

1 THE BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

2 BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

3

4

5 PUBLIC BOARD MEETING

6

7 200 NORTH AVENUE

8

9 BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21202

10

11 SEPTEMBER 22, 2015

12

13 6:00 P.M.

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19

20 REPORTED BY:

21 W. BODENSTEIN

1 BOARD MEMBERS:

2

3 MARNELL COOPER, BOARD CHAIR

4 DR. GREGORY THORNTON, CEO

5 MARTHA JAMES-HASSAN

6 CHERYL CASCIANI

7 TINA HIKE-HUBBARD

8 LISA AKCHIN

9 PETER KANNAM

10 LINDA CHINNIA

11 JOHNATHAN TOWNES, STUDENT COMMISSIONER

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Good evening,
3 everyone. Welcome to the meeting of the
4 Baltimore City Board of Commissioners. I'd like
5 to have a motion to open the meeting.

6 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: So moved.

7 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: Second.

8 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Motion by
9 Commissioner Hike-Hubbard, second by Commissioner
10 Casciani. All those in favor of opening the
11 meeting? The vote is unanimous.

12 I want to start with first thanking the
13 Dunbar Jazz Ensemble. (Applause.) On trumpet,
14 we have Marquis Montgomery. (Applause.) On
15 reeds, we have Wayne White. (Applause.) On
16 percussion, we have Samuel Smalls and Daniel
17 Harris. (Applause.) We have their instructor,
18 Mr. Charles Fund, on acoustic bass. (Applause.)
19 On piano, we have Brianna Smith. (Applause.)

20 They've been playing very well for the
21 past hour and they'll be playing the National

1 Anthem for us in a minute.

2 Before we get to the color guard, we do
3 have, unfortunately, a couple folks in our
4 district who have passed during the week. First,
5 we have Mr. James Hyman. He was a custodial
6 worker are Margaret Brent for 7 months. He
7 passed away on August 22, 2015. We have Ms.
8 Kathleen Weber who was a teacher at Fallstaff
9 Elementary/Middle for over 25 years. She passed
10 away on September 13, 2015. Let's have a moment
11 of silence for those we lost in the district.
12 (Moment of Silence.)

13

14 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Thank you. At this
15 point in time, I'd like to call to order with the
16 presentation of colors by the Frederick Douglass
17 High School.

18 (Color Guard Presentation - Frederick Douglass
19 High School.)

20

21

1 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Before we move on,
2 I want to present the names of the color guard
3 members. Monique Howard, Jimmy Spears, Donald
4 Cottman, Talese Johnson, Kianna Melcher. They
5 were the student members of the Color Guard that
6 just presented from Frederick Douglass High
7 School. (Applause.)

8 I want to move to 2.04, the Consent
9 Agenda. These items that I'm about to read have
10 been pulled from Consent. So, they are not a
11 part of the Consent Agenda. Item 8.03, appeals
12 and hearings case number 15-1601, 8.06, KDA,
13 access to public record Board policy revision,
14 13.03, Dustin Construction, Inc., renovation and
15 addition, 13.04, (Inaudible) Sales, Inc., boiler
16 room replacement services at Samuel Coleridge
17 Taylor Elementary School. All other items are up
18 for vote on Consent. Can I have a motion?

19 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: So moved.

20 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: Second.

21 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Seconded by

1 Commissioner Casciani. All those in favor of the
2 Consent Agenda? Commissioners Hassan, Casciani,
3 Hike-Hubbard, Cooper, Kannam and Chinnia, along
4 with Mr. Townes.

5 So, today under Chair Comments, as I
6 think I said at the last Board meeting, I want to
7 try to find a way to incorporate students more
8 into our public meetings. We've always had the
9 Color Guard. Today we had a presentation from
10 the Jazz Ensemble. We also have four young
11 people who have entered their first year into
12 high school. They're going to come and give us
13 some words about their first couple of weeks in
14 high school and share with us how it's going.

15 The four students that we have here are
16 from Poly, Evans Francois, you can come on up.
17 From the Baltimore School for the Arts, Lucy
18 McCarthy and Charlie Dean, from Baltimore City
19 College, Mattie Parsley.

20 First of all, I want to thank all of you
21 for coming and agreeing to share with us your

1 first weeks of high school and how you feel about
2 it. Who would like to start?

3 MR. FRANCOIS: My name is Evans
4 Francois. I am in the Ingenuity Project at the
5 Baltimore Polytechnic Institute. So far, school
6 has been nice, it was a nice transition between
7 middle school and high school.

8 The hardest thing to do so far is adjust
9 to having 8 classes and every night having 8
10 different assignments that are due. So, that's
11 the biggest thing to keep in mind.

12 MS. MCCARTHY: Hi, I'm Lisa McCarthy. I
13 go to Baltimore School for the Arts and I'm
14 studying theater there. My high school
15 transition went pretty smoothly, I'd say.
16 However, I did have a couple of incidents with
17 the transfer of credits from my middle school to
18 my high school. But, that's pretty much cleared
19 up at this point.

20 MR. DEAN: Hi. My name is Charlie Dean
21 and I go to the Baltimore School for the Arts for

1 stage production. There were also a couple of
2 issues with my credits and the classes I'm
3 taking. Some of them I've already taken. But,
4 overall, it's great. It's definitely a nice
5 environment at the new school and it's good to be
6 able to specialize in something that is
7 interesting.

8 MS. PARSLEY: Hi. I'm Mattie Parsley.
9 I go to Baltimore City College. School has also
10 started off pretty smoothly for me. I've had a
11 couple of issues waking up early because my
12 school does start so early.

13 I am taking a few of the same classes,
14 but I don't know if it's so much of an issue. I
15 really like school so far. I found a lot of my
16 classes challenging and I feel it's a good
17 environment to really learn a lot. My lunch is
18 really short, though. It's only 20 minutes. By
19 the time I get my lunch, it's over. But, I like
20 school. So, it's good. Thank you.

21 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Any questions from

1 the Board members? Commissioner Townes?

2 STUDENT COMM. TOWNES: Why are you guys
3 not at Dunbar? (Laughter.) You guys are fine.
4 Just saying.

5 DR. THORNTON: Certainly
6 congratulations. The best is yet to come. I
7 would like to follow up. I think you said you
8 are taking some courses that you already have? I
9 didn't understand. Tell me a little bit about
10 that. Either now, or I can have someone talk
11 with you offline. Whichever you prefer.

12 MS. PARSLEY: I am taking a geometry
13 course that I took in middle school. I'm just
14 repeating the material. So, the class is just
15 easy. But, it's like a required course.

16 DR. THORNTON: A high school required
17 course.

18 MS. PARSLEY: Yes.

19 DR. THORNTON: So, you test drove it in
20 middle school and did a great job. Something we
21 may want to think about, can she test out of

1 that? Or, does she have to take it over now that
2 she's in high school?

3 VOICE: (Inaudible. Speaking away from
4 microphone.)

5 DR. THORNTON: Good. That's good to
6 know. Thank you and good luck. (Applause.)

7 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
8 Casciani?

9 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: The two students
10 who are at the School for the Arts. It sounds
11 like you had a similar issue with the transfer of
12 credits? What classes are you having to take
13 over?

14 MS. MCCARTHY: I'm also having to retake
15 geometry. Actually, all four of us went to the
16 Ingenuity Program at Roland Park and we took
17 geometry in 7th grade and we're having to retake
18 it again this year.

19 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: It would be
20 great if we could look at that. That doesn't
21 sound right.

1 DR. THORNTON: Typically, the course
2 work at middle grades is certainly rigorous.
3 But, it is fundamentally a different course with
4 different concepts. I think there is an
5 opportunity for us to leverage that, maybe at
6 least accelerate the movement through the high
7 school geometry course.

8 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: It's been a
9 really long time since I've taken a course in
10 geometry.

11 DR. THORNTON: Just a few years.

12 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: But, it always
13 seemed like when you started a new year, there
14 was always a time when it felt repetitive. So, I
15 think to discern whether it's that or whether we
16 really are heavy is something here.

17 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
18 Hike-Hubbard.

19 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: I just want
20 to thank you all for coming and to say that this
21 is an open invitation to come back as you

1 continue your high school experience and as
2 things come up, new issues or concerns or things
3 you love, please come back and share it with us.
4 Student voice isn't heard enough at our Board
5 meetings. So, I would love for you to come and
6 comment and keep letting us know how you're
7 doing.

8 STUDENTS: Thank you.

9 DR. THORNTON: Have a great year.

10 (Applause.)

11 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Next, I want to
12 acknowledge some former Commissioners who are
13 seated up front. Our most recent immediate past
14 Chair, Dr. Shanaysha Sauls, and Mr. Bob Heck.
15 They're here this evening because, if you come to
16 these meetings enough or you watch them enough,
17 you know that when Commissioners finish their
18 service appointment, we generally do some kind of
19 farewell.

20 The most recent departure from the Board
21 as of September 1 is Dr. David Stone. So, this

1 evening, we have a farewell to Dr. Stone for
2 which we have some items. So, Dr. Stone, if you
3 wouldn't mind coming up and taking a seat,
4 please? (Applause.)

5 Before we give you the items, I know that
6 your long-time Board friend, Mr. Heck, has a few
7 words.

8 MR. HECK: I certainly do.

9 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: I'm sure that Dr.
10 Sauls may have a few words about her experience
11 with you on the Board. So, Mr. Heck, Dr. Sauls,
12 please come sit next to Dr. Stone here.

13 MR. STONE: It's a family show, folks.

14 MR. HECK: Good evening, School Board
15 members. Good evening to the public. It's
16 always good to see the public come out when there
17 are issues and people are voicing their opinion
18 in a respectful, constructive and collaborative
19 manner.

20 As you know, I'm now working for a
21 charter operator. So, I'm not here tonight for

1 anything else than to honor David. I would like
2 to salute David for one very specific talent.
3 His fierce dedication to what is right for
4 children. David is maybe the most expert person
5 I know on the issue of special education. Not
6 too many years ago, this district was mired in a
7 decades long lawsuit where we did not provide
8 adequate services. But, we, through the
9 leadership of our previous CEO, Dr. Alonso, and
10 many hard working staff members, and David Stone
11 who works in the world of special education, was
12 the moral voice about what is right.

13 David, whether or not we've agreed on
14 everything is not important. It's not important
15 if we don't agree, folks. This is America, we
16 can disagree. But, we can do it respectfully and
17 always listen to the other person's opinion.
18 David, not that you always have listened,
19 actually.

20 But, sincerely, I'm really here because
21 people should know what a fierce defender of

1 children you are and that what must be done in
2 schools must be right for kids and families.
3 Especially those who most need the protection of
4 the law. So, I salute you and wish you all the
5 best and congratulations on your doctorate.
6 (Applause.)

7 MS. SAULS: So, Dr. Stone, it's fitting
8 that I sit beside you once again to recognize
9 you, and also sit beside Commissioner Heck. It's
10 like old times.

11 Ditto to everything that Bob Heck said.
12 You don't often get to sit beside someone who has
13 the courage of their convictions but also is
14 flexible enough and has enough of a sense of
15 humor to compromise. That is David 120 percent
16 of the time. I'll tell you, whether or disagree
17 with him or not, whether or not you wanted to
18 throw something across the room at him or not,
19 you knew that he took this home every single
20 night and he loved his service to this Board and
21 to this community. That's the kind of person you

1 want to sit beside.

2 I don't have to agree with the things
3 that you say. Although, I agree with 99 percent
4 of the things that he says. But, it's more
5 important that a person has depth in his chest
6 and he absolutely does. I was so proud to serve
7 beside him and it's a huge loss that you are no
8 longer on the Board.

9 I will say that all these people came out
10 to say farewell to you, David Stone.

11 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioners?

12 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: David, I
13 appreciate my time on the Board with you. I
14 think you are the longest serving Board member
15 ever, potentially, and with good reason. I think
16 that Dr. Sauls said it perfectly. His courage
17 for convictions is so important for us. You
18 modeled, upstairs and downstairs, what it meant
19 to challenge, to question, to really think
20 through things before making critical decisions
21 for the students, for our city. So, I thank you

1 for modeling that for me.

2 I also thank you for thinking about all
3 kids because, it is true, Bob. It's not just
4 about special ed. It was sort of advocating for
5 all kids. So, I thank you. I miss you already
6 because without you, I feel like I have to take
7 the role of the challenger all the time.
8 Although, Cheryl is giving me a run for my money
9 on that one.

10 But, we do miss you and I do want to come
11 play Board in the basement with your kids. I've
12 always joked with David that as soon as he steps
13 down, he's going to play School Board in the
14 basement with his kids because he literally loves
15 it that much. It can be said, it's long-time
16 dedication to really love something as much as
17 you do, David. So, for that, I thank you.
18 Thanks to Heather and the boys for giving us so
19 much of your time. (Applause.)

20 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
21 Kannam?

1 COMMISSIONER KANNAM: David, I just want
2 to say thank you as well. What I learned most
3 from you is there's an institution of the Board
4 and how this whole thing operates and there's no
5 one more skilled and adept at, not only the
6 importance of the Board, how we can set a vision,
7 what is our lane, what's appropriate and what's
8 not appropriate. I just think you've taught many
9 of us many things. So, thank you so much.

10 (Applause.)

11 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
12 Casciani?

13 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: So, having had
14 the chance to sit next to you for the last year,
15 I've learned the fine art of how to use the
16 computer and any computer in this room, and that
17 anything that leaves somebody's mouth should be
18 instantly Googled so that you can do all the
19 research real time and make yourself as smart as
20 you can in the moment and I'm not joking. It was
21 very helpful. I take as many notes as I can

1 about things that you would always argue for so
2 that I could try to represent your point of view
3 while you were gone. So, thank you for
4 everything you've taught me on this Board.
5 (Applause.)

6 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
7 Hassan?

8 COMMISSIONER HASSAN: Well, I actually
9 have both of you at the table since I took Bob's
10 seat. Bob and David both took a special spot in
11 mentoring me to be here. I don't feel like I was
12 here long enough for Shanaysha, but I am very
13 grateful for David's mentorship, for the way Bob
14 welcomed me to the Board. I'm not really sure
15 though, Peter, about using David as a metric for
16 behavior. Just, you know. Thank you.

17 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
18 Chinnia?

19 COMMISSIONER CHINNIA: David, I'm one of
20 the people up here who has had the pleasure of
21 working with you both as a part of the staff and

1 on the Board. So, I want to echo what everyone
2 else has said in terms of the commitment that
3 you've shown to the children of Baltimore. I
4 thank you.

5 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: David, you are the
6 Commissioner with whom I've had the most
7 conversations with in my time on the Board. I've
8 said this to you privately and I'm going to say
9 it publicly. Sometimes you go off the rails.
10 However, you listen more than anyone else. If
11 people really listen to you when you speak, they
12 realize that often you are responding to what you
13 heard.

14 I think that all that anyone in this
15 room, anyone in this city can ask of us as
16 Commissioners, as you hear people chanting
17 outside, is to listen. We may not agree. We may
18 not come to the same conclusion. But, we respect
19 each other enough to listen to each other's
20 opinion and try to find some middle ground.

21 You and I have had numerous

1 conversations, often over adult beverages.

2 (Laughter.)

3 DR. STONE: Ovaltine.

4 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Right. Exactly.

5 So, with that, I want to present to you, a lot of
6 stuff. So, David, first is a plaque. It says,
7 Making the difference awarded to David Stone for
8 your dedicated years of outstanding service and
9 thoughtful guidance. Thank you for serving with
10 honor, integrity and commitment to the students
11 and parents, staff and community of Baltimore
12 City Public Schools. Board of School
13 Commissioners, 2008-2015. (Applause.)

14 We have a proclamation of the Baltimore
15 City Board of School Commissioners. Whereas, Dr.
16 David Stone has diligently worked in the field of
17 special education, both as a teacher and
18 administrator for more than 20 years, and
19 whereas, he has been a tireless advocate for
20 meeting the needs and advancing the well being of
21 students with special needs and their families,

1 and whereas, he's served as Director of Charter,
2 New and Community Schools for Baltimore City
3 Public Schools and oversaw the opening of
4 Baltimore City's first 23 charter schools.
5 (Applause.)

6 Whereas, he faithfully served on the
7 Board of the Baltimore City School Commissioners
8 for 9 years and was Board Vice-Chair for two
9 years, and whereas, his dedication and selfless
10 devotion to public education and the children of
11 Baltimore epitomized the high standards of public
12 service.

13 Therefore, the Baltimore City Board of
14 School Commissioners does hereby proclaim our
15 gratitude and best wishes to David Stone, ED.
16 (Applause.)

