

1 DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

STATE OF MISSOURI

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NORMANDY SCHOOL DISTRICT

PUBLIC HEARING

NOVEMBER 11, 2013

Normandy High School
Viking Hall Auditorium
St. Charles Rock Road
St. Louis, Missouri 63121

(Starting time of hearing: 6:30 p.m.)

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S

2 Present for the Department of Elementary and Secondary
3 Education:

4 Dr. Chris Nicastrò, Commissioner of Education

5 Margie Vandeven, Deputy Commissioner

6 Ronald Lankford, Deputy Commissioner

7 Dr. Tim Ricker, Area Supervisor

8 Dr. Maureen Clancy, Area Supervisor

9

10 Also Present:

11 Dr. Tyrone McNichols, Superintendent of Normandy

12 Schools

13 William Humphrey, President of the Normandy School

14 Board

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The Court Reporter:

21

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25

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

2 DR. McNICHOLS: Good evening, Normandy.
3 Welcome to this community forum. I'll take the time
4 to first start off by welcoming all of those who
5 came out today in support of the Normandy footprint
6 and this community forum. I look forward to this
7 one and the second one that will be also on December
8 11th, same time, same place. So we're going to get
9 started and I'm going to take this opportunity at
10 this point to introduce our commissioner of
11 Missouri, Chris Nicastro. Let's welcome her.

12 COMMISSIONER NICASTRO: Thank you very
13 much. It's my pleasure to be here tonight. I want
14 to thank all of you for turning up. We really want
15 to hear your ideas, your thoughts. This is about
16 hearing from the Normandy community and I'm very
17 gratified and pleased to see so many of you turn out
18 tonight to let us share in your ideas and hear from
19 you about your school district and about -- most
20 importantly about your kids.

21 We're -- as I said, we're going to be about
22 listening and we're going to tell you about how the
23 process is going to work, but, once again, thanks so
24 much for being here.

25 At this time I would like to introduce deputy

1 commissioner of Learning Services Margie Vandeven.
2 She'll tell us a little bit about how the meeting is
3 going to go. Thanks.

4 MS. VANDEVEN: Thank you, Commissioner
5 Nicastro. Yes, it is a pleasure to be here this
6 evening and to hear from each of you. We are going
7 to go through a couple of the processes to help this
8 meeting go as smoothly as possible in the time span
9 that we have.

10 This meeting is scheduled from 6:30 until 8
11 p.m. and so we will begin with a presentation from
12 your school board president, as well as the
13 superintendent of schools, Dr. Ty McNichols.

14 Next we will move to the public comment
15 period and there are a number of ways for you to
16 present public comment, so we'll go through those
17 very quickly. One is there are public comment
18 cards. Those are the burnt orange colored cards.
19 You can provide that information for us and we'll
20 collect those.

21 There is also opportunity for public comment.
22 We have two microphones that are established here.
23 If you do wish to provide verbal public comment, we
24 ask that you complete the bright yellow card and we
25 will be by collecting those. We will then select at

1 random the number of people we can hear from this
2 evening. As Dr. McNichols also reminded you, there
3 will be another meeting in a month, same place, same
4 time.

5 And then the third way is that we do have an
6 email address specifically dedicated to this school
7 district and comments regarding the Normandy School
8 District and that is Normandy comment at DESE dot mo
9 dot gov. We'll be handing out that information as
10 you leaving this evening as well.

11 So, with that, I would like to introduce --
12 he doesn't need an introduction but it is your board
13 president, Mr. William Humphrey.

14 MR. HUMPHREY: Good evening.

15 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

16 MR. HUMPHREY: I will tell you good
17 evening to you again and welcome to the Department
18 of Secondary and Elementary Education's public
19 hearing. I would like to take this time to
20 introduce the Normandy Board of Education.
21 Mr. Henry Watts, Terry Artis, Jeannette Pulliam, in
22 her absence, she's ill. Joyce McRath, Nancy
23 Hartman, vice president Sheila Williams and student
24 representative Dianitia Butler.

25 The Normandy School District Board of

1 Education understands that education is a civil
2 right. As such, it is our responsibility to be
3 accountable educationally and to ensure equal access
4 to fiscal resources for students, staff,
5 stakeholders and the residents of the 24 communities
6 that are served by the District.

7 The Board is committed to educational reform
8 in the Normandy School District. We are working in
9 concert with Superintendent Dr. Ty McNichols to
10 implement the vision that will result in successful
11 student achievement, professional staff development
12 and the reaccreditation for the District.

13 The Board supports the administration's focus
14 which encompasses the vision for authentic
15 educational reform.

16 Number one, students that are learning are
17 focused on clear objectives and assessments. Number
18 two, to continue with a voter-elected school board
19 that empowers the local community to have a voice in
20 their children's education. Number three, time that
21 will allow leadership to implement the necessary
22 reform and access to the appropriate resources to
23 increase student achievement and move towards
24 accreditation.

25 The Board, working with administration, is

1 reviewing the curriculum and learning standards for
2 students and identifying the resources needed to
3 ensure that the instructional and emotional needs of
4 all students are met. Additionally, the Board
5 supports high quality professional development of
6 its staff.

7 Funding for the transfer program has had a
8 direct adverse effect on the current instructional
9 programs. The educational needs of the families
10 that chose Normandy as their educational option
11 cannot and must not be ignored.

12 The Board, despite the imposed financial
13 strain placed on the District by the student
14 transfer program, has payment practices that address
15 all financial obligations. The Board has a history
16 of being fiscally responsible and prudent while
17 operating within its available budgets. The current
18 financial stress is tied directly to the student
19 transfer program. Without this obligation, the
20 District's financial solvency would not be
21 compromised.

22 Over the past two years the Normandy School
23 Board has been recognized twice by the Missouri
24 School Boards' Association for the Excellence in
25 Leadership Team Program in the year 2012 and 2013,

1 now called the Governance Team Award. There are 520
2 school Districts in the State. Normandy was one of
3 18 recognized with this honor.

4 The Board understands the necessity of
5 participating in professional development activities
6 related to school board governance. The Board
7 engages in effective internal and external
8 communications through, number one, the District
9 website. Number two, the distribution of Quality
10 Advocate newspaper, a publication that is mailed to
11 all households and businesses within the Normandy
12 School District, which promotes new students, staff
13 and district events and programs.

14 Number three, the emailing of the biweekly
15 Quick Wins, an internal e-newsletter detailing
16 various building level activities and
17 accomplishments of students and staff. And
18 SchoolReach, the automated phone call system, which
19 provides informational updates to parents and staff.

20 The Board also engages in community outreach
21 efforts through the District's partnership with
22 Beyond Housing, the University of Missouri St.
23 Louis, Washington University, Better Family Life and
24 the Friends of Normandy, just to name a few.

25 In an effort to continually be strategic, the

1 Board is planning a retreat in January of 2014 to
2 assess progress of the District's accreditation and
3 to review student success in the areas of academic
4 performance, attendance and discipline.

5 At this time, I would like to introduce
6 Dr. Tyrone McNichols, better known as Ty,
7 superintendent of the Normandy School District. As
8 Dr. McNichols approaches the podium, I will tell you
9 that the District is in most capable hands.

10 DR. McNICHOLS: All right. Good
11 evening, ladies and gentlemen.

12 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

13 DR. McNICHOLS: I hope tonight's meeting
14 provides you information of the journey Normandy has
15 and will be taking on our voyage to accreditation as
16 becoming a new beacon of light at the city limits.

17 Demographic profile. 98 percent of our
18 students are African American students. 25 percent
19 of our student population is diagnosed with asthma
20 that may or may not be being treated at this point
21 in time. We have a 93.6 percent rate of students
22 who are receiving either free or reduced lunches.
23 31 percent of our families are classified as
24 functionally homeless, which means they are either
25 doubled-up or staying with relatives or friends.

