reasons and biases. That being said, this study treats all inputs and insights shared at these meetings of equal value and worth as with interviews collected by business partners, foundations, and district employees. Given the political state of education throughout the United States at this present time, many of those who spoke at meetings or during interviews are assumed to represent values that are not always their own privately, but are values that support political affiliates and their employers as well. However, this study seeks to look at this affiliation gracefully, to not discredit the opinions, values, or insights of people who spoke at public meetings or in private interviews, and to also consider the affiliation and the political source as an input of data at the same time. This was taken into consideration during the coding process.

It is worth noting that the school district did attempt to make significant reform changes before the City Plan was produced. However, as Beatrice* stated, this still led to the inevitable collapse of the function of these schools and leading to staff transition. The school district suffered academically with 55% of schools under “academic watch”, had low enrollment in high performing schools, terrible finances with a $64.9 million-dollar deficit, and issues with their operations in which school principals had little say as to the needs for their school (Metropolitan School District 2012).

Research shows that early childhood development and quality preschool education is linked to increasing a child’s success in development, especially for low-income and middle class children and is linked to increasing graduation rates for high school and an increase in years of completed higher education (Yoshikawa et al 2013). Also in chapter iv, pre-k combined schools were part of the analysis making this program important not just in these implications, but also in relation to the program being co-run and aided by local CDCs and businesses.

In order to protect the identity of the city and school locations in accordance with the agreement with the school district, maps will not contain North arrows or scale bars and have been rearranged. This violation of cartographic rules was deemed necessary due in part to the unique shape of the city being easily identifiable. The city has also been divided and maps are separate to ensure further protection.