17 Here is a souvenir you can also hang in
18 your basement. There you go. Thank you, David.

19 MR. STONE: Thank you.

20 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Thank you, Dr.
21 Sauls and Mr. Heck. (Applause.)

1 MR. STONE: Do I get a word?

2 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Well, we'll let you
3 say a word.

4 MR. STONE: I'm going to begin by saying
5 9 years is not enough. I really want to thank
6 everybody. I appreciate all of the compliments
7 but I really didn't do anything that anybody else
8 wouldn't have done in the same position knowing
9 that our students need a lot and that the School
10 Board is the vehicle by which that happens.

11 I will tell you, if anyone in this city
12 is sitting around thinking, gosh, I'd really like
13 to do something important in life, you need to
14 sign up for the School Board because there's
15 really nothing more important than what you guys
16 are doing right now. It's the future of our
17 city.

18 I really appreciate it. I have just
19 enjoyed every single minute of it. Everyone I've
20 worked with was extraordinarily dedicated on the
21 School Board. I've never met a single person on

1 the Board that ever sort of was just half in.
2 Everyone was all in, all the time. It's like
3 working in a restaurant. It's so intense that
4 everybody gets to be like foxhole friends.

5 I've just really loved it and I'm glad
6 you appreciate it. Wish I could have done more
7 but I'll try my best. Dr. Thornton, thank you
8 for your time. I've enjoyed working with you
9 very much, you and Naomi.

10 DR. THORNTON: I get an opportunity to
11 now hang out with your son over at Montessori.

12 MR. STONE: Yeah, he's the smart one in
13 the family. I especially want to say thanks to
14 the Board office staff, I don't think they get
15 enough credit. I have never been treated better
16 by anyone on Earth and I hope my wife is
17 watching. To the Board Office staff, everyone
18 has been wonderful, answering every one of my
19 silly questions and following up on all my silly
20 requests. But, thank you very much. You guys
21 are wonderful.

1 Thanks, I'm glad I was able to serve. I
2 hope I can continue to contribute in some way.
3 Thank you very much.

4 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Thank you, David.
5 (Applause.)

6 So, now I want to do something that I
7 have yet to do as Chair and that is actually give
8 a comment about something. It's an unpleasant
9 matter but, I feel as Chair, I owe it to make a
10 comment about it.

11 In the past week or so, there was an
12 incident that occurred at Frederick Douglass High
13 School where a young man was severely injured.
14 I've had the opportunity to review what I'm sure
15 many of you in here have already seen.

16 One, I want to say from the Board that
17 our hearts go out to not only the young man that
18 was injured, but also to the other young man that
19 participated. Unfortunately, we do things and
20 actions like this in life and they impact your
21 life for the rest of your life. It was so sad

1 and painful to witness what I did on the video.

2 What was as much troublesome was a
3 comment that I read that said what is wrong with
4 the school system? The thing that bothered me
5 about that comment was I am confident in saying
6 there's not a principal, there's not a teacher,
7 there's not an administrator, there's not a
8 school police officer that is teaching any child
9 that that is the way to solve a conflict.

10 I notice there are a lot of young people
11 in this room tonight. Some of you are 18 or soon
12 to be 18 by the time the election of the next
13 Mayor comes, which is in April, the primary, I
14 think you guys need to ask those who are
15 candidates, those who intend to be candidates,
16 what is their plan to address the violence that
17 we have all seem to accepted in the city?

18 Unfortunately for me, what I witnessed
19 was common when I was in high school almost 30
20 years ago. We just didn't have video. We didn't
21 have cell phones. It pained me because I feel

1 like we, as a city, have just accepted it. But,
2 there is an election coming up. I think those of
3 you who are young, you need to ask those that are
4 running, what is their plan for your future?
5 That is what is important.

6 I will be honest with you, a lot of folks
7 in my position, we've got too much to lose to
8 upset the apple cart. That's just a fact. But,
9 those of you who are young and are eligible to
10 vote, you need to vote. You need to join
11 together and make your voice heard and ask the
12 people that are running for office in this city
13 what they are going to do to address the violence
14 and the poverty that is rampant in this city.

15 Once again, the incident was horrible.
16 But, I think it's bigger problem that is beyond
17 the school system. I think young people that are
18 here tonight, that are here on behalf of charters
19 or whatever issue you're here on behalf of, you
20 need to also keep this going to the city because
21 it's up to youth. It is up to you to push us

1 adults to do what needs to be done for the
2 future. With that, I pass to CEO Comments.

3 DR. THORNTON: Thank you very much,
4 Chair Cooper. Well said. I think that deserves
5 a round of applause. (Applause.) I certainly
6 thank you, sir.

7 I'm pleased to share that, Baltimore City
8 Public Schools today agreed to withdraw the
9 revenue-based model for funding charter schools
10 it had developed for discussion by request of the
11 coalition to move forward. It was always our
12 goal to begin conversations and at least begin a
13 starting point where we could sit down and have
14 conversation around the future.

15 It's important that we have a formula, it
16 was important that it was scalable and
17 sustainable over time. I have been advised a
18 commitment to withdraw the lawsuit against the
19 Board of School Commissioners over the current
20 year's funding while we continue to work
21 collaboratively toward an equitable solution for

1 all Baltimore children.

2 City schools, and the representatives
3 from the Maryland Alliance of Public Charter
4 Schools, will hold at least two day-long work
5 sessions to begin conversations around the
6 options for charter funding. Our goal is to
7 adopt a charter formula to be applied at the
8 beginning of the 2016-2017 school year. The
9 public forum scheduled for Saturday, September 26
10 was to seek comments as we move forward with the
11 proposed funding which now has been cancelled.
12 That seminar, that listening session on Saturday
13 has now been cancelled. (Applause.)

14 As the Board Chair and the entire Board
15 and myself have stated from the very beginning,
16 charter schools play a very important role in the
17 school district. So, we look forward to
18 continued conversations in moving toward a
19 formula that works for all our children.

20 We were hopeful that the beginning was
21 certainly the proposal that was put out to begin

1 the conversation. It was never intended to be
2 any more than a way in which we could begin the
3 conversation. That's also noted on all the
4 correspondence that's been put out. Hopefully,
5 the community will note that the commitment of
6 both parties is to work together and focus on
7 putting our children first in everything we do.
8 Thank you so much. (Applause.)

9 I'm also pleased to say that due to a lot
10 of hard work in our Mayor's Office and with the
11 support of Kurt Schmoke, that we would sit down
12 and begin a facilitation around getting to
13 meaningful places for our children as they move
14 on through the grades and, hopefully, they will
15 sit in these seats, as we saw today, in high
16 performing high schools and taking geometry in 9th
17 grade and certainly, hopefully, making their way
18 on to college and doing the great things that we
19 know as a Board and a community that they are
20 capable of.

21 But, on the way, I'd be remiss if I

1 didn't recognize, this is Attendance Month and
2 I'm pleased to say that attendance is well over
3 90 percent. Good won't do and better is an
4 option. So, I'm saying to you and your friends,
5 you've got to get to school. I'm trending in the
6 right direction but we're not where we need to
7 be. We have enough research to show that when
8 our kids are in school every day, they do a very
9 good job. (Applause.)

10 I'm also pleased to say, and I'm very
11 proud of this, that so many folks are calling
12 Baltimore home. The National Hispanic Heritage
13 Month will be celebrated this year from September
14 15th to October 15th. It is a great opportunity to
15 celebrate the diversity of our city from
16 classroom to classroom.

17 This is truly exciting news and I'm very
18 proud of this. I know the Board is. I'm pleased
19 to report that two of our students have been
20 named as National Merit Scholarship
21 Semi-finalists. Think about that. Max Uhaas of

1 Poly and Laura Seaberg of Baltimore School for
2 the Arts. Give them a nice round of applause.
3 (Applause.) The opportunity to continue to the
4 competition with 7,400 National Merit Scholars
5 from around the country that has the potential of
6 bringing together close to \$32 million in
7 opportunities throughout the nation. I've just
8 got to believe that our two youngsters are going
9 to go into that competition and just blow them
10 all away. So, best of luck to Max and Laura.
11 We're very proud of you at city schools.

12 Oh, can we read the PEP Agenda? Linda,
13 would you read the PEP?

14 MS. GRILLO: We are pleased to welcome
15 this evening new leaders to our team. Cynthia
16 Brown, assistant principal at Harford Heights.
17 (Applause.) Janice Lane, Executive Director of
18 Teaching and Learning. (Applause.) Deborah
19 Tatum-Sullivan, interim Chief Human Capital
20 Officer. (Applause.) Lindsay Valentine, we
21 welcome her back to city schools, instructional

1 leadership Executive Director, Elementary/Middle.

2 (Applause.)

3 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner

4 Casciani?

5 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: This is a little

6 bit out of the ordinary but I feel compelled.

7 I've been involved in working on behalf of

8 charter schools since before there were charter

9 schools in 1997. I'm, like everyone else, am

10 happy that we're going to be moving forward

11 together.

12 But, I also want to say that it was a

13 little disappointing that somehow everything got

14 misrepresented as that what we put out was the

15 funding formula. It was never intended to be the

16 funding formula, it was supposed to be a

17 conversation started that was in response to a

18 lot of other conversations.

19 So, for all the people that think that

20 was put out there as a way to kill charter

21 schools in Baltimore, it's unfortunate that you

1 thought that because that's not what we said and
2 it's not what we meant. So, I'm glad we're
3 moving forward but I regret that there was so
4 much misinformation.

5 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Thank you,
6 Commissioner Casciani. I'm going to read a few
7 gifts and donations that we've received. We'd
8 like to acknowledge a donation of \$500 to the
9 Hilton Elementary School for student school
10 supplies and PBIS incentives by the Zeta Sigma
11 Foundation. I also want to acknowledge a
12 donation of 200 school supply items provided to
13 the City Schools' Ombudsman for dissemination to
14 various schools throughout Baltimore City from
15 Kaiser Permanente Member Services.

16 At this time, I'm going to turn to our
17 public comment section. I have the Baltimore
18 Teachers Union listed. Is there a representative
19 here for BTU? No? Okay, they're in another
20 room.

21 MS. HOGUE: I hope you don't mind I've

1 brought some teacher friends with me tonight.

2 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: If you all wouldn't
3 mind introducing yourselves?

4 MS. HOGUE: I am Adia Hogue, field
5 representative for the Baltimore Teachers Union.

6 MR. WORTHMAN: My name is Jason
7 Worthman, I'm a teacher at KIPP.

8 MS. HARENDEN: My name is Shanika
9 Harenden. I'm an ad associate at Carver
10 Vocational Technical High School.

11 MS. HOGUE: So, first of all, we bring
12 greetings from Marietta English and the Executive
13 Board at BTU. I brought our two teacher leaders
14 here tonight. That's a program that the BTU
15 runs. They do different research projects that
16 sort of help exemplify the very best in policy
17 and practice.

18 It is funded by the AFT, the American
19 Federation of Teachers. These two teacher
20 leaders have done exemplary work and I would like
21 to yield my time to them to talk about their work

1 around restorative justice because I think it
2 would be a very timely topic to talk about
3 tonight. So, I'm going to yield my time to them.

4 MS. HARENDEN: Good evening. We started
5 our research back in September of 2014 with the
6 Baltimore Teachers Union's teacher leader
7 program. Jason and I decided that the discipline
8 policy, we are all for, being those that work in
9 the schools, we know what teachers are up
10 against, we know what students are up against, we
11 know what the administrators are up against, and
12 our stakeholders.

13 But, one thing that we found was that
14 with the discipline policy, we feel like
15 restorative practices need to be brought into
16 city schools and there needs to be uniformity
17 amongst the intervention programs that are housed
18 within the school buildings.

19 We feel like students should not have a
20 lot of time outside of school for suspensions.
21 However, if they do a behavior that results in

1 suspension and needed to be inside of the school,
2 whoever is running that intervention program
3 needs to be equipped with the skills and
4 strategies to use restorative practices so that
5 these students will not repeat the same negative
6 behaviors upon returning to the classroom.

7 MR. WORTHMAN: To build on that, it's
8 become clear from interviews and research we've
9 done across the district of teachers basically
10 stating their opinion that, what they're seeing
11 in the classroom, there is no uniformity. They
12 feel like they are ill equipped, as which was
13 mentioned, and they are left to kind of fend for
14 themselves.

15 Our policy is basically that we would
16 encourage city schools to introduce a universal
17 or citywide intervention and restorative justice
18 practice across the district and train teachers
19 and staff in the buildings to be able to carry
20 that out effectively.

21 MS. HARENDEN: What you see in one

1 school should be the same in another. So, if a
2 student in School A has presented behaviors that
3 were negative and they had to go to what we call
4 the resource room or the in-school suspension
5 room, it should not be a room of students that
6 are just sitting with their heads down or writing
7 in notebooks. They shouldn't be talking amongst
8 each other. It should be something that's more
9 strategic and organized and structured. There
10 should be a day planned where the person who is
11 facilitating that particular program or in that
12 room should have the skills to teach these
13 students restorative practices and restorative
14 resources so that when they go back into the
15 classroom, that is pretty much a place they don't
16 want to go back to. So, if they don't want to go
17 back to that room, they won't present the same
18 behaviors or present any new negative behaviors.

19 Right now, if you go into one school, you
20 may see that. But, if you go into another
21 school, you may not. Jason and I did our

1 research based off of what we see in our schools,
2 what we've seen in other schools that we've
3 worked in, and what our teachers and staff
4 members have seen in their schools based on a
5 survey that we sent out. We feel like that will
6 reduce a lot of the things that are going on,
7 that would reduce a lot of the kids feeling
8 unsafe when they come to school because we have
9 kids that want to learn. We have teachers who
10 want to teach. However, teachers coming straight
11 out of college into a classroom with students
12 that may not have those resources. If they don't
13 have those resources, we are making a recipe for
14 disaster.

15 We feel like if we have those skills
16 within our schools and embedded in our
17 facilitators and embedded in our staff members,
18 we can make a difference and we can see a
19 reduction in negative behaviors among city
20 schools students.

21 MR. WORTHMAN: Just to finish it up, it

1 has been tried in schools across the country.
2 It's even been tried in Baltimore. The
3 statistics show that it does work. It's the way
4 to go. I would encourage everyone to do
5 restorative justice practices, or at least
6 implement a policy in city schools. (Applause.)

7 MS. HOGUE: Thank you.

8 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
9 Hike-Hubbard?

10 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: I thank you
11 for that and I happen to agree with both of you.
12 But, my question is actually not for you but for
13 staff. I know that we have restorative practices
14 in schools right now. I don't know how many.
15 I'd like to know, if you can't answer this right
16 now, it's fine. But, I'd like to know how many
17 we have, how they're working. Did you find that
18 in your research at all?

19 MS. HARENDEN: We found one in
20 particular which is City Springs which is
21 working, and I believe Glenmount.

1 MR. WORTHMAN: And, Green Spring.

2 VOICE: It's not systemic.

3 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: I know, but
4 I know that we've done some grant work around
5 this and we do have it working across several
6 schools. I'd just like to know what they are.
7 Maybe they can get that feedback to you as well,
8 but the Board would like to see that as well.
9 Make that happen.

10 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Thank you.

11 MS. HARENDEN: Thank you for having us.
12 (Applause.)

13 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: So, I had to learn
14 a lesson about reading. If you recall, at the
15 last meeting I made a comment about public
16 comment. I think I said something along the
17 lines of it had to be limited to what was on the
18 agenda. I realize I didn't read the second half
19 of that policy which says that the comments can
20 be related to anything from a general education
21 perspective. So, pretty much you guys can talk

1 about anything you want to talk about.

2 (Applause.) But, you've still only got three
3 minutes.

4 So, first up is Hilda Bryant, a community
5 member at Baer Circle.

6 MS. BRYANT: Good evening. An angel
7 rode in spotless white, bent down to kiss the
8 sleeping knight. The knight woke to blush, the
9 spirit was gone. Men saw the blush and called it
10 Dawn.

11 That was a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar.
12 I'm here to inquire exactly what has been done
13 when students graduate to know about historic
14 schools in this city. Paul Laurence Dunbar being
15 one, Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison
16 and George Washington Carver.

17 Do the students know a poem by Paul
18 Laurence Dunbar? Do they know the collaborative
19 work between the great abolitionist, William
20 Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass? Are there
21 any experiments in the STEM program that go back

1 to Dr. Carver?

2 I would like to offer a remedy for this,
3 if I may. Number one, upon entering these
4 schools, there should be at least two assemblies
5 about these people. There also could be essay
6 contests about these people. Enter school,
7 history and English exchanges between one school
8 and another. Bulletin boards.