1 We have a 59 percent mobility rate.
2 61 percent of the students who were tested last
3 year -- I'm going to stay that again -- 61 percent
4 of the students who were tested last year were
5 enrolled in the Normandy School District for less
6 than five years.

7 These are not excuses. They represent our
8 demographics and the opportunities we face every day
9 in educating our students. So what does that mean
10 as it relates to education? According to experts
11 like John Haden (ph), mobility rate is the number
12 one negative impact on student achievement and yet
13 we have a 59 percent mobility rate.

14 As an urban district that has many external
15 challenges, it is important that students have
16 exposure to language and words prior to entering
17 kindergarten. Research tells us that the greatest
18 challenge for the first day of kindergarten each
19 year is word deficit.

20 On one hand, children of middle- and
21 upper-income families are introduced to
22 approximately 45 million words by the time they
23 reach the age of four. I will say that again, 45
24 million words by four years old. On the other hand,
25 children growing up in poverty or

1 deficiency-challenged areas are exposed to
2 16 million words by the age of four. This results
3 in a gap of more than 30 million words. Those
4 30 million words account for a 2.5 year deficit when
5 entering kindergarten. And we talk about the
6 achievement gap.

7 Normandy has the second -- the second highest
8 poverty rate of school districts in the State of
9 Missouri. We are second to Riverview Gardens
10 District and we are followed by the St. Louis -- I'm
11 sorry -- by the Kansas City Public School System. I
12 wonder what they all have in common.

13 In 1946, the federal government defined a
14 family of four making less than \$23,500 a year as
15 living in poverty. This includes the ability to pay
16 for housing, healthcare, transportation, food,
17 utilities, just to name a few. While the federal
18 government has not changed its definition of
19 poverty, the actual living rate today for a family
20 of four is 44,500. As you can see on the slide, the
21 average household income in Normandy of the students
22 who attend our school is 22,908 based on last year's
23 information.

24 This slide -- this slide represents the
25 application of the MSIP process dating back to 1995.

1 This certification process led to the provisional
2 status that we had up until here recently.
3 Historically, the MSIP process is considered the
4 resource, process and performance standards when
5 determining accreditation status. They have also
6 come to the District to do on-site visits as part of
7 the process, with the exception being 2012.

8 As you can see, Normandy has been
9 provisionally accredited since April 1996. I will
10 say that again, 1996. This did not happen
11 overnight.

12 As you can see on the screen, in 1995, under
13 MSIP 1, there was a group of people who came out,
14 did an audit and we were given provisional
15 accreditation. Again, MSIP 2, there was a site
16 visit in 2000, again, the accreditation process was
17 maintained provisional. 2005, same thing. 2008,
18 same thing.

19 And when I say "they came out," there was a
20 comprehensive audit that was done. They came in and
21 looked at everything. Any of you who had been here
22 at that time know exactly what I'm talking about.
23 They didn't just look at your test scores, they
24 looked at how many accredited teachers and certified
25 teachers with masters and salary in correlation to

1 other districts. They looked at were our buildings
2 up to par, did they meet safety expectations.

3 The next couple of slides will illustrate the
4 standards that were met and the District status
5 under each one of those. I apologize for it not
6 being as clean as I would like it to be. The
7 pointer is not working. I don't want to tear up any
8 airplanes, but you can see at the very bottom, it
9 says overall standards met going across.

10 For 2001 -- and part of the reason we have
11 question marks there is because I don't have the
12 data to be able to put into the individual
13 categories but those are the categories that were
14 used starting back in 2001. And you can see at the
15 very bottom we earned 55 standards that were met on
16 a system that had a 106 through 66 being the minimum
17 number for performance. 83 through 46 being the
18 provisional and it says you had to have at least
19 nine points to get provisional if you were below 83.
20 We were below 83 but because we met grade spans
21 three through five, we were provisionally accredited
22 under that system. That's MSIP 3.

23 MSIP 4, which is the system in which we were
24 made unaccredited under, MSIP 4. The date on MSIP
25 4, you will notice that Normandy's markings were in

1 the unaccredited area based on MSIP 4. However, as
2 I said before, resource and process standards were a
3 part of that and on-site visits were a part of that
4 and based on that information, even though we earned
5 unaccredited, we were given provisional. 2006 to
6 2012.

7 Here recently we transitioned from MSIP 4 to
8 MSIP 5, another accreditation process. MSIP 5 used
9 the data from 2012 to determine or convert the
10 starting point for Normandy as we moved into this
11 new system. This data is reflected in MSIP 4's
12 preview, which is the second column "Data" under the
13 new system process -- under this new system, process
14 and resource standards seemed secondary to
15 achievement and I say that because there was no
16 on-site visit.

17 What is the impact? How has the
18 accreditation process impacted the Normandy District
19 and our entry into the transfer program? In
20 June 2013, the Missouri Supreme Court upheld the
21 Missouri Statute 167.133, which many of us know as
22 the transfer law, which allows for students in
23 unaccredited districts to transfer to accredited
24 districts in the same county or adjoining counties.
25 Unaccredited districts are required under statute --

1 we have no contracts with these districts under
2 statutes -- we are required to pay tuition to the
3 districts the students and their families have
4 chosen to go to.

5 Unaccredited districts, such as ours, are
6 also required to provide transportation to at least
7 one district. The Normandy School District spends
8 approximately \$12,000 per student, which includes
9 about \$6,000 in state funding, with the remaining
10 being supported by local taxes. When a student
11 transfers to another district, those receiving
12 districts charge tuition rates ranging from as low
13 at \$9,500 to as high as 21,000.

14 With that, Normandy is sending local tax
15 funds to receiving districts to offset the tuition
16 gap between the state funds that are received by
17 Normandy and the amount of tuition that we are
18 required to pay. Additionally, transportation
19 requirement has added an estimated \$1 million to the
20 bill.

21 The late timing of the ruling, along with the
22 uncertainty as to how many students will participate
23 in the transfer, put the District at a distinct
24 disadvantage in terms of planning. Approximately
25 1200 students applied for the transfer and 1,060

1 students completed the process. At this time,
2 approximately 1,000 students that live in the
3 District are still participating in the transfer
4 program. This includes roughly 250 students who
5 have never -- and I say that again, never attended
6 school in the Normandy School District.

7 While we have about 750 students, who have
8 previously attended our District, participate, we
9 have had additional students move in and fill their
10 spots in the District. So what that means is even
11 though we lost technically 700 kids who were here
12 last year, we have had other students, who have
13 moved into the District, fill their spaces.

14 With an expected tuition bill between 13 and
15 \$15 million, we're expected to use approximately
16 30 percent of our budget to pay for transfer costs
17 while at the same time -- at the same time
18 effectively educating 88 percent of the number of
19 students that we had the same time last year.
20 88 percent of the kids. The number of students we
21 had last year was -- it's about 88 percent of what
22 we had last year.

23 The State Department of Elementary and
24 Secondary Education has submitted -- has submitted,
25 on our behalf, a supplemental funding request of

1 \$6.8 million to the Missouri legislators. If the
2 supplement request is approved and we take no
3 actions at all, then Normandy would have still gone
4 bankrupt before school was out.

5 As such, we are forced to make decisions that
6 would impact our students, families and staff but
7 these are necessary for us to stabilize the
8 District's finances and to provide both a quality
9 and effective education and structure.

10 We believe that this plan, the plan I was
11 talking about, with these extraordinary measures,
12 are the first steps on a journey for the long-term
13 liability of the Normandy School District. We
14 regret that these actions that we are in the process
15 of taking will impact so many people.

16 The following slide represents our current
17 reality. One of the actions we're taking is the
18 closure of Bel-Nor Elementary School. This closing
19 allows the District to save fixed costs associated
20 with operating a building. These costs include
21 building administration, support staff, maintenance
22 and utilities to keep the building running day to
23 day.