9 In the STEM program, can we duplicate
10 anything that Dr. Carver did? Can we have
11 debates? Could we have a poetry contest? I'm
12 sure our poet laureates in our state would be
13 happy about that. I say that because I know a
14 poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar and I was taught
15 that poem when I was in the Baltimore City Public
16 School system. Here is the book right here. You
17 can see how old it is and you see I've always
18 kept it.

19 So, thank you very much for listening. I
20 think that this is something that is so important
21 because every city does not have schools named

1 after such great, great historical people. So, I
2 would like to inquire, if it's already there,
3 fine. If we could enhance it, fine. But, I
4 appreciate you listening to me because this is
5 the first time I've endeavored to really talk
6 about this in a serious way.

7 So, I decided to present it to a very
8 serious Board, which is you. So, thank you for
9 listening and I'm going to leave now because I
10 know somebody else wants my seat. (Laughter.)
11 (Applause.)

12 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Before you leave,
13 Ms. Bryant, Commissioner Hike-Hubbard?

14 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: As a former
15 social studies teacher myself, I applaud you for
16 bringing this to the Board and I think you're
17 absolutely right. We need to think about what
18 we're teaching and we'll look into it. But, I
19 also would add that we need to highlight our
20 famous Baltimoreans like Thurgood Marshall and
21 Billie Holliday and others who are from here.

1 MS. BRYANT: That's right. We've got a
2 lot of work to do.

3 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: Thank you so
4 much. (Applause.)

5 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Next is Alissa
6 Morehead and John Bitterman. Members from
7 Baltimore Montessori. Okay. They do not seem to
8 be here. Next we'll move on to Valerie Rion,
9 spokesperson, Taylor Clinton, Peyton Mordi and
10 Denise Schechter, students at Baltimore
11 Montessori.

12 MS. MOREHEAD: Good evening. I'm Lisa
13 Morehead and I'm a parent at Baltimore Public
14 Montessori Charter.

15 MS. COLANTUONI: My name is Elizabeth
16 Colantuoni. I'm also a parent at Baltimore
17 Public Montessori Charter School.

18 MS. MOREHEAD: I just want to first
19 thank you for the time and also an opportunity to
20 explore this conversation more deeply. I want to
21 first ask that we be given a chance to have more

1 conversation and more transparency around the
2 budget process and how we can be collaborators in
3 that process as parents and teachers.

4 (Applause.)

5 Not just my child at Baltimore Public
6 Montessori, but also from the 15,000 children
7 that are in charter schools across this city that
8 are excelling and creating the next Ta-Nehisi
9 Coates or Dunkirk studies or things like that.
10 It's not a coincidence. Baltimore is producing
11 some of the most important leaders because we are
12 creating schools with progressive, innovative
13 thinking and innovative thinkers.

14 I don't want that to be handicapped or
15 crippled by something as inconsequential and
16 consequential as money. So, that's one thing
17 that I wanted to bring up.

18 I'd also like to talk and hear more from
19 this council about ways that this cannot happen
20 again in the future. We're here today and we're
21 combating an issue that feels very urgent and

1 very dire. This is not something that any of our
2 nerve endings can take year after year.

3 (Applause.)

4 So, Baltimore innovates every year on
5 many levels. I just moved here, I'm a new
6 resident. I just moved here from New York City
7 and I get asked quite a bit why I would move from
8 New York City to Baltimore. I think that's a
9 problematic question on many levels because, for
10 me, there are many obvious reasons and one of
11 them being the stellar education that this
12 charter school provides that many other cities
13 put a \$20,000 to \$30,000 price tag on. There's
14 nothing like this. I can assure you. I'm here.
15 My whole family is here. I sold my house. This
16 is a very real phenomenon and I don't want an
17 issue like this to force me back, or any of the
18 other parents who have to contemplate leaving
19 such an important city and they're doing it and
20 they're going to the county, they're going
21 outside of the public school system and I think

1 that is tragic for not just our school system but
2 for the city. (Applause.)

3 MS. COLANTUONI: I have just a couple of
4 prepared remarks. I find myself as serving three
5 roles in trying to figure out a way to make sense
6 of this current issue. So, I think of myself as
7 a taxpayer and a resident of the State of
8 Maryland and Baltimore City. I find it
9 frustrating and disappointing that city schools
10 has continued to break the law since 2007 in not
11 using the state mandated funding formula for
12 Maryland charter schools.

13 I'm also an educator and a professional
14 and I do not understand why our school system
15 would threaten to cripple almost half of the most
16 successful public schools in this city. It's
17 just bad business to break things that aren't
18 broken.

19 We need to be learning from our
20 successful models and thinking creatively on how
21 to expand their reach. As a parent, it just

1 breaks my heart that the successful educational
2 model that I have found for my children could
3 disappear.

4 Mostly I think in the parent role, I have
5 to weigh my choices. Do I stay and continue to
6 support a city that I love? Where I've spent
7 more than 20 years and dedicated my life to
8 living in Baltimore City? Or, do I leave because
9 I can't find the choices that our children
10 deserve in terms of education? (Applause.)

11 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
12 Casciani?

13 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: I don't actually
14 want an answer but I'm going to raise this
15 question. Who told you that we were threatening
16 to cripple the schools? Because, we did not say
17 that that was the funding formula.

18 MS. MOREHEAD: Right. Well, from what I
19 understand and from what we've read and what
20 we've been told, the formula is a little, let's
21 say, obtuse. It's a little hard to get through.

1 From what we understand, this formula
2 will result in a significant deficit, for our
3 school and all of the charter schools across the
4 city. So, am I wrong about that?

5 (Chatter from audience.)

6 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: Yes, you are.

7 MS. MOREHEAD: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: You asked me.

9 It was presented as the beginning of a
10 conversation because there had been so much
11 disagreement. So, it was presented to be the
12 beginning of a conversation. Nobody on this
13 Board thought that that was the funding formula.

14 MS. MOREHEAD: So then, that's
15 fantastic. So, what I'm going to read into your
16 statement and your tone is that there is an
17 interest in transparency. That will clear up any
18 conversations that are in any way inaccurate. We
19 want that accuracy. More than we want the
20 accuracy, we want to be able to be funded
21 adequately and we want to be able to understand a

1 formula going forward that works and that there
2 be no questions about it from anybody here. And
3 certainly not questions, we're reasonably
4 intelligent parents and we want to be able to
5 sort through it in a very expeditious manner.

6 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: That's why we're
7 hoping what Dr. Thornton presented at the
8 beginning, after conversations with the Mayor
9 that would give us an opportunity to do that.

10 MS. MOREHEAD: Then we share that hope.

11 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
12 Hike-Hubbard?

13 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: I just want
14 to say that the Board and I personally share your
15 sense of urgency around this. We don't want to
16 have this conversation year after year. It needs
17 to be fixed. We need to solve it and come to a
18 conclusion together.

19 To your point about us not caring, my own
20 son goes to a charter school. Every day he tells
21 me how much he loves going to school. He's in

1 Kindergarten. It's not about the Board wanting
2 to shut down charter schools. Please understand
3 that. We value them as innovative members of our
4 district. I consider that across the entire
5 board. So, please don't ever mistake the want to
6 fix this and figure out this solution for 85,000
7 students across this district, not just 15,000
8 but 85,000, as a statement that we don't care
9 about charter schools. We do. They're part of a
10 whole solution to help our school kids get a
11 great education.

12 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
13 Townes?

14 STUDENT COMM. TOWNES: As a student from
15 a charter school, I understand how you all feel.
16 But, if I may make a recommendation? Can you all
17 take this anger and frustration that you have to
18 the state capital and ask the Governor to give
19 the money that he cut back to us because not only
20 are charter schools suffering, but all schools
21 are suffering as well. At Paul Laurence Dunbar

1 alone, we lost 10 teachers and had to take on
2 more students. So, we're suffering right now.

3 So, please take this anger and
4 frustration to the capital and beg for our money
5 back. (Applause.)

6 DR. THORNTON: Before you leave,
7 hopefully you've been able to see the commitment
8 from this Board on charters. We have the largest
9 charter footprint in the entire state and
10 continue to grow. We opened up four new charter
11 schools this year. I had the good fortune of
12 cutting the ribbon.

13 We hear you loud and clear about the
14 formula. One of the things, as we sat down, we
15 wanted to get ahead of it this year. So, in
16 order to get ahead of it, we put out a proposal.
17 It was merely a proposal to begin the
18 conversation around where do we go from here.

19 There were some things that were
20 important to me. One, that the proposal was
21 certainly, we'd have a formula. So, anyone in

1 the public can apply the formula and get the same
2 answer. The second thing that was really
3 important to me was that it was scalable. That
4 it could move and have elasticity as we grow with
5 charters. But the other thing was that it was
6 sustainable.

7 I know Montessori very well. I was in a
8 Montessori school before any of the conversation
9 happened. I had an opportunity to see your
10 children. I was in the three-year old program
11 and I watched the work that they do.

12 We had conversations and were very candid
13 about the expansion of Montessori. If you talk
14 with the Montessori leaders, we're committed to
15 great schools. I want the opportunities that
16 present themselves in many of our charter schools
17 and traditional schools to be in every single
18 school in the city.

19 I'm committing to you, the Board is
20 committing to you ongoing conversations.
21 Tonight, certainly the proposal is off the table.

1 We think it's a good faith effort to come back,
2 let's start over, let's hit the reset button,
3 let's get proposals from our charter community,
4 let's get a proposal from me and let's work
5 together.

6 But, more important than that, we want to
7 do it all publicly. We want it all out so you
8 can tune in and work and hear every word that is
9 said because, at the end of the day, these are
10 all our children and we're committed to create
11 wonderful opportunities.

12 I thank you for coming down. I want to
13 thank you for staying in Baltimore.

14 MS. MOREHEAD: Don't be the reason I
15 leave. (Applause.)

16 DR. THORNTON: No, we won't be. I think
17 we're going to be the reason you stay because we
18 want to expand Montessori throughout the city
19 because I think it's a wonderful program that has
20 great results. We're just excited.

21 I think there's some work to be done and,

1 every so often, you hit the reset button and
2 start over again. We're ready to rethink, get
3 back to the table, figure it out and get a
4 formula. So, hopefully, we won't have to talk
5 about this for another 10 years. The formula will
6 have enough growth and elasticity to move
7 forward.

8 MS. MOREHEAD: Thank you and, on behalf
9 of Alison and the school, we know that our
10 parents will be there as part of that
11 conversation, that very public conversation. We
12 will definitely be in Hogan's and everybody
13 else's conversation. So, whatever is needed,
14 we're there. (Applause.)

15 DR. THORNTON: Thank you very much.
16 Thank you for your commitment.

17 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Once again, calling
18 Valerie Rion, Taylor Clinton, Peyton Mordi and
19 Denise Schechter. Good evening. Please
20 introduce yourselves?

21 MS. DOYLE: My name is Genevieve Doyle

1 and I go to Baltimore Montessori Public Charter
2 School.

3 MS. MORDI: My name is Peyton Mordi and
4 I go to Baltimore Montessori Public Charter
5 School.

6 MR. CLINTON: My name is Taylor Clinton
7 and I go to Baltimore Montessori Public Charter
8 School.

9 MS. RION: My name is Valerie Rion and I
10 go to Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School.

11 MS. MORDI: I am a child of Dyslexia and
12 this has been the first school that I have gone
13 to that has helped me out with it. This school
14 provides life lessons and things you need to move
15 on to high school and college and to the real
16 world.

17 MR. CLINTON: I am an 8th grade student
18 at this school. I came here last here. My old
19 school was Windsor Hills Elementary/Middle
20 School. Basically, the difference between a
21 regular Baltimore City school and a charter

1 school, it's a way big difference for me. When I
2 think of words to explain my school, I think of
3 peace and community and gatherings and things
4 because we do things as a community. I love to
5 see all these people come out and support charter
6 schools because I think that our school is
7 something to stand up for and we're not just up
8 here because our teachers told us to come up here
9 or anything like that. But, I think our school
10 is really good.

11 MS. DOYLE: My name is Genevieve Doyle.
12 I'm a 7th grader at Baltimore Montessori Public
13 Charter. I love my school. I've been there
14 since 4th grade and they've helped me grow, learn,
15 everything. It's terrible that I have to protest
16 for it to stay open.

17 COMMISSIONERS: You don't. (Applause.)

18 MS. RION: My name is Valerie Rion. I'm
19 an 8th grader at Baltimore Montessori Public
20 Charter School. One thing I really like about
21 this school is it is a safe and diverse place to

1 learn. So, you can meet a bunch of new people
2 and you're not confined to one certain group of
3 people.

4 In the City of Baltimore, there's a lot
5 of prejudice. At least where I live, it's a lot
6 of prejudice around people. Because of the
7 budget cuts, I was in a program called Bridges
8 and I'm afraid they might not have it this year.
9 I'm scared they might not have it this year. I
10 was in that program for three years and I'm
11 scared they might not have it this year.

12 So, there's a bunch of things that we had
13 before that we might not have now because of the
14 budget cuts that are happening. I'm really
15 nervous that our school might not be able to
16 operate and we won't have our school anymore.

17 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Are there any
18 questions? Commissioner Hike-Hubbard?

19 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: I just want
20 to thank you all for saying how much you care
21 about your school. I appreciate it and you don't

1 have to advocate for it not to close. That's not
2 anyone on this Board's intention. We just want
3 to make sure that you hear that and understand
4 it. We celebrated your school through your
5 renewal process and it's a fantastic school. We
6 know it, we were just there recently.

7 So, we appreciate you coming and please
8 come again. But, you need to know that we're not
9 threatening to close your school. (Applause.)

10 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Next up we have
11 Arianna Townes, a student at City Neighbors.
12 (Applause.)

13 VOICE: Hi everyone. Before the kids
14 talk, I just want to say one thing so that we're
15 really clear about what is happening.

16 Dr. Thornton, I appreciate so much that
17 you wanted to make an announcement that the Mayor
18 is stepping in and trying to help us with this.
19 But, unfortunately, the folks that would be part
20 of that did not make that agreement.

21 So, we haven't made that commitment. We

1 haven't said we're going to do that. You said
2 you wanted to pull this formula and I recommend
3 that you do pull this formula. To say that you
4 are beginning a conversation with a formula that
5 would close 13 charter schools is not responsible
6 and it's not okay and it makes me question your
7 leadership and trust that we have for you.

8 (Applause.)

9 What I want to do right now is clear a
10 space for these kids who came here tonight to
11 speak their hearts and came to be heard. They
12 need to be heard by you for what they came here
13 to say. So, please, give them this time. This
14 isn't between you and us right now. This is for
15 the kids to speak their mind because that's how
16 democracy works. These guys are going to hear
17 these voices. Right guys?

18 STUDENTS: Yeah.

19 VOICE: So, let's let them speak and
20 I'll have my time at the next public comment.
21 Thank you. (Applause.)

1 MS. TOWNES: My name is Arianna Townes
2 and I'm from City Neighbors Charter School. Our
3 city has been in the dark for many months. After
4 the tragedy of a young man named Freddie Gray.
5 This city is recovering but every time there is a
6 speck of light, the darkness just gets stronger.

7 Adults are always saying these kids are
8 the future and they're going to make it shine.
9 But, with this new proposed funding, I can't see
10 that happening.

11 You might be thinking, well, every school
12 has had a budget cut and they're doing pretty
13 well. But, charter schools aren't other schools.
14 We make a difference in our community and we help
15 when they're in need.

16 I come from City Neighbors as an 8th
17 grader and I'm here because I disagree with what
18 you are doing. These charter schools that are
19 facing closure are among the 20 highest
20 performing schools in Baltimore City. City
21 Neighbors has taught me to stand up for what I

1 believe and have confidence while doing whatever
2 you put your mind to.

3 These charter schools are all I know.
4 But, pretty soon, I will have a taste of high
5 school. But, you have to think of the little
6 kids and would you be doing the same thing for
7 your kids if their schools were facing closure?
8 For one minute, put yourselves in our shoes and
9 please make the right decision. (Applause.)

10 MS. ASAKA: Good evening. My name is
11 Khalila Asaka. I'm in 8th grade at City Neighbors
12 Charter School. It always seemed like I was
13 miles away from my destination, the moment I
14 stand in now where I'm able to face you all
15 tonight and speak on the future of our schools.

16 This would not be possible without City
17 Neighbors Charter School shaping me into who I am
18 today. The next steps to a recovery, however, is
19 a distant obstacle I never imagined we'd face.
20 Three thousand dollars in the wrong direction.

21 As I look amongst the students, I look

1 into the eyes of ambition. I watch as my peers
2 live the beginnings of success stories.
3 Opportunities abound in our future because of the
4 education that our teachers have gifted us.
5 Teachers who bring with them a wealth of
6 knowledge, are co-conspirators in igniting a
7 spark in each child.

8 We have been provided several unique
9 educational opportunities. Such as the Mind Fair
10 which allows us to tap into and explore our own
11 interests and make inquiries into science and
12 health, social awareness issues, as well as arts
13 and history.

14 We take our well-formulated views into
15 the real world by protesting against job cuts at
16 Johns Hopkins, or speaking out in support of
17 freedom to read what we choose and rally against
18 censorship.

19 Written words hardly convey the
20 experiences we share, the family we've built, but
21 clarify for us the inequalities of your proposal

1 of many of our schools barely surfacing the line
2 of survival while others become non-existent.
3 City Neighbors and their views of education gives
4 us the tools to make us better speakers, better
5 thinkers and more productive citizens. It gives
6 us a voice.

7 CNCS has propelled me to articulate and
8 voice my own ideas. With this voice, I ask you,
9 what do you see in us? When have our aspirations
10 and dreams faded in the priorities of education?
11 When has this become equitable? (Applause.)

12 MS. ISAACSON: Good evening. My name is
13 Aliyah Isaacson and I'm in 7th grade. City
14 Neighbors has made me the way I am today, being
15 open-minded to opportunities to come and how can
16 we let this place go? Vanish. Gone. All of the
17 hard work that was put into it. A small school
18 that has been built upon with creativity for 10
19 years now, a sense of community, diversity and
20 international potluck and project-based learning.

21 This may be a small school, but that's

1 what makes us more like a family. A family that
2 fights for rights. A family that does things
3 differently. A family that extends to their
4 horizons.

5 Fight to save the charter. Future of all
6 public schools' students. (Applause.)

7 MR. UNOKO: Good evening. My name is
8 Makai Unoko. I'm in the 8th grade at City
9 Neighbors Charter School. Baltimore has been in
10 the dark for a long time now. Out of town people
11 think of Baltimore, they think of crime or school
12 fights. But, when I think of Baltimore, I think
13 of charter schools. I think of the light that
14 they bring to the city. I think that if you
15 close down charter schools and you do the budget
16 cuts, then people won't get a good enough future
17 as they wanted to.

18 We have a City Neighbors High School that
19 is standing outside at the moment. They're going
20 there and they're one of the highest graduation
21 rates in the city. Do you want to close that

1 down? No. (Applause.)

2 MS. HINES: Good evening. My name is
3 Michaela Hines. I am a student at City Neighbors
4 Charter School. I have been in this school since
5 Kindergarten. To get into Kindergarten, you have
6 to put your name in a raffle to get in. I was
7 the last one to get picked out of the box. Ever
8 since, I have been grateful. This school has
9 brought so many opportunities that have helped me
10 in my school and outside of school. I have made
11 many new friends and so many of them are really
12 close.

13 In this situation, my class has been
14 talking about it and discussing what we would do
15 if the school closes down. A lot of us said we
16 don't know. Other said that they would move so
17 that they could go to a charter school.

18 I would like to ask you guys what you
19 would do if your child was going through this?
20 How would you feel if you had to choose what you
21 would do and how would you deal with maybe having

1 to move or put your child in an overcrowded
2 school where your child doesn't know anyone and
3 is overwhelmed?

4 With shutting down many different
5 schools, it would cause a ripple effect and there
6 could be many different problems that would
7 happen because if you close down schools, there
8 could be like vacant houses and poverty because
9 many teachers would be fired from their jobs.

10 You are pretty much saying that many of
11 you will succeed, but some of you can't. At City
12 Neighbors High School, the graduation rate is 93.
13 The drop-out rate is 6 percent. Ninety-three is
14 87 percent more than 6 percent for the drop-out
15 rate and that's a charter school. So, why would
16 you close down a school with such good
17 expectations? (Applause.)

18 MR. MCDONALD: I am Ramsey McDonald, 7th
19 grade, City Neighbors Charter School. I was just
20 wondering, how do you think we feel about this
21 formula? Do you think we'll be happy to give up

1 our school? Even though we complain about going
2 to school and homework, that doesn't mean we want
3 it to go away.

4 In school, we learn things. We learn
5 math, language arts, social studies, music and
6 other things like friendship and responsibility,
7 and even things like how to talk to your pals
8 without being noticed. Right now, we're learning
9 how to stand up for ourselves and not take what's
10 being given to us. Or, in this case, to not give
11 what is being taken from us.

12 We need to keep this charter school
13 because we like this school and we like to learn.
14 So, will you just let us learn? Our charter
15 schools are small. That makes it more like a
16 family. When that formula was proposed, the
17 whole family banded together so they won't have
18 to split up. No to the proposed charter school
19 formula. (Applause.)

20 MR. GAZARA: Hi. My name is Max Gazara.
21 I'm from the 8th grade at City Neighbors Charter

1 School. Someone close to me once said that if
2 you love something to protect it. Protect it
3 with both arms even if that means facing the
4 impossible. I love my school. Therefore, I will
5 protect it.

6 I've spend the last 9 years of my life at
7 City Neighbors and it has forged who my friends
8 and I are today. I will protect the school and
9 the futures of all the younger students. We are
10 a family. Maybe not in the sense of flesh and
11 blood, but through the experiences we have
12 shared. We've all cried, laughed, gotten in
13 trouble, but we've all faced those mistakes and
14 we've overcome them.

15 This proposed formula you have put before
16 us, we have denied it. We have formed a bond and
17 strengthened a wall that denies it. I say no to
18 the proposed formula and ask you this. If you
19 care about equity between schools, why even
20 propose a formula like this? Or, even put it out
21 to the public? (Applause.)

1 VOICE: (Name inaudible. Speaking away
2 from microphone.) I've been at City Neighbors
3 Charter School since I was in Kindergarten. This
4 school has taught me how to embrace diversity and
5 it also has taught me many things I wouldn't have
6 learned in other schools.

7 Also, we do all these wonderful trips.
8 Like, the 8th graders, they go to Germany for a
9 week and then they stay with different families.
10 Then, they come here. If I was at a different
11 school, that would most likely not happen. We
12 get to do so many opportunities that other
13 schools don't get. With this proposal you're
14 doing, it will close multiple charter schools.
15 If the proposal goes through, that is closing 8
16 of the 20 best schools in Baltimore.

17 Baltimore isn't in the best situation
18 already. If you do put the proposal through,
19 that is putting us in an even worse situation.
20 (Applause.)

21 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Thank you.

1 Commissioner Hassan?

2 COMMISSIONER HASSAN: First of all,
3 thank you all for your very articulate and
4 well-prepared presentation. (Applause.) To
5 respond specifically to one of the comments the
6 first young woman made, and I'm going to try to
7 do this without getting emotional. But, it may
8 not work.

9 She asked us to stand in your shoes. We
10 stand in your shoes. There are 85,000 students
11 in this district and we don't want to leave the
12 other 70,000 behind. So, we have to make very
13 careful decisions to make sure that everyone has
14 the funding they need to succeed.

15 Does that mean that some schools need
16 more funding? Maybe. That's what we're going to
17 talk about as grown-ups. What I'm also really
18 sad about, though, is that some grown-ups in your
19 life are allowing you to believe we are going to
20 close your schools. We are absolutely not. We
21 are not interested in that at all.

1 Standing in your shoes, I apologize that
2 you have heard that message. That is not our
3 intent. That is not where we're going. Thank
4 you.

5 VOICE: I would like to ask something.
6 When you say that you will talk about it as
7 grown-ups, does that mean the kids don't get a
8 say in it? (Applause.)

9 COMMISSIONER HASSAN: That is an awesome
10 point. Our Student Commissioner is ready to
11 weigh in but I know we also have student forums
12 and ways for students to contribute all through
13 this process.

14 STUDENT COMM. TOWNES: So, as the
15 Student Commissioner, my job here is to represent
16 all of you. All 85,000 of you. So, any issues
17 and concerns that you all have, I share them and
18 I will bring them to this Board and I will fight
19 with you all. I will stand in the streets with
20 you. Stand in the rain with you. I'll go to
21 Annapolis with you. I'll come here with you.

1 Regardless, I will be there with you.

2 But, another thing. Can we please stop
3 focusing on our own personal ideologies here?
4 Can we focus on getting work done and stop saying
5 this and that and actually do something here and
6 stop pointing the finger? We're all adults here.
7 The adults and adults here and we can do our
8 jobs. Let's work together and get our jobs done.
9 Thank you. (Applause.)

10 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
11 Hike-Hubbard.

12 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: I just want
13 to make a comment. You made a point about
14 learning how to advocate. I think it's one of
15 the strongest things our schools can teach our
16 kids is to speak for themselves. So, I
17 appreciate you all coming here.

18 But, you need to understand and know that
19 no one on this Board wants to close your school.
20 We have a lot of things to talk about, student
21 voice is incredibly important in this

1 conversation. But, there is not one intention,
2 when the formula was introduced or discussed,
3 this was the beginning of the conversation.

4 So, hearing your voice about what is
5 important at your school, I've been to City
6 Neighbors. I've been to your graduation. I see
7 the great things happening and I hear from all of
8 you, I've listened very intently and I want you
9 to know that I appreciate your advocacy. Keep
10 advocating. But, also know that it's not
11 anyone's intent on this Board to close your
12 school. Please know that.

13 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Thank you guys very
14 much. (Applause.) Next up is Bobbie McDonald, a
15 community member at City Neighbors. (Applause.)

16 MS. MCDONALD: Good evening. So, I have
17 with me Ms. Gwendolyn Unoko. She is the Board
18 President and a parent at City Neighbors. Before
19 I speak, I'd just like to give Gwendolyn the
20 chance to speak her mind because that is why she
21 came tonight.

1 MS. UNOKO: Good evening. I'm Gwendolyn
2 Unoko and I'm a parent at City Neighbors Charter
3 School. I have an opportunity to not just speak
4 for myself but to speak for all of our parents
5 who cannot speak this evening.

6 If there has been some type of
7 misunderstanding, then we hear you. Then, we
8 want this conversation that we're having with you
9 now to be a prevention and act as a notification
10 that our school, if there was some threat or
11 there was an opportunity that a third of the
12 budget would be the starting conversation, if
13 that was idea that you were considering, we want
14 you to know that we won't go quietly and we won't
15 go without a fight. (Applause.)

16 If there is a misunderstanding, then we
17 want clarity. If there was a misunderstanding,
18 then we want transparency. But, we will keep
19 coming and we won't stop coming until we don't
20 have these types of misunderstandings. We want
21 clarity and we don't want that feeling in our

1 stomach that there is a possibility that our
2 children's education could be in danger because
3 we will keep fighting. We will keep coming back
4 and we will keep saying to you that you have got
5 to do what is right. Not just for charters, but
6 for all students. So, let that be the beginning
7 of the conversation. (Applause.)

8 VOICE: So, the proposal that you
9 brought forward was a disaster for Baltimore.
10 So, for you to say we don't have any intent of
11 closing schools and not know the implications of
12 what that formula means calls into question the
13 leadership and trust between us. That proposed
14 formula impacts negatively all of the charters
15 absolutely. That's like an attack and that
16 impacts communities and it's caused unrest among
17 so many families and children.

18 So, please, I don't want to hear again
19 that that was a beginning of a conversation
20 because that's one heck of a way to start a
21 conversation. (Applause.)

1 There is a law that has a statewide
2 funding formula. I want you to know that, from
3 the beginning, charter schools in Baltimore have
4 had, at the very heart of their mission, public
5 education. That's what we care passionately
6 about. We are imagining a thriving school system
7 and we want to do that together.

8 So, tonight, Dr. Thornton, you said you
9 were going to pull that formula and I hope you're
10 going to stick to that. It's the right thing to
11 do.

12 DR. THORNTON: It's pulled.

13 VOICE: Thank you. (Applause.) We are
14 willing to meet tomorrow morning to talk about
15 next steps going forward but we have not agreed
16 to anything, we're not pulling anything else and
17 we are going to rally on Saturday so this city
18 knows how we feel about our schools. (Applause.)

19 The children of Baltimore, all the kids
20 deserve to be heard, deserve to have great
21 schools. We're going to work with you to make

1 sure that's true on behalf of every child in this
2 city. Those 85,000 belong to all of us. Are you
3 with us on that? (Applause.)

4 But, we're going to do it from a position
5 of strength and we're going to do it from a
6 strong table of coming together. That means that
7 we will not stop, we will not give up and you're
8 going to have to hear from folks that you can't
9 just propose a formula that would wipe out
10 certain charter schools and that formula
11 absolutely would. If you play it out, that's
12 what it does by design.

13 I know that many of you care passionately
14 and also are here as volunteers because you care
15 about the students of Baltimore. But, we need to
16 move forward in a position where both sides of
17 the table have strength. I think tonight, from
18 the folks out in the hallway and in the waiting
19 rooms and the kids who came to protest, and their
20 parents, you understand what they're dealing
21 with. (Applause.)

1 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Ms. McDonald, your
2 time has expired. I thank you very much for
3 bringing the children.

4 MS. MCDONALD: Our time is just
5 beginning.

6 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: That may be true.

7 MS. MCDONALD: Well, that's all right.
8 We've got a continuing conversation and, guys,
9 we'll see you on Saturday at 10:30 at Lake
10 Montebello. Let's get together and show this
11 city what we really care about. All right?
12 (Applause.)

13 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Before everyone
14 leaves, I want to reiterate that prior to public
15 comment, when Dr. Thornton said we are
16 withdrawing the proposal, we also said at the
17 same time that the forum on Saturday would be
18 cancelled as a result of withdrawing the formula.
19 So, the forum on Saturday is not going to happen.

20 VOICE: Nobody said we were going to the
21 forum.

1 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: I just wanted to
2 make sure everyone understands that the forum has
3 been cancelled.

4 (Dialogue and cheers from audience.)

5 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: All right. Next up
6 on public comment is Citrina Lucas, community
7 member of Edgecombe Elementary. Joanne Wyatt?

8 MS. WYATT: Good evening. My name is
9 Joanne Wyatt and I represent Edgecombe Elementary
10 School.

11 MS. LUCAS: Good evening. I am Citrina
12 Lucas and I am also a parent at Edgecombe
13 Elementary.

14 MS. MCFADDEN: Hello. My name is
15 Jaliyah McFadden. I'm a student from Edgecombe
16 Circle Elementary/Middle.

17 MS. WYATT: I came here today because I
18 was a little disturbed at all the comments I've
19 been hearing. I got teary-eyed, too. That's my
20 daughter. This is our future.

21 I was told that the school was going to

1 have funding to renovate the school. Now, they
2 pulled, it was a elementary and middle school.
3 They pulled the middle school out and transferred
4 them to Pimlico. They also closed Langston
5 Hughes which they transferred them to Pimlico.

6 So, now my child, this is her last year.
7 She's subject to go to Pimlico with two other
8 schools in this building. How is she going to
9 learn? In her class now, she has 31 kids. It's
10 only one class of 5th grade. I had to do this
11 when she was in the 1st. It was two classes in
12 the 1st grade. I went to the principal and I
13 talked to the principal.

14 She's an honor roll student. Her grades
15 are going to drop. Like I said, this is our
16 future. There, I don't see any future for her.
17 Not in the way this is going.

18 Everyone sitting behind these tables,
19 come out to the schools. Sit there. I have.
20 The Langston school principal is now the
21 principal there. Their principal from last year

1 is here in this building. Promoted. We're
2 losing our good teachers, principals, everything.

3 I'm a taxpayer. Where are my taxes
4 going? I listen to the charter people. I tried
5 to get her in a charter. I can't afford it. I'm
6 a single parent. So, she's subject to stay in
7 city schools. But, what is city schools
8 offering?

9 Just like he talked about the Douglass
10 incident. She had an incident in her class where
11 a little boy got knocked out. A 5th grader. It
12 took that for the principal to suspend this
13 child. Every day, my child was coming home and
14 telling me about this same little boy and one of
15 the children got tired and he knocked him out.

16 I feel as though my child is in a sardine
17 can. It's ridiculous. The system is really
18 failing now. I'm working two and three jobs to
19 make sure she has her books, to make sure she's
20 getting her lessons. I mean, it's not fair. I
21 come to you to ask first that we open more

1 classes for these children. It's too many
2 children in one classroom. Thirty-one kids with
3 one teacher, that's impossible. Especially now
4 that their hormones is out of whack. You got
5 attitudes flying all over the place.

6 I went to the principal and asked her why
7 they can't come up with another 5th grade class?
8 She said it's not in the budget.

9 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Ms. Lucas?