24 We carefully reviewed all aspects before
25 making this decision. We considered the enrollment

1 of staff and parents, as well as the building's
2 physical structure, as well as its location.
3 Bel-Nor will close at the end of first semester.

4 Bel-Nor is the oldest District building in
5 operation and needs an extensive update and upkeep.
6 Bel-Nor is also in close proximity to several other
7 elementary schools.

8 This data represents the proposed reductions
9 and expected savings as a result of our decision to
10 reduce. The elementary, middle and high school
11 structural numbers that you see represent certified
12 staff positions. Additionally, at the building
13 levels there will be reductions in administrative
14 and support staff positions. At the Campus Support
15 Center central office the positions identified
16 include both administrative and support staff.

17 The year-long savings are estimated to be
18 \$7 million. However, because we're doing this at
19 the semester, we will probably only see 1 to
20 \$1.3 million of savings. Part of the reason we
21 decided to do it at the semester is to minimize the
22 impact on families and students and staff.

23 Additionally, we are looking at implementing
24 the following measures. We're talking about
25 offering an early retirement incentive plan for

1 those staff who are eligible, which they need to let
2 us know by the 9th of December so that we can try to
3 make some decisions. Again, the impact of not
4 having time to plan is forcing us to do things
5 rather quick.

6 Selling unused District properties. We have
7 a number of buildings that we have acquired through
8 the Wellston merger, as well as other buildings
9 throughout Normandy that we have closed. We are
10 looking to try to sell those properties as soon as
11 possible with the exception of Bel-Ridge and
12 Bel-Nor. We're not going to sell them even though
13 Bel-Nor will be closed. Part of the reason is I'm
14 optimistic. I believe we will get our accreditation
15 back.

16 We're going to expand our soliciting external
17 partnerships with various investors. We have a few
18 now. We have some different grants and programs but
19 we're looking to expand that to many of our North
20 County, as well as South and Central, whoever the
21 State wants to support. But we're looking to expand
22 our footprint for other people who see Normandy and
23 the investment potential that I see with our
24 students and our staff and our community. So we're
25 going to continue to pursue that.

1 We're looking at our budget. We're
2 reexamining things every day. We're identifying
3 what is essential and what's not. We're going to be
4 reducing overtime. We're going to have to try to
5 get our work done. It's forcing us to be smarter,
6 yet more efficient. Those are the things we have to
7 do, not that we shouldn't have been doing them but
8 now we have to do it on the quick.

9 We're not filling vacancies. We already
10 started some of that. Right now we're in the
11 process of reduction of staff. It's creating
12 definitely a lot of emotions throughout the
13 District.

14 And, finally, we are eliminating
15 non-essential travel. There is a need for
16 professional development skills but we're trying to
17 identify which of those attributes are most
18 important and which ones can be put on hold.

19 By implementing these strategies we will
20 reduce expenditures. We hope to increase revenues
21 and we will really try to reduce being heavily --
22 you know, to minimize our need for the state
23 legislative funding. We need it, but we're trying
24 to minimize it as much as possible. So we're doing
25 things internally, so that people see that we're

1 doing our best to ensure that our kids have a
2 quality education.

3 So how do we plan on regaining accreditation?

4 The leadership team and I are passionate about the
5 transformation of the Normandy School District. We
6 have developed a new vision for the District and
7 community. A vision based upon developing a
8 student-centered organization while considering the
9 socioeconomic conditions of our community that
10 affects -- that affects a teacher's ability to teach
11 and a student's ability to learn using a
12 non-traditional approach. We can't keep doing what
13 we've always done. We got to do things different.

14 As part of this vision the leadership team is
15 committed to developing a student-centered
16 organization, developing successful children,
17 preparing them for the 21st century and to be good
18 citizens. It will be essential that students have
19 the technological and character traits needed to
20 thrive in the 21st century and the solution for
21 uplifting many of our families out of their current
22 conditions. That's what we believe our educational
23 strategies will allow our kids in our community to
24 do.

25 Using the constructivist model throughout the

1 organization in order to support our vision by
2 training, for example, our students with the MOUSE
3 dot org classes, this is a class that we're bringing
4 into the District, they will be, as we call them,
5 tech specialists for minor computer issues in every
6 building.

7 Imagine that, you call a kid, a student, who
8 can come fix your computer. How many of you call
9 your grandkids when you need your VCR -- that's out
10 of date -- you need your computer or your clock on
11 your microwave changed? Oh, I'm the only one that
12 calls people? Okay. So you know what I mean,
13 having kids do that.

14 With this training and skills, we will
15 empower our students to be problem solvers who can
16 support teaching and learning but also provide a
17 21st century skill. Now imagine how many of those
18 kids can go work at Geek Squad in the summer because
19 they have done that work in school. Imagine that.

20 It also supports the logic and benefit of
21 skill teaching and learning processes, which is
22 going to be vital in our moving forward. We need to
23 align our goal with our vision and ensuring our
24 teaching and learning practices incorporates student
25 literacy and character development. We are going to

1 be providing support to the teachers in an embedded
2 way so that staff can have the supportive and the
3 transition to a proper learning environment and
4 student-centered organization.

5 We're not talking about seven o'clock in the
6 morning or eight o'clock at night professional
7 development. We're talking about job-embedded.
8 Having people come in and support people, while they
9 are teaching, with immediate feedback.

10 It's the same thing you see -- it's the same
11 thing you see on the basketball court. You don't
12 wait until after practice to talk to the students,
13 you pull them over to the side and you talk to them
14 immediately. We're talking about that same kind of
15 support for our teachers.

16 Including staff in the decision-making
17 process, which contributes to the constructivist
18 model being implemented by organization. There are
19 some decisions that are non-negotiable, we're not
20 going to sit there and debate them but we're still
21 going to talk to you about it. And then there are
22 other decisions where you can have input and we will
23 gladly invite you to be a part of that process
24 because the more people involved will improve our
25 District than one person telling everybody what they

1 are going to do.

2 We do this so we can get better at this,
3 using data to perform instructional and
4 organizational practices. We have to get better.
5 It's not that we don't do it, we've got to do it
6 with a sense of passion and conviction that the
7 decisions have to be what's best for the students
8 first.

9 Working closely with the stakeholders of our
10 community to help achieve greater impact. We have
11 to begin this work. We have already started some of
12 this work in partnerships with the 24:1 Initiative.
13 We have been working with our neighbors, police and
14 fire chiefs, along with organizations like the Big
15 Brothers and Big Sisters, UMSL, Beyond Housing, just
16 to name a few of the things that are out there.

17 There are many, many more than what we're
18 doing but the key -- this is key for our District's
19 work because we cannot do it all by ourselves. Your
20 presence here proves to me that there are people who
21 are committed to Normandy. We can't do this by
22 ourselves. We must come together for the future of
23 our children. This is our time and we're asking
24 everyone to join us on this journey.

25 We, me, along with my administrative team,

1 along with the staff that I will support, we accept
2 this challenge and responsibility for making this
3 vision a reality.

4 So, here's a quick review of our school's
5 improvement plan to help us start getting there.
6 Increasing the level of student achievement and
7 success is paramount to the survival of Normandy
8 moving forward. We believe that by using the common
9 core State standards, if that's the assessment that
10 the State or whoever is going to make -- and I'm not
11 blaming the State -- whatever the system is that
12 exists, if that's the system, then our kids have to
13 be doing well on that system.

14 So by using the common core State standards,
15 developing guidelines, lesson protocols and
16 utilizing -- this is the key for me -- utilizing
17 rigorous constructivist-based teaching strategies,
18 have to be aligned to the curriculum and
19 instructional improvement. And, when doing that, I
20 believe, my team believes, not only do we improve
21 the subgroups, we'll improve every group in
22 Normandy.