10 MS. LUCAS: Good evening. First of all,
11 I'd like to say thank you for taking the time out
12 to listen to us and our concerns.

13 Initially, my children were attending
14 Baltimore County schools. They attended Wellwood
15 Elementary for a fair amount of time.
16 Unfortunately, I had moved into the city. I was
17 not very adamant about transferring my children
18 into Baltimore City schools.

19 My children are very secluded children.
20 I try not to introduce them into things that
21 other, and this starts at home. I'm not putting

1 the blame on the school system wholeheartedly.
2 But, I do have a concern with, first and
3 foremost, the issue that she has a concern with.

4 In the 5th grade, 30 students in one class
5 is entirely too high. My son alone, he's already
6 very educated, but he has a very hard issue with
7 focusing. Having that many children in one
8 classroom and trying to focus on learning is very
9 hard when you have your peers and a whole lot of
10 distractions.

11 When my children first initially started
12 attending this school, because they were so
13 different, they were being bullied. That wasn't
14 even addressed properly. So, it is a high
15 concern for my children when you have a concern
16 for their safety. I wanted that to be addressed
17 as well because I don't want my children, it's
18 hard to say that but I don't want my children in
19 Baltimore City schools. I have four boys.

20 So, my concern with them growing up to be
21 black men and as well as them getting the

1 education and focusing on the things that they
2 need to be, it's not easy for them. They can't
3 focus on their learning if they're concerned for
4 their own safety as well. So, that's my concern.
5 Thank you.

6 MS. MCFADDEN: Hello. Once again, my
7 name is Jaliyah McFadden. I would like to say
8 that there are teachers in the school and when
9 kids get into fights and stuff like that, the
10 teachers don't never do nothing about it. They
11 just sit and watch and then at the last minute,
12 we always get in trouble. I'm not liking that.

13 I would just like to ask you all can you
14 all come up there and do something about it?

15 MS. LUCAS: That's another issue. Since
16 the beginning of this school year, my son has
17 already gotten into two fights and I wasn't even
18 notified. Luckily, she is my neighbor and she
19 told me. When I addressed the teacher and she
20 said the reason I wasn't notified was because she
21 separated the students. That's not a good enough

1 answer. If my child is getting into an
2 altercation or getting into a fight, why are the
3 parents not being notified?

4 My second older son, he was being bullied
5 for about three months and I had no idea. The
6 school had no idea. They didn't know who my son
7 was. They didn't know who was bullying him. I
8 didn't even realize it until one day my son came
9 home with a busted lip. So, I have a big issue
10 and I just need you guys to come out and see for
11 yourself. It's easy to be behind closed doors
12 and hear complaints when you don't see it for
13 yourself.

14 Of course, if you mention that fact of
15 coming up there, you can't see it because people
16 put on a good persona for people if you're
17 announcing your presence. But, you know, more
18 pop-ups, being more involved will help not only
19 with the school but with the students as well
20 because it shows that you care. So, that was
21 another one of my concerns.

1 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
2 Hike-Hubbard?

3 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: I appreciate
4 all three of you coming to speak today and
5 especially on your advocacy on behalf of yourself
6 and you should advocate on behalf of yourself.

7 One thing I want to just clarify, you
8 made a statement about having to pay for charter
9 schools. You don't have to pay for charter
10 schools. I'm not advocating that you go to one
11 or not. But, they are free for every city
12 resident. It's a lottery system, so you put your
13 name in a lottery.

14 MS. LUCAS: But, if I'm a taxpayer,
15 regardless of whether, let me rephrase that.
16 Regardless of whether I'm a taxpayer or not,
17 education should be free. The only way you
18 should be paying for education is college.

19 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: It is.
20 Baltimore City Public Schools, charter or
21 whatever, there is no charge to go to city

1 schools. There's not. Unless you are from out
2 of zone and you are coming into our district.
3 That is the only way we charge anybody. I'm
4 sorry that you have that incorrect information
5 and I want to make sure that staff can clear that
6 up for you.

7 But, I want to say as a parent myself, I
8 resonate with what you are saying. I work in the
9 Park Heights community at the job I actually get
10 paid to do. I'm in Park Heights all the time. I
11 have been in the schools. I have not been in
12 Edgecombe but I will come. I promise you that.
13 Commissioner Hassan and I were at Pimlico the
14 first day of school looking at how the merger was
15 going, thinking about Langston Hughes and
16 Edgecombe and thinking about how that's going to
17 look and challenging our district to say, if
18 we're going to make a 21 Century building in that
19 building, but also a 21st Century school for all
20 our children.

21 So, I want to make sure that you know

1 we're doing that and I will come to Edgecombe and
2 I think that other staff will talk. I want to
3 thank you for coming out and waiting all this
4 time to speak your mind. It's really important
5 that we hear it.

6 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
7 Casciani.

8 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: When we made a
9 very difficult, I also appreciate that you came.
10 Thank you. When we made a very difficult and
11 widely unpopular decision to close Langston
12 Hughes, I thought we were making a simultaneous
13 commitment to attend to the climate, educational
14 offerings, and other issues to the schools that
15 were going to receive those students. So, I
16 would like to know.

17 DR. THORNTON: We'll be glad to.

18 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: Yeah, I mean,
19 they have to be linked. We can't make those
20 decisions and then not attend to every aspect of
21 what opportunities those children have. Whether

1 it's class size, quality of teaching, safety of
2 the schools, they have to be linked.

3 VOICE: Also, when this school year
4 started, they started out with two 5th grade
5 teachers. Now, they have one. They flip-flopped
6 this one particular teacher from 5th to 1st, and
7 now that one teacher is teaching the 1st grade and
8 they've combined all of these kids into one
9 class.

10 So, just imagine when school started, 90
11 degree weather and all these kids piled up into
12 one little tiny classroom, who is going to learn
13 like that?

14 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
15 Chinnia?

16 COMMISSIONER CHINNIA: Again, I want to
17 thank you all for coming and sharing. But, this
18 is a time of the year when we also are taking a
19 look at enrollment. So, I know that folks from
20 our staff will be there in terms of seeing what
21 class sizes look like compared to what the

1 expectation was.

2 So, I'm going to ask that we could,
3 hopefully, just get some reports back about what
4 is happening there.

5 VOICE: I sat down and talked to the
6 principal Thursday or Friday of last week. She
7 told me it wasn't in the budget. Now, like I
8 said, in the past, my daughter, it was only two
9 1st grade classes. I went straight to the
10 principal that was there then and I spoke and
11 told him that I didn't see my daughter being
12 successful in this class because you have the
13 inner city and then you're sending county
14 teachers out. They don't know that these
15 children are rough around the edges.

16 So, because they are rough around the
17 edges, that's what they're going to get. If they
18 don't know how to sit them down, I literally
19 walked into class and was talking to the teacher,
20 I told the teacher, excuse me, and I said, excuse
21 me. I'm a parent. This is your teacher. You're

1 being quite rude. It was like E.F. Hutton in the
2 class.

3 You know what the teacher turned around
4 and said? Oh, we have volunteer work, we stop
5 work every day. I'm a taxpayer. Where are my
6 taxes going? I feel as though my child is going
7 to be a failure before she even gets to high
8 school.

9 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Dr. Thornton?

10 DR. THORNTON: Yes, thank you very much.
11 I do take your suggestion very seriously. I get
12 the opportunity to be in schools all the time. I
13 was excited about Edgecombe this year. We have a
14 wonderful new principal there. I'm somewhat
15 concerned around some of the challenges that you
16 are facing. But, I know the work that she's done
17 at Langston Hughes. I'm hopeful that that work
18 will continue.

19 As we move forward, you have my promise,
20 and I will certainly report back to the Board by
21 Friday. Ms. Chen and I will have visited

1 Edgecombe. We'll be able to share with the Board
2 a report as to how things are going. We'll
3 actually count numbers.

4 But, I would ask that you give our new
5 principal a chance. She is a very capable young
6 woman. She's very committed to young people.
7 I'm under the opinion that, as the year continues
8 to unfold, that you will be very pleased with the
9 results. You have a very strong instructional
10 leader so I'm somewhat surprised. But, I'll be
11 more than glad to follow up.

12 If you like, you can stop Ms. Chen and
13 get her name and number so I can call you back
14 personally so I can give you an update on how
15 things are going. But, thank you for bringing it
16 to our attention. Your children are special to
17 us. That's why we're here and we certainly want
18 to do a great job. Not only in your school but
19 all schools in this city. So, we'll be glad to
20 look into it for you.

21 VOICES: Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: Next up, we
2 have Mary Alexander. Thank you for your
3 patience, Ms. Alexander.

4 MS. ALEXANDER: Dr. Thornton, I wrote
5 this letter to you; however, I had penned it to
6 someone else. So, please give me a moment. I
7 want everybody to have it before you start my
8 three minutes.

9 DR. THORNTON: Thank you for coming out
10 the other night. I saw you at the forum.

11 MS. ALEXANDER: Yes.

12 DR. THORNTON: I wanted to thank you. I
13 heard some of the concerns that I want to get
14 involved at the architectural level.

15 MS. ALEXANDER: I know. It's around the
16 same issue so I know you might get a little tired
17 of hearing it. But, that's what I'm here for.

18 First of all, my name is Mary Alexander.
19 I'm a grandparent. My grandson attends Northwood
20 Elementary. Back in June of this year, I came to
21 you all. I can't recall the exact date. But, at

1 that time, after I did some research, I found out
2 that there was a 21st Century Advisory Committee
3 making decisions about the schools. I thought
4 that that was a great opportunity for me to sit
5 on that Advisory Committee and actually
6 participate.

7 So, on or about July 14, I received a
8 call and I was told that the July meeting of that
9 Advisory Board was going to make a determination
10 if I, personally, Mary Alexander, could sit on
11 the team. Since I have a grandchild at one of
12 the schools that are earmarked for rebuilding,
13 hopefully.

14 Because of communication problems, I
15 decided to ask that they go through the PCAB
16 President. I didn't get too much information. I
17 had sent emails that went unanswered. So, you
18 came out July 30th.

19 DR. THORNTON: We had a PCAB meeting
20 together one night.

21 MS. ALEXANDER: I'm getting to that. On

1 July 30th, you came out to the PCAB meeting. At
2 that time, I re-arranged my time, I left work
3 early, I got here in hopes to ask you that
4 question, which I did. I understood that maybe
5 you looked at me a little funny because I had to
6 leave early. But, I had to go pick up my
7 grandson and, actually, I went straight from here
8 to Hamilton. So, you can check the sign-in
9 sheet. So, I don't want you to think that I was
10 rude.

11 At that time, we were told that at that
12 meeting in July, the team came up with the
13 concept to invite BTU, PCAB to send a
14 representative, and the PTA City Council to send
15 a representative which, effectively, but no from
16 me personally, to be on the Board. So, the PCAB
17 President asked the question to the Board. So,
18 what was the criteria? About three pages in,
19 this is the criteria for which people on the
20 Board were going to be measured to see if they
21 could be part of that Board.

1 Now, I don't know where they got this
2 from because, as you see, it doesn't really, it
3 looks like it came from something legal and
4 something legitimate but it was put on 21st
5 Century letterhead. But, my question becomes
6 that if, in fact, the Advisory Committee maybe
7 hadn't heard of these standards or if they
8 created them, I find these standards to be a
9 little frustrating to me because even the Board
10 of Commissioners have room for a Commissioner
11 that is a parent in the school system. You all's
12 information is way more sensitive, I would
13 imagine, than the Advisory Group. So, what is it
14 they receive that I can't be a part of that?

15 I believe that, somewhere along the line,
16 me personally, I feel as though the Office of
17 Parent and Community Engagement has failed me and
18 I kind of feel like they have closed the door on
19 an opportunity for me to be involved and actually
20 even took up the welcome mat. At this time, I
21 feel as though I haven't been given a good reason

1 as to why a parent can't be on that committee.

2 So, in closing, I hope to bring it to
3 you, the CEO and the Commissioners, to make a
4 decision to see if not only myself, but a parent
5 from an elementary school level, a middle school
6 level and a high school level, and even a parent
7 who has a child with an IEP could participate on
8 this Board so that we can be heard. I'll tell
9 you, what I heard in front of me just now, it
10 just breaks my heart, too. Parents should also
11 be empowered. What they create for us to be
12 involved in I think is really a distraction. The
13 true measure of our voices to be heard as
14 stakeholders need to be at the table where
15 they're making the decisions. I thank you very
16 much.

17 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Any questions?
18 Commissioner Casciani?

19 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: Thanks. For a
20 lot. Not for now, but as one of the follow-ups,
21 could somebody please clarify for me the

1 different teams, how somebody gets on, I've just
2 lost track. I think she's right, she just made a
3 simple request. She just wants to be involved.

4 In my life, I run a lot of things and
5 think you need really, really good reasons to
6 exclude somebody and minimal rules to include
7 somebody. If any.

8 MS. ALEXANDER: About 15 years ago, I
9 worked with True Ginsberg and I was a parent and
10 I went over there to BEN and I became a parent
11 facilitator and I actually served on a Board over
12 at the old Northern Parkway Junior High School
13 with Commissioner Chinnia. One thing you learn
14 about stakeholders is some characteristics of
15 that team that has to mimic everybody across
16 section.

17 Right now at that table, you have
18 primarily, if not only people who work for these
19 non-profits. They can not possibly think like me
20 as a parent.

21 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: I would

1 appreciate some clarification. I know I've been
2 told these things and I apologize for not
3 remembering. But, if someone could take a fresh
4 look?

5 I would rather see explicit really,
6 really good reasons why we exclude people. We
7 don't need rules for inclusion, we need rules for
8 exclusion. There has to be good reasons. If a
9 parent wants to participate, let them
10 participate.

11 MS. ALEXANDER: Yeah, we can't be around
12 people's school records, we can't be around
13 people's health records, we can't walk off the
14 street and be police officers. I thought the
15 same thing. Maybe you all need to define when
16 your staff can say when we can't be a part of
17 something because it's not clear. I understand
18 why PCAB and the PTA should send a
19 representative. I understand their relationship
20 to you. But, I'm pure advocacy. I'm a
21 grandparent. I work with that child, I take him

1 to school every day. I have some clear ideas,
2 too.

3 The core team, I think if you can look in
4 my rebuff to the core team, they don't even get a
5 response back. Your team came out to Northwood
6 back in spring of 2014 and they haven't been
7 back. People told me last year, I have four
8 pages of names right here. Parents who said, you
9 know what? I signed up for that team and I have
10 not heard back from not one person from that
11 office, Parent and Community Engagement. So,
12 it's like a farce. That speaks volumes. Do they
13 even take that team seriously? If you have
14 people that sign up and then you don't follow up.

15 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
16 Hike-Hubbard?

17 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: You're
18 saying what I was going to say to you. We value
19 parent engagement. We invited community
20 engagement in this process. It was my
21 understanding that whoever wanted to be involved

1 could be involved. So, I would also appreciate
2 the clarity. So, I appreciate you bringing it
3 forward and I would encourage other parents, if
4 you're trying to participate in a school process
5 and not being able to be engaged, please come
6 forward. Let Hassan Charles know, let this Board
7 know. That's not the way we intend for this
8 process to happen. Let me just be clear about
9 that.

10 I also was a member of BEN's Board. So,
11 I'm from that same background. I get it. We're
12 with you and we want to make sure we rectify
13 this.

14 MS. ALEXANDER: Okay. If it's possible,
15 can I get at least a written response or an email
16 or something? The last time I came here, I don't
17 remember getting anything from you all. Even if
18 it's a wait and we're still hovering around it, I
19 would appreciate it. Thank you.

20 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Thank you, Ms.
21 Alexander.

1 DR. THORNTON: Ms. Alexander, Mr.
2 Charles just stepped in. He heads up Engagement.
3 Mr. Charles, if you could get an address to which
4 we could respond. I thank you. In the last
5 month, we've been in three places in the evening
6 together. It shows your commitment.

7 The way this is aligned, and we may need
8 to look at it to the Board, what we've done, and
9 Nicole, you can help me with this. We've set
10 slots aside for individual groups. For example,
11 PCAB puts a representative on the Advisory Group,
12 SECAC puts a representative on the Advisory
13 Group, PTA. So, the nomination comes from those
14 particular groups. The question you are asking
15 is, why not more? That's the question. That's
16 why, you were actually there the night I spoke to
17 PCAB and this subject came up and it also came up
18 with Nicole the night I was over at Digital.

19 So, let me explore and talk with the
20 department head there to look at potentially if
21 there is room. You are very committed. I hear

1 it. You just keep showing up. So, let me have a
2 conversation and see if there is a rationale to
3 see why the committee has to be so small and look
4 for potential ways we can get you involved. Mr.
5 Charles will take responsibility for coordinating
6 that effort for me. Thank you, sir.

7 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Thank you. Mr.
8 George Mitchell. Member of Neighborhoods United.

9 MR. MITCHELL: When I came down here, I
10 didn't expect all this tonight. I just wanted to
11 say a couple of things. The young lady that was
12 just here and spoke about Edgecombe Circle, I
13 gave her my card because we don't have Langston
14 Hughes Elementary any more. My organization,
15 Neighborhoods United, is a group of Presidents of
16 all the neighborhood associations in Northwest
17 Baltimore. We came together as a group to speak
18 as one.

19 Tomorrow night, we're having a parent
20 forum there and basically serving ice cream and
21 cookies, but we want the parents to come hear

1 what they have to say and, what the flyer says,
2 come get a scoop of information along with a
3 scoop of ice cream.

4 So, I gave her the card and invited her
5 to be there tomorrow. Already, we've got 125
6 parents that have signed and said they're coming
7 in. What we're going to do is wrap our arms
8 around that school. That school has some issues.
9 But, Ms. Poole has been there for less than one
10 month, maybe. We have identified some things we
11 have to do. Tomorrow, we've got some people
12 coming in that's going to be doing financial
13 literacy with the kids. We've got ROTC program
14 to teach these kids some discipline. We've got
15 Dr. Spears from Boyd University that's coming
16 down to do some things with the kids.

17 That really wasn't what I came here
18 tonight to speak about, but since she brought it
19 up. You all can't solve all the problems we have
20 in Baltimore. You all can't do it. It has to be
21 a community effort. What we're trying to do is

1 make sure it gets done.

2 Whether you come or not, we're going to
3 do it. We're going to get this thing solved and
4 that's the bottom line. But, one thing, the real
5 reason I came here tonight and I was really
6 surprised that, and I got a little angry but
7 getting angry is not going to solve issues.

8 Two of the past Board members, one being
9 the President, now works in and talks for charter
10 schools. And, they voted our school to close
11 down. At the same time, I heard on a program
12 last week, I heard City Neighbors say that the
13 next thing is going close things down and yada
14 yada. Well, where were you 6 months ago when we
15 were closing? They want to compare themselves to
16 Langston Hughes, there is no comparison.

17 In fact, I'm going to say this, there are
18 charter schools that opened up around us which is
19 one of the reasons why Langston Hughes closed
20 down. They were taking our kids. Then, we get
21 closed down because it's under-enrolled.

1 So, I'm not here to speak against charter
2 schools. But, charter schools is not a cure-all.
3 We've got charter schools that represent less
4 than 20 percent of the kids in Baltimore City. I
5 said this before and I'll say it again, I would
6 put 10 of my best kids at Langston Hughes up
7 against 10 kids anywhere in Baltimore City at the
8 same grade level. I bet you they would have beat
9 them. Every time. They would have won.

10 There is nothing wrong with public
11 schools that we can't solve. I applaud the
12 parents and all the people that came here and
13 they're yelling and screaming and being rude and
14 all that stuff, attacking Dr. Thornton
15 personally. You can't spend, you don't have the
16 money to spend. The mandate is that you've got
17 to close 26 schools. The criteria that was used
18 to close down Langston Hughes, that same criteria
19 should be used to close down a charter school.
20 Period. We've got 70,000 more kids that we need
21 to look out for. And, I'm speaking for people

1 that cannot or may not speak for themselves.

2 The people over there yelling and
3 screaming, talking about charter schools, they
4 don't look like the people I see. They don't
5 look like the people I see. The people I see are
6 dealing with drug issues, they're dealing with
7 poverty, they're dealing with whole lot of issues
8 that these people that came in don't deal with.
9 So, it's up to us.

10 My mother always told me, son, you've got
11 to speak up for people that can't speak for
12 themselves. I'm a big guy and I've got a big
13 mouth. So, I'm saying to you all that what you
14 need to do, we need to make sure that we're
15 covering all the bases for all the kids in
16 Baltimore City Public Schools.

17 A couple of programs that we're working
18 on that I wanted to bring to your attention. I
19 know my time is expired but I heard the President
20 speak about what happened at Douglass High School
21 the other day. I'm sorry that happened as well.

1 But, we have a program called Scholar
2 Ballers. Everybody want to be a baller. But,
3 this program is set up so if you want to be a
4 baller, you've got to be a scholar as well. That
5 could have been stopped and I'll tell you how
6 that could have been stopped.

7 We have a program where we put students
8 from colleges into high schools and we would
9 check on a kid's grades, even if they talk back
10 to a teacher, they start off with 100 points. We
11 deduct a point or two for things that they do.
12 Even walking with their pants down. That's two
13 points off your 100.

14 I'll tell you something. You'd be
15 surprised at the attitude that the kids would
16 change in order to play sports. I heard that kid
17 that beat the guy up at Douglass, he's had
18 previous anger management problems. We could
19 have caught that. We could have caught that and
20 helped get him straight before he beat the hell
21 out of somebody.

1 So, that's one program. The other
2 program that we're working on, I've got two
3 people that have been in the Baltimore school
4 system an average of 40 years. We've got two
5 people that have Masters in education. We have a
6 lot of good people on our Board.

7 But, the other program that we talk about
8 is K-14. I know you all are a K-12 program but
9 getting out of high school now is not enough.
10 I've talked to the President of BCCC. I've
11 talked to the Board over at Coppin, I've talked
12 to the Board at Morgan. They have empty chairs
13 at those schools. Why is it that we can't
14 develop a program that when our kids graduate
15 from the Baltimore City school system, they have
16 an AA degree. Can you imagine what that would do
17 for the school system?

18 Everybody wants their child to have a
19 great education. Now, we can somehow work it out
20 that your child is at least going to have an AA
21 degree when they get out of here, I guarantee

1 some people would be moving back into Baltimore
2 and they'd be doing some things.

3 So, we're working on trying to get that
4 done. And, I'm done. Dr. Thornton, I just want
5 to say this and I'll be through. I apologize for
6 what that young lady said. Questioning your
7 leadership. I think you are doing a fine job
8 with what you have to work with. If you're not
9 part of the solution, you're part of the problem.
10 For people to sit here and chastise people and
11 sit here and throw stones and all that stuff,
12 sure, I got mad when Langston Hughes closed. I'm
13 still mad.

14 DR. THORNTON: But, you were sitting on
15 your porch one Saturday or Sunday night and I was
16 concerned about the kids showing up. What did
17 you tell me? Where would you be on the first day
18 of school?

19 MR. MIDDLETON: I've been there every
20 day. Every day on the bus stop. Every morning.

21 DR. THORNTON: I want to tell you how

1 much I appreciate that and the work you're doing.

2 MR. MIDDLETON: No problem.

3 Transportation is doing a great job. Doing a
4 great job picking up kids and bringing them back.

5 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Any questions?

6 Commissioner Hassan?

7 COMMISSIONER HASSAN: In case some
8 people at home want to know more about tomorrow
9 night's event, can you tell us some more about
10 it?

11 MR. MIDDLETON: Yes, the Scoop for
12 Scoop. It's tomorrow night at 4:30 at Edgecombe
13 Circle.

14 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
15 Casciani?

16 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: I just want to
17 say thank you.

18 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Mr. Mitchell, I
19 wanted to make a comment. During the Langston
20 Hughes discussion, you came to a meeting and I
21 think you asked us a question of whether we

1 wanted you to keep coming and keep advocating. I
2 think I responded to you, I always wanted you to
3 keep coming and advocating.

4 I wanted to say that I appreciate the
5 fact that you didn't just let your energy for
6 Langston Hughes disappear. You channeled that
7 energy to somewhere else in the neighborhood
8 where the kids needed your help. As I've said to
9 other folks, this is the kind of commitment from
10 community that we need as a Board to move this
11 thing forward. I appreciate that you continue to
12 be active.

13 MR. MIDDLETON: Thank you very much.
14 We're going to get this straight and take care of
15 our kids. Thank you very much.

16 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: The person who has
17 waited the longest, Julian Gersky. I guess they
18 changed their mind? All right. That ends our
19 public comment. A very robust one. We'll now
20 turn to information and discussion. Item 7.01,
21 the Master Plan. If you would, just please

1 introduce yourselves.

2 MS. CHEN: Good evening, I am Linda
3 Chen, I'm the Chief Academic Officer. I'm also
4 joined by Jennifer Dull who is the Director of
5 Strategy and Compliance in the Office of
6 Academics. We're pleased this evening to be able
7 to present to you what's customary at this time
8 of the year. There is an annual submission
9 requirement to MSDE regarding our use of funds
10 from the state, both at the state and federal
11 levels, and also gives an alignment of the work
12 that we are doing in alignment with the funds
13 that we are given from the state.

14 So, Jennifer Dull will actually walk us
15 through the specifics of the parts of this plan
16 and we'll also end with an engagement plan to
17 propose to you as well.

18 MS. DULL: Thank you. Linda gave some
19 of the background. The Master Plan is something
20 that we do based on COMAR as a reporting
21 mechanism to the state regarding our academic

1 programming and the alignment to the fiscal part
2 of the Master Plan submission. That's really
3 important, our title fund. Title I, Title II and
4 Title III grant submissions. There's also going
5 to be some updates that you haven't seen in
6 previous years.

7 The time line for this, this is the first
8 public presentation of the overview of the
9 updates to the Master Plan. The Master Plan will
10 be voted on October 13th by the Board.

11 Drafts. For a little time line back and
12 forth, the Master Plan is an iterative process
13 between MSDE and city schools. So, drafts have
14 been going back and forth with MSDE to make sure
15 that, as we put together our Title grants, that
16 they're in allowable expenditures for federal
17 dollars.

18 The final Master Plan, or our first draft
19 of the Master Plan, goes to MSDE on October 15th
20 following the Board vote. At that point, it goes
21 back and forth for revisions by a

1 cross-functional team that reviews our LEA
2 submission for final draft going to MSDE on
3 November 19th for a vote by the State Board in
4 early December.

5 Some overview of the content within the
6 Master Plan includes the executive summary and
7 state success factors, standards and assessment,
8 data systems to support instruction, which is
9 actually a new section for most LEAs in the
10 Master Plan. In previous years, it was only a
11 part of the Race to the Top submission and not
12 necessarily the entire Master Plan. Great
13 teachers and leaders, and also climate and
14 culture is a new section to the Master Plan for
15 this year for all LEAs. And, finally, the
16 turning around of the lowest performing students.

17 The Master Plan always starts out with
18 the context for city schools and the mission and
19 the vision of city schools. This goes back to
20 what the Board has adopted and remains unchanged
21 for this year's submission. It also outlines the

1 district goals and priorities. What's important
2 to note on this Master Plan submission this year
3 is that we are in the process of going through
4 our strategic planning process.

5 We are a little out of sync in future
6 iterations of the Master Plan that approved
7 strategic plan will feed right into our
8 submission for the state very single year. But,
9 you should note some alignment as you read
10 through the drafts, are in the internal working
11 documents because we've already started aligning
12 the Master Plan to our draft strategic plan and
13 priorities.

14 There's some data overviews. Most of
15 this information comes directly from data tables
16 provided by the state. Of note this year,
17 because there's not academic performance data, as
18 PARCC data points have not come forth yet, some
19 of the things we look at are historical trends or
20 what the state is calling this year as progress
21 towards academic goals. So, it's a review of all

1 sorts of data points and then aligning to how we
2 are moving forward in those projections.

3 So, some key updates, as this is a fiscal
4 update as well, some of the things that people
5 will note in the Master Plan update is the
6 district organizational framework. As a lot of
7 the fiscal part of it, and noting that we did
8 take a large reduction in this year's budget, the
9 re-organization within district office is noted
10 within how we support schools.

11 Along with the academic priorities, and
12 instructional core of knowing your pedagogy,
13 knowing your content and knowing your students.
14 In that part, we're really looking at, and we'll
15 go into a little more detail, but curriculum, how
16 it's aligned, how we're supporting through
17 professional development, how that pedagogy is
18 supported through things like Universal Design
19 for Learning, and how we are knowing our students
20 as a district and part of those strategies
21 include the multi-tiered systems of support

1 planning process that has begun here in city
2 schools.

3 So, as I noted, in the progress towards
4 academic targets, this is the section of the
5 Master Plan that really looks at historical data
6 trends. When you look at these within the Master
7 Plan, you should note that, for Board members who
8 have started looking through the strategic
9 planning process, these bullet points are
10 addressed throughout. But, are also in alignment
11 with what the draft strategic plan actually looks
12 at. So, it's alignment of curriculum to the
13 Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards.

14 Part of that looks through, we're
15 undergoing a curriculum audit right now to make
16 sure what our written curriculum is, is moving
17 students towards what they are expected to know
18 and to be able to do. It also looks at, in the
19 part of the strategic plan, the alignment to
20 curriculum, really talks forward about any
21 revisions to curriculum, really looking at how

1 it's aligned to the Universal Design for Learning
2 principles, multiple levels of text to make sure
3 to meet student reading levels, cultural and
4 racially relevant diverse texts and support for
5 teachers to meet diverse needs.

6 The other part of it is really
7 strengthening, not just around the written
8 material that is available, but strengthening the
9 implementation of that curriculum within
10 classrooms. Part within there, you'll see
11 references and strategies around regular
12 revisions to the curriculum and the instructional
13 models which came forward two or three years ago
14 for reading and mathematics, the ongoing cycles
15 of professional development for central office
16 schools and school leaders, and consistent,
17 ongoing and timely support, depending upon the
18 content for professional development, onsite
19 support, coaching and blended learning
20 opportunities.

21 It also talks through our development of

1 the multi-tiered system of support plan which
2 will be brought from Procurement to help support
3 us in building that plan in August. It also
4 mentions the redesign strategy for assessments
5 and alignment to ensure not only that it is the
6 electronic environment in which students are
7 assessed, but the adaptive ability to inform
8 instructional practice on an almost instantaneous
9 basis.

10 Then, it also looks at our capacity and
11 to strengthen the knowledge of college and career
12 readiness on not just the high school level but
13 also as we move forward in backmapping that to
14 the elementary and middle levels.

15 As I mentioned, the data systems to
16 support instruction is a newer section of the
17 broader portion of the Master Plan. In previous
18 iterations, this was our report out on how we
19 utilized Race to the Top funds to support
20 basically hardware development. In this
21 iteration, you'll note some of the systems we

1 used to inform instruction and to inform changes
2 at the district and the school level through the
3 CEO Climate Dashboard and our instructional
4 leadership tools, data link, also assessment
5 systems and reporting such as iReady and the
6 supports for schools and teachers for making
7 these instructional decisions.

8 The Great Teachers and Leaders section
9 comes very much forth and it's a kind of
10 technical portion regarding the Title I. This is
11 where we report around our highly qualified
12 teachers. In Title II, you'll actually see the
13 alignment to the priority II within the strategic
14 plan which are noted up there. Really looking at
15 how are we supporting school leaders and teachers
16 to be more effective and better effective, highly
17 effective teachers for our students.

18 Climate and culture is also a new section
19 to the Master Plan. This aligns to our Priority
20 III. This is another example of the iterative
21 process that we go through with the state. Since

1 this is a new section to the Master Plan, we are
2 actually still going with technical assistance
3 supports, as with all other LEAs, and really
4 looking at what they're not only looking for, but
5 how are we best describing some of the things
6 that we're doing around climate and culture,
7 including the use of PBIS, restorative practices,
8 which we heard some from public comment today,
9 and really the supports of the strategic climate
10 which was part of our district re-organization,
11 but also part of the strategy to support our
12 schools that are struggling with climate and
13 culture.

14 The Master Plan also asks us to report
15 out about specific subgroups. Although, students
16 with disabilities is called out on a slide.
17 Because it is a subgroup we do report on, you'll
18 notice that students with disabilities is
19 actually integrated throughout the Master Plan
20 submission to not only highlight, but to make
21 sure the focus is on inclusion and that students

1 with disabilities are a part of all of our
2 planning and not just an afterthought.

3 Some highlights of key successes in the
4 past year include some professional development
5 we did around content for teachers in
6 self-contained classes that have multiple grades
7 in their classrooms, and some of the work we've
8 done around early learning. Some of the focuses
9 for the upcoming year include proactive
10 engagement of families and the increased
11 proactive professional development for teachers
12 of students with disabilities.

13 Early learning is another subgroup that
14 we report on and we have some great news on. I
15 believe we came out with the KRA results in May
16 or June. However, some of the key success
17 factors here is that we continue, and this is
18 where the fiscal alignment comes in, to offer a
19 full-day PreK program. Our students in our PreK
20 programs are outperforming the state average
21 based on the KRA results that came out from last

1 year.