23 The results of the formal assessments along
24 with state assessments will be analyzed as part of
25 our data. This data will form instructional

1 planning differentiation to meet the individual
2 needs of our students. Progress will be measured by
3 benchmark assessment. It's not going to be just
4 "that's what I think," we're going to use
5 assessments to determine that and the Missouri
6 Assessment Program, which is the MAP test, as well
7 as the End-of-Course.

8 And, finally, until the system is changed, it
9 will be judged on MSIP 5. For me, this is part of
10 the MSIP 5 game. If you don't know the rules to the
11 game, you can't play it well. And I don't think we
12 have been playing by the rules of the game in the
13 past.

14 Preparing students to be college and career
15 ready is imperative. It is imperative. By
16 utilizing the strategies outlined on Objective 1.1,
17 along with realigning the core sequences, we believe
18 we can increase the number of high-level courses
19 that are available for our students and prepare more
20 students to be successful in those classes. We also
21 believe by focusing on that, that more and more of
22 our kids will be college and career ready.

23 Some of those objectives will be measured by
24 ACT, SAT. Results as well may be -- as well by
25 post-graduation placement and graduation rates. You

1 know, there are a couple of things about MSIP 5 that
2 I question, but we need to be clear of our
3 understanding, where your kids go six months from
4 now counts. It's part of the reporting system. So,
5 if you move, and you get a postcard forwarded to
6 your new address, we need it back. It impacts our
7 MSIP results. That's part of understanding the MSIP
8 5 game that I'm talking about.

9 Goal 2, address the professional staff. We
10 are working to recruit and try to develop and retain
11 a highly qualified, diverse staff to carry out the
12 District's vision, our mission and our District
13 goals. We will utilize high quality professional
14 development, as I talked about, and support for the
15 instructional environment to improve and maximize
16 staff practices. That's a necessity for us to move
17 forward.

18 The community and families are an essential
19 part in our success to educating our students. As
20 such, we are committed to keeping the community
21 informed of programs and opportunities that support
22 our students, as well as keeping them abreast of
23 issues that negatively impede our goal. We will
24 continue to engage the community and parents as
25 partners in this District.

1 In the spring of 2013, the Normandy taxpayers
2 approved a bond issue for the One-to-One Technology
3 Initiative. This was after the District was defined
4 as unaccredited. That is a commitment from the
5 community.

6 By approving the bond issue, the Normandy
7 community supports efforts to ensure that our
8 students acquire the skills to become successful
9 21st century learners. It is imperative that we
10 provide teachers with not only the technology,
11 professional development and support that is needed
12 but that we embrace -- this gets back to my comment
13 a few minutes ago that I was trying to be funny
14 about the VCRs and all of that -- think about our
15 kids today, our students today, iPads, iPhones,
16 Drones, all of those things, they are highly
17 tech-connected, more connected than many of our
18 schools are. And, even though we have been moving
19 in that direction, we, the adults, have to embrace
20 that. We have to get better at how we utilize that
21 data to be more effective in their own learning.

22 The One-to-One platform allows us to begin
23 that dialogue in the District. That's going to be
24 essential for our kids to move forward into the 21st
25 century. Essential that they be able to not, as I

1 call it, not just play with technology, but design
2 the information that runs the technology, behind the
3 scenes of it.

4 Normandy's fiscal status has been solid for
5 years. We don't -- we haven't had a money problem.
6 We haven't. The management of our resources is
7 essential to ensuring that the ideals and needs of
8 the student, staff and community are brought to
9 light. Within the last five years this has not been
10 an issue. However, with the impact of the transfer
11 program causing our District to reallocate between
12 13 to \$15 million towards tuition rate, it has
13 challenged our financial department to become
14 extremely focused on how to continue to provide
15 resources to students and staff while avoiding
16 financial instability.

17 Think about it, we are being asked to do more
18 with less. If I was a public private entity, I
19 could raise the prices on food and recoup that but
20 we're not a revenue generating organization, so I
21 don't have the ability that the private industry
22 has. I can't pass on the cost to someone else.

23 Despite these challenges, we are still
24 reviewing our budgetary practices and doing still
25 long-term planning because we anticipate that we

1 will still be here two or three years from now.

2 Why Normandy? Why now? We hold the basic
3 belief that all children can and will learn at high
4 levels. In order for any student to be successful
5 in school they must be successful in literacy,
6 reading, writing, listening and speaking. In order
7 for us to make this a reality, we have invested
8 resources into developing a first class literacy
9 initiative. In doing this, we have hired
10 exceptionally talented literacy experts to work with
11 students and teachers.

12 Our teachers are learning how to increase
13 literacy so that it's in all of our classes, not
14 just the reading class and not just in English
15 class. We have hired reading interventionists to
16 help our struggling readers in elementary school and
17 we're collaborating with the three largest textbook
18 companies by putting reading items in all second and
19 third grade classrooms for the entire year. That's
20 happening now.

21 Upon completion of the pilot, we will use
22 data to determine which programs work best for our
23 students. We also have UMSL students visiting
24 classrooms weekly, working to increase reading
25 levels. Through research, we have learned that

1 reading does not start in kindergarten, so we're
2 increasing the emphasis on literacy at the Early
3 Childhood Center.

4 Let me pause for a second, I guess it was the
5 Better Family Life or NAACP, Ron Ferguson I think
6 his name was, Dr. Ron Ferguson (ph), he was brought
7 to the state, he's a researcher and one of the
8 things that he -- his research is suggesting, is
9 that kids who come from poverty or struggling
10 communities or districts that don't have a lot of
11 resources, kids, by two years old, you see a
12 significant gap in their cognitive development. Two
13 years old. Before they go to preschool, before they
14 even probably go to daycare that gap exists. If we
15 know that already, then why aren't we doing things
16 differently? And when I say "we," I'm talking about
17 education as a whole.

18 Many career opportunities in the 21st
19 century are in the field of STEM. STEM, for those
20 don't know, STEM stands for Science, Technology,
21 Engineering and Math. Because we believe it is our
22 responsibility to prepare Normandy students for the
23 future, we have made STEM a priority.

24 Currently, we have a partnership with the
25 Magic House. And I know that people are oh, wow,

1 what's that got to do with anything. Every
2 elementary student and their family can engage in
3 shared learning at family nights at no charge. Now,
4 think about that because there are places where you
5 can go for shared learning and it's going to cost
6 you but because one of our local partnerships
7 underwrote this, the transportation, any of our
8 families at the elementary, who want to go on family
9 nights, can go for free. It is an opportunity for
10 shared learning with kids. I know it looks like
11 it's all fun, but part of learning is fun.

12 But not just that, the Magic House staff will
13 also come into visit our buildings to reinforce
14 those STEM processes. So it's not just go have fun,
15 they're coming to our buildings and working with our
16 kids to reteach, to demonstrate how the STEM
17 attributes are played out in school.

18 We are offering STEM-related classes for
19 credit with Washington University for our teachers.
20 UMSL professors are working with us on increasing
21 STEM practices by working with our staff and
22 students. I kind of alluded to this earlier, the
23 MOUSE dot org organization is a nationally
24 recognized organization that wants to help our
25 students run a technology help desk at their own

1 school.

2 We are also starting a partnership with the
3 Missouri Conservation Department that allows our
4 staff and students to get free materials and field
5 trips to enhance their knowledge of ecology and the
6 environment.

7 The reason that's important, is you pay
8 attention to the future of these tests, college is
9 going to take on more and more of an importance on
10 the science part of the test. So this, again,
11 understanding the MAP game. We know where we're
12 going. We're trying to get ahead of it. We're not
13 waiting for it to catch up with us.

14 There are a number of programs that support
15 our students exposure and access to funding as we
16 prepare them to be college and career ready. Do you
17 know we give every kindergartener who wants a \$500
18 bond when they enter kindergarten? Did you know
19 that? It's a college bond.