2 We'll continue to focus on how we can
3 expand these programs, making sure that we are in
4 a fiscally sustainable way and also looking at
5 the constraints in our physical buildings to
6 allow for our youngest learners to have the
7 appropriate space to learn.

8 Universal design for learning is a
9 section that became more robust in the last
10 year's Master Plan update. Universal design for
11 learning is the approach to learning to make sure
12 that the supports for all students, it really
13 takes a differentiated look at not only
14 curriculum development, but curriculum
15 implementation and how does technology fit into
16 that access.

17 When we look at this, you'll see in
18 multiple places, but the curriculum and how the
19 what, the how and the why of learning, but also
20 in the assessments which is kind of where our
21 re-defined assessment strategy works for.

1 A highlight for this year in our redesign
2 of the district office, we now have a
3 differentiated learning department. Thus far,
4 already, we have a module out for all teachers
5 for what is UDL, which is a step forward from
6 anything we've done in the past and something
7 that we are looking towards building in our MTSS
8 plan so that all teachers have the skills and
9 tool box they need to make sure they can support
10 all learners in their classroom.

11 Turning around the lowest performing
12 schools. This has overlays, not only with our
13 strategic support schools and our tiered support
14 model which is outlined in the Master Plan
15 submission. But, it also has overlays with our
16 Title I submission as this is also directly
17 aligned to the state designated of priority and
18 focus schools.

19 So, part of what, this is twofold in the
20 submission and it looks at the executive summary
21 about how we're supporting all of our schools

1 that we've identified as in needing support, but
2 also in those schools that are designated by the
3 state. Something important to note is that the
4 state, MSDE, will be redesignating the priority
5 and focus schools in spring 2016. So, part of
6 this planning process is to not only understand
7 the schools that are designated now, but to start
8 us thinking forward in how we will be supporting,
9 if it's a brand-new bunch of schools that are
10 designated in spring 2016.

11 We are also one of the LEAs that got a
12 no-cost extension for Race to the Top that has
13 now come to an end. So, this will be the final
14 update on Race to the Top. Happy to report back
15 that we have spent down all of the funds. We
16 spent down our funds so well that the state
17 actually gave us an additional \$300,000 above and
18 beyond our designation which allowed us to
19 purchase 10 additional laptop carts for schools
20 throughout the city.

21 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Questions?

1 Comments? Commissioner Kannam?

2 COMMISSIONER KANNAM: First of all,
3 thank you all. We had the chance, for 45 minutes
4 today in Teaching and Learning, to get our first
5 exposure and have an in-depth conversation and
6 fielded questions as a committee. So, I really
7 appreciated the opportunity.

8 I did want to kind of, one thing that is
9 really important to us and so that people
10 understand is that this is a yearly compliance
11 document that we do for MSDE. But, we want to
12 make it a strategic document that is actually
13 living and breathing and forms our direction
14 going forward. So, that's going to be living in
15 the strategic planning document.

16 So, I just want to reiterate the fact
17 that this is the beginning, in some ways, of the
18 process that Dr. Thornton is going to bring to us
19 in October/November, the strategic plan that
20 we're going to, but it's going to be aligned and
21 informed by it and that's going to be more of a

1 three-year plan and this is for MSDE for the
2 first year. So, they're not completely separate.
3 I'm saying this to the public. But, I think it's
4 an important first step.

5 In Teaching and Learning, the one thing
6 that we talked with the committee about is the
7 public engagement of this document. So, I know
8 that you, I talked to Dr. Chen and Naomi. Is it
9 okay if I just kind of go ahead and share what we
10 came up with? It's important that the public has
11 an opportunity to weigh in.

12 I think the public is really, and the
13 committee members and staff, other Board members,
14 are really interested in the specifics. The meat
15 behind this. So, it's a great framework, now
16 what is the academic plan? How are we going to
17 move to our targets? What things are we putting
18 in place? How are things going to be different
19 for kids?

20 So, I just want to encourage people that
21 are up and watching that on the 5th to the 8th of

1 October will be the first opportunity for the
2 Master Plan to be posted on Boarddocs and the
3 public can review that entire document, including
4 Board members.

5 Because it's such a big kind of document,
6 Dr. Chen has agreed to put some guiding questions
7 out there to kind of chunk it, to guide people on
8 where to give feedback. So, just really
9 appreciate that. The idea is, on October 9th,
10 that staff could have the ability to gather the
11 feedback, make updates, and then it comes to us
12 again on October 13 for public presentation.

13 So, it is one of those things that we
14 talked about a lot in Teaching and Learning that,
15 let's give the public a chance to really
16 understand what specifics are behind the plan and
17 there's an opportunity to weigh in and give
18 feedback. I just want to appreciate you all for
19 building that into the time line because it's a
20 lot. So, just get ready, everybody, for some
21 good reviewing of the Master Plan. It's a big

1 document but it's going to be important because
2 it's really about the direction of our school
3 system and what we're going to be doing
4 academically. So, please take some time to
5 review and give feedback.

6 MS. CHEN: Thank you, Commissioner
7 Kannam, and other Commissioners, for that
8 engagement and that conversation to help us get
9 to some public engagement. I think it's also
10 great that you've noted that it would be a
11 kickoff to the strategic plan.

12 So, part of what the public can expect,
13 as well as the document being loaded onto
14 Boarddocs, is also guiding questions aligned to
15 the 6 district priority areas. So, thank you.

16 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Thank you. We're
17 going to come back to item 8.03 because that was
18 not on Consent. But, there are a couple of
19 presentations starting with 8.04, capital
20 improvement plan. Please introduce yourselves.

21 MR. LIPSKY: Wayne Lipsky, facility

1 maintenance, operations.

2 MS. WASHINGTON: Lynette Washington,
3 Director of Facility Planning.

4 MR. SCROGGINS: Keith Scroggins, Chief
5 Operating Officer.

6 MS. WASHINGTON: Good evening,
7 Commissioners and Dr. Thornton. This evening,
8 I'm going to walk us through the 2017 capital
9 improvement plan that Baltimore City is going to
10 be submitting to the Interagency of School
11 Construction for our request for capital
12 improvement projects.

13 Just as a general background, we normally
14 submit this 6-year plan to the Interagency on
15 School Construction which identifies construction
16 needs and then it provides a construction
17 schedule on how we're going to address those
18 needs.

19 So, today I'm going to present the 2017
20 request. Just a brief overview of the
21 presentation, I'm going to talk very briefly

1 about the 2016 and past CIP projects. I'm going
2 to talk a little about the goals for the 2017
3 submission, and then also about our new rating
4 and prioritization process, and then request.

5 Just a general overview, for the past CIP
6 projects for 2016, 2015 and 2014, a sample of the
7 projects were roof, HVAC projects, doors. So,
8 these are systemic projects, even though we have
9 one or two major redevelopment or renovation
10 projects. These are basically systemic projects.

11 So, for fiscal year 2016's CIP, about 20
12 of those projects are in the design process and
13 then the other half are in the design proposal.
14 For 2015, most of those projects have completed
15 designs, and then for 2014, those projects are
16 either bid out or under construction.

17 For our two major renovation and
18 replacement projects, Holabird and Graceland,
19 just an update. We have approved schematic
20 designs with construction completion in December
21 of 2017 in alignment with some of our 21st Century

1 projects.

2 In terms of our key goals for 2017, one
3 of the things that we did was we wanted to be
4 very transparent about how we prioritize and
5 select projects for our CIP projects. So, with
6 that, we developed a rating system that was very
7 robust and it was an evaluation process.

8 One of the things that we did to
9 prioritize high when we did the review and
10 evaluation were roof projects, in alignment to
11 our capital improvement plan that we addressed
12 within our Comprehensive Educational Facilities
13 Master Plan.

14 Then, there were two other categories
15 that the state provided us to be able to bundle
16 our projects together so that we were not
17 spreading our systemic projects across all of our
18 schools. But, we could be able to bundle them
19 together and prioritize them together and that
20 was the building envelope, meaning the roof,
21 windows, doors, exteriors of the buildings and

1 then also anything above the ceiling which is
2 HVAC and roof projects.

3 In terms of being transparent about our
4 project rating system, we began the CIP process
5 early in January. We worked specifically with
6 our maintenance team for them to identify all of
7 the deferred projects and then to rate those
8 project initially.

9 From that, we took the projects that were
10 the most challenging and then we put them through
11 the rating system, looking at the asset
12 conditions, the alignment to other facility
13 plans, financial impacts and also academic
14 impacts.

15 On top of that, we gave weights based on
16 various other factors such as input from our
17 maintenance staff, looking a little more about
18 scopes and expansion of scopes for
19 comprehensiveness. Then, from there, we provide
20 scorings for each one of our projects and then
21 prioritized based upon those scorings.

1 In the total list of projects, we have
2 three replacement projects. One I'm going to
3 talk about in the next slide and then the
4 remainder were systemics with the total of 43
5 projects.

6 Generally, within our CIP, we are able to
7 fund very few of our replacement projects. So,
8 right now, we have Holabird and Graceland. Now
9 that Holabird and Graceland are moving further up
10 in the design process, we're able to fund another
11 project as a replacement project. So, Armistead
12 Gardens was a year five project within the 21st
13 Century. Then, as we have room within the CIP in
14 order to fund another project, we're looking
15 specifically at areas that are in overcrowded
16 parts of our city. So, Armistead Gardens'
17 utilization was 183 percent. One of the highest
18 in the district.

19 Some of the other factors we looked at
20 for the selection of Armistead Gardens, we looked
21 at projected enrollments and building

1 utilization. We also looked at adjacent schools,
2 areas where we could not alleviate overcrowding
3 by adding and changing and rezoning boundaries.
4 We also looked at the building conditions. Then,
5 we looked at what was previous CIP funding, if
6 there was major renovations in those schools,
7 then we looked at demographics and neighborhood
8 development.

9 So, our total request for the 43
10 different projects came out to be about \$86
11 million for the state and \$17 million for the
12 city.

13 Just as a general time line, our initial
14 submission of the capital improvement plan to the
15 state is in October and then our formal final
16 submission is in November after comments or
17 reviews from the state. In January is when we
18 receive the first portion of what will be funded
19 for our projects. Seventy-five percent of the
20 Governor's budget and our final list of projects
21 that are going to be approved by the state is

1 provided in May and June of 2016 which is 25
2 percent of the Governor's budget.

3 So, our recommendation before the Board
4 for a vote is a request for \$86 million for 43
5 projects.

6 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Actually, we
7 already voted by Consent. Are there any
8 questions? Commissioner Kannam?

9 COMMISSIONER KANNAM: Does the public,
10 or do you guys produce just, I know we are
11 actually tracking all the projects and completion
12 to date and how we're using the funds that we've
13 already received. Then, just project completion.
14 Is there a public place that that can be viewed?

15 I recently thought about this. As you
16 know, my kids go to Roland Park. The roof was
17 started, then there was an issue with the
18 contractor. We rebid it and now people are back
19 on the roof. That was a challenge and we've
20 worked through it. But then, the question is how
21 many other projects are out there and what is our

1 completion rate and how do we track that? And,
2 where, if people wanted to look at that, could
3 they view that?

4 MR. SCROGGINS: Actually, we don't have
5 any of our projects that are posted on the web or
6 anything. The only project that we've had in the
7 last three or four years that had some delays was
8 the Roland Park roof. We've had some in previous
9 years, some that are still in legal situations.
10 But, overwhelmingly, our projects are completed.
11 Maybe not always on time because there are change
12 conditions, change orders that occur on numerous
13 projects. But, the overwhelming majority of the
14 projects are on time but we do have some that
15 extend beyond the time initially established.

16 COMMISSIONER KANNAM: Yeah, one thing
17 I'd say is we know that is the case.
18 Overwhelmingly, we get things done on time and on
19 budget. One thing I would just think about in
20 considering the communications effort is to post
21 that, how much work we're investing in getting

1 done for the city. It just gives people a charge
2 when they see the work that is happening in
3 improving the schools for our kids.

4 MR. SCROGGINS: We'll definitely look
5 into that and we'll get that done.

6 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
7 Casciani?

8 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: I actually want
9 to second that. I know you said you'll look into
10 it, this should be that hard. To be able to
11 create a grid that shows the projects, when it
12 started, where it is and anticipated completion
13 date. Just something that people can log in,
14 take a look.

15 I think it's also something that we can,
16 we should do that. We're not talking high
17 technology here. A spreadsheet, a couple of
18 pictures. You must be tracking that in your
19 department.

20 MR. SCROGGINS: Yes, we are.

21 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: That's a lot of

1 money, the state is giving us a lot of money and
2 we appreciate it and we want them to know where
3 we are with it. I think it's a great idea.

4 MR. SCROGGINS: Okay.

5 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Any questions?
6 Thank you. We'll move to item 8.05, quarterly
7 budget amendment and audited prior year
8 close-out. It was voted on by way of Consent,
9 however, there is a presentation. Please
10 introduce yourselves.

11 MR. KENNEDY: Don Kennedy, the CFO for
12 the school district. To my right is Ryan
13 Heminger who is the district's budget director.
14 We're here tonight to give information on one of
15 the last transactions that takes place before we
16 issue our financial statements.

17 For your information, we will be issuing
18 financial statements on Wednesday of next week,
19 which is September 30th. At one of the Board
20 meetings in October, our CPA firm will be here to
21 brief the School Board on the results of those

1 financials.

2 So, as part of the closing of the books
3 for last fiscal year, we are required to present
4 to the School Board budget amendments that took
5 place during the fiscal year. So, we do that for
6 each quarter and this is the final quarter, the
7 fourth quarter amendments, to show all of the
8 amendments for the fiscal year just closed on
9 June 30.

10 So, budget amendments. So, the Board
11 adopts a budget. We have budgets in the
12 different categories and in different objects.
13 So, when we make adjustments, amendments, we move
14 money or funds from a particular category to
15 another category, from one object to another
16 object. This is what we're reporting.

17 The category is where money is spent.
18 For example, when we spend money on instruction,
19 it's in the classroom. When we spend money on
20 special education, when we spend money on
21 transportation, those are categories where the

1 money is spent. The objects are how we spend our
2 dollars. We spend dollars on salaries and wages,
3 we spend dollars on fringe benefits for
4 employees, we spend dollars on supplies and
5 materials.

6 So the categories are where the money is
7 spent, objects are how the money is spent. So,
8 that's what the report shows.

9 The highlights here is that, if you take
10 a look at the bottom section here of this
11 particular slide, it shows that we moved \$26
12 million in fiscal year `15 from instruction
13 categories into primarily student transportation
14 at \$13 million and another \$10 million in plant
15 and operations for facilities.

16 What this represents is the historical
17 trend of how we have budgeted for these
18 expenditures for the last, at least, three years.
19 So, if you take a look at the budget amendment
20 for last year, you will also see \$12 million that
21 moved from instruction into transportation, and

1 another \$11 million got moved from instruction
2 into facilities and plant operations.

3 So, if you go back a couple years prior
4 to that, you'll see the same trend. What you
5 will see in fiscal year `16, the current fiscal
6 year we are in as we do the budget amendments,
7 because we changed the way we budgeted for these
8 expenditures, we increased the budget for
9 transportation, we increased the budget for
10 facilities and plant operations. So, you should
11 not see these tremendous swings in budget
12 amendments as we move forward through fiscal year
13 `16 and beyond.

14 The tables here that are depicted show
15 the different categories here and you can take a
16 look at those as you look at the document itself.
17 I will highlight, at the bottom right-hand
18 corner, it shows an overall increase of the
19 district's budget by \$343,000. So, whenever we
20 have a supplemental appropriation that the Board
21 adopts, then we have to increase the budget. We

1 did have an appropriation this year of \$343,000
2 and that was for the Maryland Stadium Authority
3 appropriation to city schools for work that city
4 schools did through the 21st Century Buildings
5 office for work in support of the 21st Century
6 Building program. So, \$343,000.

7 Again, the slides I'm going through now
8 are the categories. Here, I am at the object
9 changes. Again, down at the bottom, you can see
10 the majority of changes were from increases into
11 transportation and also contractual services
12 primarily associated with transportation, also.

13 Then, we have the tables that show all
14 the movement in the objects. So, again, this is
15 one of the final transactions that we do before
16 we submit the documents to our accountants for
17 compiling the financial statements. Again, those
18 will be presented on Wednesday of next week.

19 Questions?

20 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Questions?

21 Comments? Thank you very much. All right. At

1 this time, we will return to the items that were
2 pulled from Consent so that we can now vote on
3 those items or ask any questions there may be
4 about those items.

5 We'll turn to item 8.03, appeals and
6 hearings case number 15.1601BP. Do I have a
7 motion? Commissioner Hike-Hubbard?

8 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: I hereby
9 move that the Board reject the recommendation of
10 the CEO in case number 15.1601BP that the RFP is
11 rebid for the reasons discussed during
12 deliberations pursuant to the Board's
13 quasi-judicial function.

14 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Is there a second?

15 COMMISSIONER HASSAN: Second.

16 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Second by
17 Commissioner Hassan. All those in favor of the
18 motion? Voting in favor are Commissioners
19 Hassan, Casciani, Hike-Hubbard, Cooper, Kannam
20 and Chinnia. Vote passes, 6-0.

21 We'll now turn to 8.06, KDA, access to

1 public records, Board policy revision. Please
2 introduce yourselves?

3 MR. BLUE: Good evening, I'm M. Dante
4 Blue from the Office of Legal Counsel, assistant
5 counsel.

6 MS. ROBINSON: Good evening, Sally
7 Robinson, senior counsel for school services,
8 Office of Legal Counsel.

9 MR. BLUE: As stated, we are here to
10 discuss changes necessary for policy KDA. There
11 were changes in the law, Maryland Annotated Code,
12 General Provisions, Section 4.101. Updates to
13 the procedures were based on staff experience.

14 After the 2015 General Assembly, the
15 Governor signed into law numerous changes to the
16 Maryland Public Information Act. The effective
17 date for these changes is October 1st of this
18 year. We would need changes to our policy on
19 October 1st as well. They were minor edits but
20 they were, of course, necessary. Policy KDA was
21 adopted by the Board in 2011 and has not been

1 modified since that time.

2 In Section One of the revisions to KDA,
3 there is an edit to clarify that city schools may
4 determine, based on a deliberative process,
5 privilege that predecisional documents should not
6 be released. The deliberative privilege permits
7 city schools to hold and redact portions of the
8 predecisional documents.

9 The privilege, which is analyzed on a
10 case-by-case basis is designed to protect the
11 quality of the decision-making process and the
12 give and take of the consultive process. Also,
13 in Section 2, the annual salary final has been
14 added to the list of general informational
15 documents. Human capital will prepare a file
16 each year and it will be made available upon
17 request and possibly uploaded to the district's
18 website.

19 Also, indigent individual, the definition
20 was added due to the changes in the law. Lastly,
21 Section 4, there was new language added regarding

1 fee waivers.

2 MS. ROBINSON: Those were the changes
3 being proposed to the policy. I'm going to cover
4 changes that we're recommending that will be made
5 to the CEO's administrative regulation.

6 As Mr. Blue indicated, the changes that
7 we're recommending in the regulation are due to
8 staff's experiences over the last several years
9 since the policy was adopted in 2011.

10 So, in Section 2A, the guidelines in the
11 reg, we've added some new language regarding
12 creation of records to clarify to the public that
13 city schools is not obligated under the law to
14 create records in response to a public records
15 request.

16 In Sections B and D, also in the
17 guidelines section regarding written requests,
18 we've changed language in paragraph 2B to
19 indicate city schools' preference in regards to
20 requests that are made via email, that we would
21 prefer that the request be in an attachment to

1 the email rather than buried in the body of the
2 email. But, again, it's just a preference that
3 we've indicated. It's not a requirement.

4 Also, it clarifies what we will consider
5 the date of receipt of a request that comes in
6 after hours, on a holiday or on weekends because,
7 again, everything in the MPIA is time line driven
8 so we have to be really clear as to when we
9 consider a request as received.

10 In Section D, we have also modified the
11 language to indicate that requests should be
12 submitted to the Manager of Public Information.
13 That contact information will, according to a new
14 section of the law, be provided through the
15 district's website.

16 Finally, in Section E of the guidelines
17 dealing with the processing of written requests,
18 the process that we envision is that the Manager
19 of Public Information will receive the requests
20 and route them to the appropriate custodian or
21 custodians of those records, as well as send a

1 copy to the Chief of Staff. The Chief of Staff's
2 office will coordinate the collection of the
3 records and forward them to the Office of the
4 Chief Legal Counsel.

5 A very important change in the law this
6 year is what we call the 10-day notice
7 requirement. This is a new procedural
8 requirement enacted in the law that will require
9 that city schools notify the applicant within 10
10 working days of the receipt of the request as to
11 whether or not we will be able to produce the
12 documents within those first 10 working days.
13 The law still provides us with 30 calendar days
14 in which to respond but the new requirement is
15 that within 10 working days, we'll let them know
16 whether or not we'll be able to meet that
17 deadline.

18 The custodian of the records will have to
19 provide certain information to the Office of
20 Legal Counsel, specifically, how long it will
21 take to produce the records, the estimated range

1 of the fees involved, as well as the reasons for
2 any delay beyond those 10 working days. Once
3 we've received that information, we will have to
4 provide written notice to the applicant via
5 letter or email, if we will not be able to
6 produce the records within those 10 days.

7 In Section G, we've got some new language
8 on how we will calculate the reasonable rate for
9 the fees that we charge. The law now dictates
10 how we actually calculate that fee. Currently,
11 policy KDA provides for two flat rates of \$45 and
12 \$25 an hour based on the level of staff working
13 on the response. Now, it will be based on the
14 salary of each member working on the response, as
15 well as the time involved. So, in some instances
16 the rate will increase and in others it will be
17 less. It just depends on who is doing the work
18 and how much time it takes.

19 With regard to the fee waivers, in
20 Section G4A, if an applicant requests a fee
21 waiver, the Chief Legal Officer may waive or

1 reduce the fee. If the applicant is indigent,
2 they will have to file, according to the law, an
3 affidavit setting forth their indigency. The
4 Chief Legal Officer will, according to law,
5 consider their ability to pay along with some
6 other relevant factors set out in case law.
7 Then, make a case-by-case determination as to
8 whether or not it is in the public interest to
9 waive the fee.

10 Finally, one of the other major changes
11 in the MPIA is the creation of a Compliance
12 Board. The main role of that Compliance Board is
13 to hear complaints from applicants who have been
14 charged a fee in excess of \$350. So, we've added
15 language to the reg and the policy indicating
16 that right that the applicants have.

17 That is our presentation and we just note
18 that, due to the minor nature of the changes in
19 the policy which have been made based on the law,
20 we're asking that the Board waive its three
21 reading requirement in Policy BGB and consider

1 adopting the changes in the policy after
2 tonight's reading.

3 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Do we have a
4 motion?

5 COMMISSIONER HASSAN: So moved.

6 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Second?

7 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: Second.

8 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
9 Casciani. All those in favor? Commissioners
10 voting in favor include Commissioners Hassan,
11 Casciani, Hike-Hubbard, Cooper, Kannam, Chinnia
12 and Townes. Motion passes, 7-0.

13 MS. ROBINSON: We need another motion to
14 actually approve the policy. I guess the motion
15 to waive the three readings.

16 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Okay. That was the
17 motion to waive the three readings. Now, we need
18 another motion for the policy itself.

19 COMMISSIONER HASSAN: I moved we accept
20 the modified policy as written.

21 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Second?

1 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: Second.

2 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
3 Hike-Hubbard. All those in favor? Commissioners
4 voting in favor are Commissioners Hassan,
5 Casciani, Hike-Hubbard, Cooper, Kannam, Chinnia
6 and Townes. Thank you.

7 MS. ROBINSON: Thank you.

8 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Now, we turn to
9 item 13.03, Dustin Construction, Inc. Please
10 introduce yourselves.

11 MR. PARKER: Jeff Park, Director of
12 Procurement.

13 MR. FLYNN: Larry Flynn, Director of
14 Project Management for the 21st Century Schools.

15 MR. SCROGGINS: Keith Scroggins, Chief
16 Operating Officer.

17 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: I leave the
18 question that there is a request for \$708,326.05
19 to close out the Leithwalk PreK-K8 school
20 project, as well as another contingency amount of
21 \$1.4 million. So, basically, the question is

1 why.

2 MR. FLYNN: The original contingency was
3 the \$1.4 million which was approved at the time
4 of the approval of the contract. So, this
5 particular request is for the \$708,326.05 to
6 cover the change orders required to close out the
7 project, and we're paying at this time, actually,
8 the change orders were all held until a punch
9 list was finished. This was the last school, if
10 you remember, that we're doing like this. We had
11 Carver, Dunbar Violetville and Leithwalk that
12 were done actually before I got here.

13 If you notice, on the Waverly project, we
14 came to the Board and changed our policy of
15 asking for the expansion of the contingency prior
16 to the necessity for it just on the thought that
17 we would need the money in the future. This is
18 the last school that falls under the old way of
19 doing things where the change orders were always
20 brought to the Board at the end or the close out
21 of the project.

1 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
2 Casciani?

3 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: I think I
4 understood that. So, the original contingency
5 was \$1.4 and now we're saying it needs to be \$1.4
6 plus \$708,000?

7 MR. FLYNN: That's correct. That's the
8 worst case.

9 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: So, you are
10 saying this won't happen again?

11 MR. FLYNN: No, we changed the policy.
12 If you remember, I guess that was maybe 6 months
13 ago when we came and discussed this before when
14 we had some projects that were in this category.
15 This occurred on the older, major renovation, new
16 school type projects. But, basically, that's the
17 only places it would happen. What we did at that
18 time was we asked for an extra \$500,000
19 contingency for Waverly which has lasted all the
20 way up until now where we're doing the final
21 closeout. So, if we have to come back on Waverly

1 for a change order or two based on the final
2 closeout inspections, it's going to be a very
3 small number as opposed to the change orders that
4 were left after the original contingency ran out.

5 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: Okay. That's
6 helpful. Thank you. This is broken into three
7 pieces. Unforeseen field conditions, that sounds
8 reasonable. Owner requested extras, I assume
9 we're the owner?

10 MR. FLYNN: Correct.

11 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: Why are we
12 paying for someone's design errors and omissions?

13 MR. FLYNN: That's the next step with
14 this project. One of the reasons why the change
15 orders are higher than normal, and actually,
16 when --

17 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: No, who made the
18 mistake? Whose fault is it? If it's not ours --

19 MR. FLYNN: This is the architect/
20 engineer.

21 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: Then we should

1 say, bummer.

2 MR. FLYNN: Well, we are. That's what I
3 was getting ready to say.

4 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: Okay. My bad.
5 My fuse is a little short tonight. I'm so sorry.
6 But I just was like, really?

7 MR. FLYNN: I understand. The total
8 amount of the change orders, everything, the
9 original contingency plus the second contingency
10 that we're asking for approval for tonight comes
11 to basically \$2.14 million which is 7.5 percent
12 of the original bid of \$28 million and change.

13 Our goal on buildings like this is five
14 percent. So, even with what we have here, we're
15 only two and a half percent over. However, and
16 here's where the however comes in, there are
17 close to a million dollars of errors and
18 omissions on this job.

19 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: So, they
20 shouldn't get any --

21 MR. FLYNN: Correct.

1 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: They won't get
2 any more contracts, right?

3 MR. FLYNN: Oh, this is - oh, the
4 architecture firm, you are probably correct.
5 But, this is going to be referred to Legal
6 because we're in the neighborhood where it's
7 actually worth going after the liability
8 insurance of the architect. You have to get to a
9 certain level just to make that plausible. When
10 you start to hit the million dollars on a \$28
11 million project of errors and omissions and
12 basically stupid mistakes in a lot of cases,
13 that's when we refer it to the Office of Legal
14 Counsel and they will make a decision on how to
15 proceed at that point.

16 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: Thank you.

17 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Any other
18 questions? Can we have a motion to accept?

19 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: So moved.

20 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
21 Hike-Hubbard. Second?

1 COMMISSIONER KANNAM: Second.

2 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
3 Kannam. All those in favor? Commissioners
4 Hassan, Casciani, Hike-Hubbard, Cooper, Kannam,
5 Chinnia. Vote passes, 6-0. Next is 13.04, M & E
6 Sales, Inc. Boiler replacement services at
7 Samuel Coleridge Taylor Elementary. Contract
8 increase. Commissioner Casciani.

9 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: Same question.
10 Here, we're dealing with much smaller numbers.
11 We're increasing it roughly \$39,000. Here
12 there's not three reasons, there's only one
13 reason. Design errors and omissions. Such as a
14 missing flue liner for a boiler? Like, wow. How
15 did they miss that? That's a big deal.

16 MR. FLYNN: There was an existing
17 chimney that was inaccessible for inspection at
18 this site. This one is legally questionable as
19 whether it was an error or omission or not. It
20 appears to be to us. The chimney needed a new
21 flue liner. The architect engineer probably

1 should have verified that. But, to do that, he
2 would have had to up on the roof and actually
3 inspect the chimney. For a gas burner, he really
4 didn't expect that to happen. That was something
5 that, in my opinion, he should have done. But,
6 not necessarily to the level of a grievous error
7 or omission on the project.

8 So, this one would be a little harder to
9 perform any legal action with. But, you are
10 correct. The errors and omissions, we try to
11 limit as much as we can. We do a pretty good job
12 of it. The COO's office has instituted a
13 stronger review policy than we had in the past
14 that seems to be working out very well on the
15 more recent CIP projects.

16 So, you should see, unless there are
17 hidden things that you just really can't tell
18 until you start building the job, that they're an
19 error or omission. Things look reasonable on
20 paper. They look like they're right until maybe
21 you go out and you find out the rooms aren't

1 heating and cooling correctly.

2 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: Yes. Those are
3 the unforeseens.

4 MR. FLYNN: Well, they errors and
5 omissions. They're unforeseen because they
6 shouldn't have been there. The unforeseen stuff
7 is when you tear down a wall and you find an
8 asbestos coated pipe in the wall and have to pay
9 \$30,000 to get the hazardous materials removed at
10 that point.

11 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Any other
12 questions? Can we have a motion?

13 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: So moved.

14 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
15 Hike-Hubbard. Second?

16 COMMISSIONER CASCIANI: I'll second.

17 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
18 Casciani. All those in favor? Commissioners
19 Hassan, Casciani, Hike-Hubbard, Cooper, Kannam,
20 Chinnia. Vote passes, 6-0. Thank you very
21 much.

1 MR. FLYNN: Can I say one more thing?

2 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Sure.

3 MR. FLYNN: Just to improve everybody's
4 mood, we had another really good opening of a
5 Weinberg Library tonight from 5:00 until 6:30 at
6 Commodore John Rogers. The opening really went
7 well. We had the Monday opening of the Library
8 at Westport which also went really well. But,
9 the Library at Commodore John Rogers is kind of
10 special in that they had a stained glass art
11 piece in the front of the room which we
12 restored as a part of the project. If all of
13 you can get a chance to go look at it, it is
14 really striking. There were comments tonight
15 that this could have been the best Weinberg
16 Library we have yet.

17 DR. THORNTON: (Inaudible speaking away
18 from microphone.)

19 MR. FLYNN: Yes. Wait until you see the
20 stained glass. It's really nice.

21 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner

1 Hike-Hubbard?

2 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: I would have
3 like to have been there but I couldn't because I
4 had to be here. So, at least put a message out
5 to our schools to not do things on a Board
6 meeting night so we can go out and celebrate the
7 great successes.

8 MR. FLYNN: I suggest you email Mark.

9 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: Oh, I did.
10 But, we want to thank our partners for their
11 dedication and support to the district as well.
12 So, this is a public venue so I'd like to say
13 we'd like to be there to celebrate the great work
14 we're doing. Just not on a Board meeting night,
15 please.

16 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Thank you. The
17 next meeting in this room will be October 13,
18 2015 in this room. Can I have a motion to
19 adjourn the meeting?

20 COMMISSIONER HIKE-HUBBARD: So moved.

21 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Second?

1 COMMISSIONER HASSAN: Second.
2 BOARD CHAIR COOPER: Commissioner
3 Hassan. All in favor? Meeting is adjourned.
4 (PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED AT 8:15 P.M.)
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1 STATE OF MARYLAND

2 SS:

3 I, Dawn L. Brown, a Notary Public of the
4 State of Maryland, do hereby certify that the
5 foregoing transcript of a Baltimore City Board
6 of School Commissioners proceeding was
7 transcribed under my supervision as herein
8 appears and is an accurate transcript of what is
9 recorded and audible on the cassette.

10 I further certify that I am not of
11 counsel to any of the parties, nor an employee of
12 counsel, nor in any way interested in the outcome
13 of this action.

14 As witness my hand and notarial seal this
15 2nd day of October, 2015.

16

17

18

19

Notary Public

20

21 My commission expires September 21, 2018