20 How many of you have college -- I have a
21 freshman, so I'm only speaking for myself but it's
22 killing me financially and she didn't get a
23 scholarship. She got a little money here and there
24 but nothing big. How many of you have enough money
25 right now to pay for college for your kids? My hand

1 is not up, I'm just looking for people to raise
2 their hand.

3 Okay. So a bond. You come into
4 kindergarten, you get a bond for your kids going to
5 college. Kindergarten to 12th grade, that's 13
6 years. Think of how much that bond is going to
7 mature. Thirteen years. In preparation for getting
8 our kids ready. We are committed to them. We need
9 to get other things changed so we can continue to
10 ensure that.

11 A plus certification -- or A plus designation
12 we now have. How many people know what A plus is?
13 Just raise your hand or clap if you know what A plus
14 is. I was so frustrated. My kid didn't have A plus
15 in their school. Kids can go to school for free if
16 they meet the criteria. The criteria is attendance
17 and a minimum GPA, not a 4.0, not a 4.0 GPA. A
18 minimum GPA and a good attendance record. Free.
19 Juco and now some of the other local universities
20 are taking it. Free. That's what I'm talking
21 about.

22 We're committed to those type of programs
23 because our community needs it. Our kids need it.
24 These are some of the things that we're doing.
25 These are some of the external resources. We have

1 established critical partnerships with key agencies
2 to provide both enrichment activities and
3 opportunities for social/emotional development and
4 support.

5 Research tells us and our own data even
6 reflects this, that students perform better
7 academically when they have access to higher quality
8 after-school programs. Additionally, extended day
9 programs serve a two-fold purpose. It creates a
10 means for students to feel connected to their
11 schools and community. And research has said this
12 for years, when kids feel connected they do better
13 in school. It provides a safe, yet supervised
14 environment during those after hours when
15 students -- when students are most likely to engage
16 in risky behaviors.

17 You don't have to believe me, all you have to
18 do is go ask the local municipalities when there's a
19 half day what happens in the community, not this
20 community, all communities.

21 The more kids are connected, the more
22 committed they are to the organization. The more
23 after-school activities that we allow and provide
24 for kids to be able to have a chance to do
25 something, the less likely they get involved in what

1 we call "risky behaviors."

2 And I'm not just talking about violence, I'm
3 talking about silly stuff that many of us probably
4 did as teenagers but today you'll have a record and
5 today you might get locked up. Today you might not
6 be able to go college because you did something
7 bonehead that many of us might have thought when we
8 did it, it wasn't a big deal but today it would be
9 life-altering. Minimize that. That's part of the
10 reason why we're trying to sell one of our buildings
11 so we can get a community center out there, so our
12 kids can have some place to go.

13 The vision for me is simple. I envision us
14 getting accreditation and turning Normandy back into
15 a great learning community. For our Board of
16 Education, they are committed to ensuring that every
17 student have an opportunity to achieve a quality
18 education. They see the following as a part of that
19 governance responsibility. They have a staff to
20 support goals and priorities. They hired a new
21 superintendent and administrative team. They are
22 committed to those initiatives that are first
23 student-centered and foster continuous growth for
24 staff.

25 From an accountability perspective they are

1 holding themselves and the superintendent
2 accountable. They're requesting District-wide data
3 in order to make informed decisions and maintaining
4 fiscally-prudent practice.

5 Aligning. They are ensuring that there's an
6 aligning between our policies and our practices.
7 That's what the Board is supposed to do. That is
8 what they're doing.

9 Collaborative relationship. They have set
10 expectations of how they will respect each other
11 towards their journey towards accreditation.

12 Additionally, they are a functionally and
13 professional board that welcomes constructive
14 controversy. We're having dialogues in public.
15 We're discussing why we support this. We're not
16 doing it in the closed closet doors in our back
17 rooms. We're doing it in public and we're doing it
18 in a professional way.

19 Climate. From a climate perspective they're
20 actively working to solve problems. They have a
21 desire to be transparent to the community and they
22 are striving to become leaders in education reform.

23 We're doing book studies. We're talking
24 about what are some of the things we need to do.

25 Continuous improvement. This Board of

1 Education is open to new ideas about teaching and
2 learning. They're engaging themselves in learning
3 walks. For those that don't know, they go with us,
4 the administration, they walk through and they see
5 how learning is taking place in classrooms.

6 They're actually coming to some of our
7 professional developments if their work schedule
8 permits. You have to remember they work. They're
9 volunteers. They don't get paid for being on the
10 board. They volunteer. There's no payment for
11 being on the board. So they have other jobs. Those
12 who can make it, come to our professional
13 development meetings and participate in them.

14 And they're also participating in their our
15 association meetings, which was alluded to earlier.
16 The MSBA, the Missouri School Boards' Association
17 has recognized our board twice for their
18 professional development ongoing learning.

19 The school board and I see education as one
20 of the civil rights of the 21st century. Therefore,
21 we must ensure that students have the best we can
22 provide. That means we will work to prepare all of
23 our students to be critical-thinking citizens who
24 can apply writing, reading and analyzing skills to
25 various contexts and situations. We will then have

1 students -- when we do this, we will have students
2 who are proficient or above any assessment that is
3 put before them.

4 Also, we are committed to ensuring every
5 student is prepared to be a productive and capable
6 adult, who achieve their individual dreams. For us,
7 learning is about having the skills to apply various
8 strategies to multiple challenges. As the only
9 person directly employed by the Board of Education,
10 I believe it's imperative that we, as the leadership
11 team and myself and the District staff, be of the
12 mindset of providing a service. It is vital that we
13 find whatever resources are available to help
14 students be successful.

15 Normandy is committed to the goal of helping
16 others to be the best they can be as students,
17 teachers, administrators, or staff members.
18 Therefore, we are of the mindset that we are
19 committed to continuous growth.

20 However, my motto is simple and applies to
21 staff and me, if you are here to grow then we will
22 do everything in our power to coach you up, but if
23 you are not here to grow, then you have to go.

24 We have too much on the line to not take this
25 journey with a complete sense of determination and

1 commitment. Ultimately, our students deserve the
2 best we have to offer. Thank you.

3 MS. VANDEVEN: Thank you, Dr. McNichols.

4 We will now move to the public comment period
5 and I would just like to go through some of the
6 procedures for this particular portion of the
7 meeting. If you filled out a bright yellow card and
8 wish to speak tonight and you have not turned that
9 in yet, please make sure that Dr. Lankford receives
10 that card.

11 If your name is called, we ask that you
12 proceed immediately to one of the two microphones.
13 Both of them are operating. Each speaker will be
14 given a five-minute limitation, so you have a
15 maximum of five minutes to speak. Our timekeepers,
16 your area supervisors, Dr. Maureen Clancy and
17 Dr. Tim Ricker, will be keeping time and they will
18 set a reminder. When you get to the one-minute
19 reminder, we ask that you move to your concluding
20 remarks.

21 Audience members are asked to permit each
22 speaker to present without interruption, as applause
23 or other distractions will be included in the
24 five-minute time frame. If the speaker runs out of
25 time, we will simply ask that you submit your

1 comments in writing or through email upon
2 conclusion.

3 The final speaker will be called no later
4 than 7:50 p.m. this evening to allow for a full five
5 minutes of their comments along with closing
6 remarks. And, again, this is for all comments this
7 evening, verbal or written, those do become part of
8 the public record and they may be posted on the
9 department website verbatim.

10 So at this time we're going to start with our
11 first -- our first two speakers to come forward.
12 Our first speaker will be Nakeisha, N-E-L-Y-N? Can
13 you read that? It's N-A-K-E-I-S-N-E-J-L-Y-N,
14 there's no break in the word. Anyone? N-A-K-E-I --
15 okay. Very good. And then on deck we have Bridgett
16 Fury.

17 MS. CURRY: Curry.

18 MS. VANDEVEN: Sorry. Curry. Bridgett
19 Curry. All right.

20 MS. JONES: Good evening. My name is
21 Nakeisha Jones. I have some things that I need to
22 say. I have four students, four kids, in the
23 Normandy School District and three of my kids'
24 teachers are at risk of losing their job. That is
25 an issue for me.

1 My daughter, she's in the first grade. She
2 comes home every day and she says, "Mom, I really
3 love being in Mr. Boyd's class. He teaches us so
4 much. I love Mr. Boyd. I don't want Mr. Boyd to
5 leave. Is Mr. Boyd leaving? Why does Mr. Boyd got
6 to leave?" These are the questions she asks me. My
7 response to her is "I don't know why Mr. Boyd has to
8 leave." At parent/teacher conference I said,
9 "Mr. Boyd, are you one of the teachers that might
10 lose their job?" He said, "Yeah, but I'm not going
11 to worry about that right now. My job is to teach
12 kids until they tell me I have to leave."

13 I also feel like right now it's too late to
14 point fingers at each other and say who dropped the
15 ball here, who did what. We need to be there for
16 our kids. The first mistake that we made was
17 picking up Wellston as a failing district when we
18 were also a failing district ourselves. You can't
19 put two failing school districts together and think
20 that it's going be okay. I don't think that
21 Normandy was a strong enough school district to hold
22 a failing school district. That's my opinion, if
23 you don't like it, it's just an opinion.

24 You should have gave that school, Wellston,
25 to a school that had full accreditation, not a

1 school that is on the verge of losing their
2 accreditation.

3 And, I also feel like every kid -- I feel
4 like it's okay to transfer your kids out of the
5 district, but if you want your kids to go to another
6 district, you can move to another district.

7 If you are in elementary school and middle
8 school that doesn't follow you. And I have stated
9 this before, I felt like only the high school kids
10 should have been able to transfer and it should have
11 been a cap on how much each school gets because I
12 don't appreciate my kids' money being transferred to
13 another school when they don't even want our kids
14 there. And that doesn't sit well with me.

15 So, I think that you should take that in
16 consideration when you are blaming it on these
17 teachers. You're raising the class size. How do
18 you plan to get accreditation back when you're
19 raising the class size? You have kids that want to
20 learn and kids that don't want to learn but the
21 teacher is so worried about the kid that don't want
22 to learn, he has to get them under control, when the
23 kids that want to learn are sitting here waiting to
24 be taught. My kids are straight-A students. I have
25 no issue with Normandy. I'm to going ride with

1 Normandy until the wheels off.

2 Also, to the parents that think sending your
3 elementary kids to a different school, thinking that
4 your kid is going to learn more, I'm here to tell
5 you my daughter is in the third grade. I have a
6 little brother that's in the third grade. He's in
7 Ferguson Florissant. My daughter can read a whole
8 book in the Normandy School District and my brother
9 is in third grade in Ferguson Florissant, he skips
10 every other word because he doesn't know. So, when
11 you say oh, I'm sending my kid to this school to
12 learn, she's better off here, he's better off here,
13 no, it's not the truth.

14 And, what I want to say last is, while you
15 send your kids to these far out schools, what if
16 something happens to your kid? You have to travel
17 all the way out there if you want to get a story but
18 it's not going to be the truth. It's going to be a
19 story that they want you to hear.

20 So I'm just really here for the teachers
21 because I don't want my kids to lose their teachers.

22 MS. CURRY: Good evening. I am Bridgett
23 Curry and I am a sixth grade teacher at Normandy
24 Middle School. I have brought two things. I
25 brought a visual board for the visual learners on

1 the panel and I also have a speech for my auditory
2 learners. The visual shows my kids. This is all
3 about the kids. That's all this is about. It's not
4 about anything else.

5 Why does it appear that failing districts
6 have one common denominator? Low socioeconomic
7 stats. What message is being sent to our students
8 when they are told that they are failures from
9 preschool to 12th grade? Normandy School District
10 has several issues which need to be addressed
11 regarding mobility, low test scores, and lack of
12 parental involvement, just to name a few, that one
13 cannot micromanage the very issue at hand, and
14 expect successful results.

15 I am a ten-year veteran teacher within this
16 District. I can say, without a doubt, throughout
17 this journey, my journey, this year is the first
18 year that the middle school has operated as an
19 actual school. As class sizes are more manageable,
20 we, as educators, are able to give a class of 20
21 much more individualized attention than in a
22 recommended class size of 33. The school culture
23 and climate has changed as evidenced by the increase
24 in student attendance, staff attendance and decrease
25 in student behavioral issues.

1 I am here and the students who have remained
2 in Normandy's School District are here out of
3 choice. Our students need and deserve educators
4 that care about them and their lives. We are not
5 just teachers. We are mothers. We are counselors.
6 We are therapists and anything that is deemed
7 necessary for the success of that student.

8 And, in reference to the common core
9 standards, how are we able to implement the
10 standards without the necessary resources? We are
11 separate but we are not equal. Accredited districts
12 such as Clayton and Ladue will have access to the
13 resources to meet the common core standards based on
14 the calculated tax formula.

15 Normandy receives approximately \$12,000 while
16 Clayton and other accredited districts and affluent
17 districts receive approximately anywhere from 14 to
18 20,000 per student. When will this tax pay formula
19 change so that all students are on an equal footing?

20 (Inaudible due to applause) -- Normandy for
21 providing a separate and equal education for all of
22 our babies.

23 MS. VANDEVEN: Thank you. Our next
24 speaker is Melissa Murphy. Melissa Murphy?

25 MS. MURPHY: My name is Melissa Murphy

1 and this is my second year in the Normandy School
2 District. I teach at Bel-Nor Elementary in a fourth
3 grade classroom and I came here to grow and I'm
4 afraid that my job is going to go. It makes me sad
5 for my students. It makes me sad for my family.
6 And I find it very, very difficult to console
7 children who you have developed a relationship with,
8 to learn and to grow and to advance and to really
9 succeed, when you have to leave in the middle of a
10 school year.

11 I just want to say, on behalf of the
12 teachers, how sad we are that this is happening to
13 our school. How sad we are that this is happening
14 to our children and how sad we are that this is
15 happening in our community.

16 MS. VANDEVEN: Okay. Our next speaker
17 is Stephanie Hall and then we're going to call
18 someone on deck, which will be Gwendolyn Buggs. So
19 first Stephanie Hall. Thank you, Stephanie. And
20 then Gwendolyn Buggs. Is Gwendolyn still here?
21 Gwendolyn Buggs. Oh, okay. Thank you.

22 MS. HALL: Good evening, everybody. My
23 name is Stephanie Hall and first I would like to say
24 I have been in the Normandy District within the last
25 two years. My children have attended the Normandy

1 School District last year. I am a parent of
2 transfer students and it has affected my family. I
3 believe in an accredited school, you know, I believe
4 in accreditation. I would like my children to gain
5 the proper education that they deserve.

6 I don't have anything against Normandy School
7 District, it's just that I want my kids to be on
8 point, even if it calls for transferring, you know,
9 transferring my kids, you know, back and forth to
10 school to another District. I don't think it's fair
11 because I pay taxes in the Normandy School District
12 and I also have to pay additional gas and spend
13 additional time to get my kids back and forth to
14 school. I believe it didn't happen overnight. It
15 happened over a period of time and changes should
16 have been made prior to that.

17 So my big issue was, like I said, was the
18 transportation issue. You know, and I feel that
19 everybody is saying it's because of the kids that
20 transferred out of the District. I don't think
21 that's the issue. It came before this, so I don't
22 know as far as looking down on me for choosing to go
23 outside of the District, you know, I don't think
24 it's fair because we have options too. But, at the
25 same time, I wish that the District would, you know,

1 come together.

2 Parents, I was coming to meetings last year
3 but it wasn't a great outcome, so it takes the
4 community, it takes the children, also the staff to
5 work together. I do believe that it can be done but
6 everybody has to come together, not just this one
7 meeting. You know, you have to come all year around
8 and be supportive. But I want my kids to be able to
9 be somewhere where it's accredited. And if you guys
10 regain accreditation, I would be more than happy to
11 join the District again.

12 MS. BUGGS: Hi, my name is Gwendolyn
13 Buggs and I have been a resident in Normandy for
14 over 30-something years. My children attended
15 Normandy, graduated and graduated from college, have
16 started businesses. They -- I have a daughter that
17 received a four-year scholarship from Normandy. She
18 had a 4.0.

19 Normandy -- she's over there somewhere but
20 she graduated from Normandy. Normandy, I feel is a
21 great school district but like the young lady before
22 me just said, we need all of these parents, that are
23 here now, when we have board meetings, when they
24 have their parent/teacher meetings, the PTO
25 organization. We need support and almost everybody

1 in the school to come together as one, so that we
2 know our weaknesses. And everyone here has their
3 own strength. They are talented in some area that
4 you can probably contribute and help the school out.

5 I think the team that the Board has put
6 together with the new administration is great. I
7 think they're great. I see good things happening
8 that I was displeased about in the past years. I
9 think we need to give them a chance to try to help
10 move Normandy forward.

11 For five years, the last four or five years,
12 even when you were meeting and Normandy was under
13 provisional status, I can't say what steps was given
14 and what steps were not made or what goals were not
15 reached in those steps when you were here for the
16 Board to see and hearing them reports but hopefully
17 what Dr. Ty told you all today, you will look at
18 that and give Normandy School District another
19 chance so that we can grow and bring our kids back
20 home.

21 MS. VANDEVEN: Okay. Our next speaker
22 is Dryver Henderson and then we have -- the person
23 on deck will be Aleshia Vaughn. So we have Dryver
24 Henderson followed by Aleshia Vaughn. Is Aleshia
25 still here this evening?

1 MR. HENDERSON: Hello. Can you see my
2 T-shirt? It says Normandy Final Four Basketball.

3 Members of the school board, thank you for
4 coming, you're on hallowed ground. This is the
5 court, home court, of the Normandy Christmas Holiday
6 Tournament, the oldest and most successful high
7 school basketball tournament in the State of
8 Missouri.

9 On this high school ground also, 60, 45, 60,
10 55, 50 years ago UMSL was born. UMSL is a birth
11 child of the Normandy School District. Now, we want
12 to keep control local. We want to keep Normandy
13 free and public and we don't want misleading
14 information or poor leadership.

15 Our kids are great, qualified, capable. They
16 can become leaders, successful people at all walks
17 of life, doctors, lawyers, military leaders,
18 politicians. You name it, our kids can do it.

19 All right. But, let's be honest, let's be
20 straight, we haven't done such a good job for the
21 last 25 years in getting our kids up to great level,
22 have we? No. And that's sad but they can be. Why
23 are we holding them back? Or what are we not doing?
24 I think we say we have low expectation in the
25 District. Well, maybe we have low expectation right

1 from the top. Maybe we don't know at the top how to
2 -- (Inaudible due to applause).

3 I think we heard some erroneous information.
4 I'm sure it's correct that the children of the
5 average United States, all walks of life, have a 46
6 to 50 million words that they hear. And our African
7 American low-income kids may have only 16 million.
8 Notwithstanding, our statistics of a few years ago
9 show that those entering Normandy kindergarten and
10 first grade were only 2 point, point, point 2-5, one
11 quarter of the year behind grade level entering
12 kindergarten and first grade. Sadly, and our
13 president can attest to this, the testing done
14 several years ago show that the longer the students
15 were in Normandy, the further behind grade level
16 they fell in reading.

17 And all things considered, we see over the
18 last ten years anyway, the ACT, the single score
19 that shows the college and career readiness,
20 dropping, dropping to where our average ACT in
21 12th grade is set at the 10th grade level, not
22 12th grade level.

23 We needs changes but we can do it and we can
24 keep it local. We have great teachers. Why do we
25 not -- I'm sorry, we have had things done in secret.

1 We're several months behind in the approval of our
2 minutes. You will not find DESE folks' minutes
3 anywhere. They chose the approval of Francis Howell
4 as the transfer school. You will not see a public
5 discussion of why was Bel-Nor chosen. Bel-Nor
6 should probably stay open. We're going to pay more
7 to bus the Bel-Nor kids to other schools than if we
8 close Jefferson. I'm not picking on Jefferson but I
9 would like to see Bel-Nor stay open.

10 AUDIENCE: Thank you.

11 MS. VAUGHN: My name is Aleshia Vaughn.
12 My question is what steps have been taken by DESE to
13 prevent Normandy School District from being taken
14 over by the state? Is there a time line to show
15 improvement, if so, has the time line been shared
16 with Normandy School District parents, patrons and
17 stakeholders?

18 MS. VANDEVEN: Thank you. And for our
19 last speaker for the evening we have Shirley T.
20 Robinson.

21 MS. ROBINSON: Good evening, everyone.

22 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

23 MS. ROBINSON: I just have a few things
24 I want to say. First of all, our students need to
25 stay in our community. We talk about breaking up

1 families, we're breaking up communities. And when
2 do we do that, then the students within the
3 community really don't know each other. They don't
4 know. They don't communicate because they don't go
5 to school together. There is something great about
6 going to a school within your community.

7 Another thing I want to ask, we are paying
8 all of this money for our students to go to Howell
9 and nothing against Howell, I lived in the Howell
10 District. I had three children graduate from
11 Howell, so I do agree with Francis Howell, but my
12 grandchildren are in this district and that's where
13 I want them to be.

14 What is happening? We're losing our
15 teachers. We're having to layoff our teachers. Is
16 Howell adding teachers? But they're taking our
17 money. All of our money is going there. And our
18 children are suffering in our community.

19 It's like one running two households. You're
20 going to pay for a household over here and try to
21 maintain your household at home, you can't do that
22 on one budget. So we need to really take a look at
23 that.

24 I grew up in Normandy. I have all the faith
25 in Normandy. I know that we're going to do it. I

1 know we're going to be accredited soon. I'm just
2 waiting for that time to happen. But I just think
3 there are some things we need to think about. Just
4 think about what is happening. We're losing our
5 teachers but they're not adding teachers. We're
6 losing our money for transportation, for the tuition
7 there. They just pocket it but we are suffering.
8 We are taking from what meager amount that we have
9 to supply them and they're pocketing it but you
10 expect us to still do the same things that we have
11 been doing in the past. We can't do that.

12 And, I know for a fact, I was listening to
13 Dr. Ty, there are students that people moved in the
14 District just to transfer their children out. I
15 know for a fact. They have never attended Normandy
16 School District but we are paying all of this money
17 for them to go out to Howell and other districts and
18 I just think this is absolutely ridiculous. This is
19 state money that our children need to be benefited
20 from and I just think that something has to be done.
21 Something needs to be done. Thank you.

22 MS. VANDEVEN: Okay. I actually
23 misspoke. We have time for two more speakers, so
24 I'm going to call the next two speakers. We have
25 Alderman Beverly Hills slash Brian Jackson. I'm

1 sorry. It's the alderman of Beverly Hills. I'm
2 sorry about that. Okay. And then on deck we have
3 Joan Phillips. Is Joan still here? I'm sorry.
4 We're going to hear from the alderman first.

5 MR. JACKSON: Let the young lady go
6 first.

7 MS. PERRY: Hello, Normandy family. My
8 name is Alia Perry and I'm a senior at Normandy High
9 School. When I first returned back to Normandy, I
10 came back looking for a change but not much has
11 changed. Normandy had a lot of positive things
12 going on such as the basketball boys making it to
13 state, the thespian society put on wonderful
14 production of "The Color Purple."

15 Our voices should be heard. With the layoff,
16 the result of the layoff of the teachers, I did a
17 little background research and I looked up the
18 seniority law, which is -- it's a big deal.
19 Basically, we need to save our teachers, so I
20 started a petition.

21 I started a petition that says the staff
22 reduction that is about to take place will
23 negatively affect the students of the Normandy
24 School District. With the future of the Normandy
25 School District already in question, some of our

1 most effective teachers will be laid off because of
2 the seniority laws.

3 Below, "We the students of Normandy High
4 School are concerned citizens who urge our leaders
5 to act now to repair this seniority law and allow us
6 to keep all of our best teachers." I believe that
7 teachers should be based on their techniques and how
8 they teach, not because they have seniority.

9 It is time for us to stand up and it is time
10 for our voices to be heard. Save our teachers.

11 MR. JACKSON: Good evening to Normandy
12 and good evening to DESE and all of the Board. My
13 name is Brian Jackson. I'm president of the Board
14 of Aldermen for the City of Beverly Hills. I am
15 also a parent who had a student graduate from
16 Normandy in 2011. He is now a junior at North
17 Carolina A&T and he is an engineer major. He
18 graduated from the top of his class. Normandy is
19 not waiting to produce good students. It has been
20 doing that for many years.

21 I think that for DESE, I think that it would
22 be good to understand what we have in the Normandy
23 School District, in the 24:1 communities. Our needs
24 are different, our stressors are different, our
25 families are different. They're different from

1 other school districts and if you don't understand
2 that when you need to create criteria for us to walk
3 by, when the state sets criteria, it adversely
4 affects us because we're set up a lot different as
5 communities.

6 The one other thing that I wanted to say is
7 that the criteria must change because what you are
8 doing, you are adversely affecting our students and
9 the way they're being adversely affected, they're in
10 the situation now where you're almost asking us like
11 Pharaoh to make a brick without straw. Because
12 there's nobody who can take 13 to \$15 million from
13 somebody and tell them to do better.

14 Now, the three ways that we're being affected
15 that's a problem, number one, you're hitting us with
16 attendance and you're saying if the kids are not in
17 school, it's going to affect us. We cannot make
18 parents send their children to school.

19 I have been all over the world. And, in
20 Jamaica, they fine parents if their children are not
21 in school but they also give them incentive at the
22 end of the year. They get a tax break if their kid
23 comes to school. I didn't get this information by
24 myself. I talked to some of the locals in Jamaica
25 when I was there.

1 Not only that, if the child is missing seven
2 days a month out of school and then you're telling
3 the teacher they're a bad teacher if they don't
4 succeed, that teacher is being asked to teach a
5 student who's not there and if she's not able to
6 teach a student that is not there, she's going to be
7 looked at as a bad teacher when they come to school
8 and they're unable to perform.

9 Lastly, you look at test scores. If a kid is
10 not in school five to seven days a month and he
11 comes to school and he's already behind in his
12 lesson, when the test is given he's not going to be
13 ready to pass that test or have his scores high
14 enough. So we're being hit with three different
15 things that adversely affect us.

16 Now, yes, we do need to do better in a lot of
17 areas but when the state defunds a program that was
18 working, like Parents as Teachers, other school
19 districts -- (inaudible due to applause)

20 My son benefited from Parents As Teachers.
21 When a child was born in the District they came in
22 your hospital room with something to give us,
23 something to direct us parents as teachers. My son
24 was ready for preschool and kindergarten because
25 there was somebody coming to the home while he was

1 an infant. We need that right now. Thank you.

2 MS. VANDEVEN: Our last speaker this
3 evening is Joan Phillips. I'm sorry, John.

4 MR. PHILLIPS: Good evening. My name is
5 John Phillips, not Joan. I am a lifelong Normandy
6 resident. I went to Jefferson, graduated from
7 Washington, went to the junior high before it was a
8 middle school and I graduated from Normandy Senior
9 High School.

10 First of all, it would be a shame for all of
11 the history of this place to go away. Not only do
12 we have a very good basketball team now, but we've
13 had state championship basketball teams before. The
14 girls used to dominate when I was here. Our track
15 team used to dominate when I was here. We had a
16 marching band that was nationally recognized. And
17 I'm going to use that to seg-way into what I want to
18 talk to everyone else about.

19 We have an opportunity right now to change
20 history. Parents, man, nothing is going to happen
21 if you all don't stand up. Nothing. Nothing. You
22 have to get involved in the education of your
23 children. I know sometimes you're tired coming home
24 from work, your mother needs something, you got to
25 run somebody here, you got something in church going

1 on. We all have busy lives. But you have to
2 participate in the lives of your children.

3 My son went to school here in 2001 and it was
4 a ghost town on parent/teacher conference night.
5 Ghost town. That means parents aren't coming up to
6 check on their kids and if you're not checking on
7 your kids, how can you expect your child to be
8 concerned if you're not? How can you expect the
9 teachers to care, if you don't? Everything starts
10 at home. It has to start at home.

11 Alumni and I'm looking at -- I see Terrell, I
12 see Marvin, Kenny. I'm looking all over the place.
13 Marvin. I said Marvin. Anyway, we have to come
14 back to our school and volunteer, mentor, organize,
15 all of these things that we haven't been doing the
16 last 25 years that we've been going downhill. So if
17 parents and alumni decide to actively get involved,
18 there will be no doubt that our District can reclaim
19 some of this past doing.

20 MS. VANDEVEN: Okay. Thank you. Before
21 we move into our closing remarks from our student
22 representative of your -- of the Normandy School
23 Board, what I would like to do is just remind you of
24 a couple things. We do have opportunity -- if
25 you're completing your orange comment sheets, we

1 want to make sure we collect each of those tonight.
2 Make share we get ahold of those orange comment
3 cards.

4 You may also submit your comments via writing
5 or you may submit something to the Normandy comments
6 at DESE dot mo dot gov. We really appreciate your
7 attendance this evening and I'm going to hand it
8 over for some final comments from our student
9 representative -- or your student representative.

10 MS. BUTLER: Good evening, everyone.

11 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

12 MS. BUTLER: My name is Dianitia Butler.

13 I am a 12th grade student here in Normandy. I am
14 the president of the senior 2014 class, the captain
15 of the varsity cheerleading team and the student
16 representative on the school board.

17 Normandy is making strides to ensure and
18 maintain its dedication to excellence from its
19 continued conversation about attendance, to its
20 active role in recruiting parental involvement. I
21 love my school, which is why it hurts me to hear the
22 negative things the media has to say about Normandy.

23 I'm proud to be a Normandy High School
24 student and look forward to being one of the many
25 successful Normandy alumni. I know I not only speak

1 for myself, as well as other students at Normandy,
2 when I say the staff has positively affected my time
3 here at Normandy. I have come to rely on the
4 guidance and support of the excellent staff who are
5 dedicated to my success, staff who make themselves
6 available before and after school hours, staff who
7 consistently go above and beyond to make sure that I
8 am successful after high school and after college.
9 And because of this, the students of Normandy have
10 formed a bond with the teachers.

11 As a senior of Normandy High School, I choose
12 to stay at Normandy because I believe Normandy has
13 and will continue to provide me with the skills I
14 need to be successful in college. Normandy is more
15 than a high school. Here at Normandy we are family.
16 It is truly a great day to be alive.

17 MS. VANDEVEN: That concludes our
18 evening. We thank you very much. We hope to see
19 you on December 11th, same time same place. Thank
20 you very much.

21 (Whereupon, the record ended at 8:06 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, Suzanne Zes, within and for the State of Missouri, do hereby certify that the witness whose testimony appears in the foregoing deposition was duly sworn by me; the testimony of said witness was taken by me to the best of my ability and thereafter reduced to typewriting under my direction; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this deposition was taken, and further that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties thereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

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